

logical accordance, both with his championship of the new conceptions against the older 'mechanical model' method, as well as with this implication that the objectivity he seeks cannot be apprehended as definitely representative of the physical world, that he proceeds to develop a Coherence theory of scientific truth. 'All this contributes to a notion of physics as a pattern of logical relations, the truth criteria being recognition of the orderliness within the pattern.'

Analogous to this theory of scientific truth is sketched one of artistic and ethical truth in which the criteria are again coherence or harmony of feelings in art, of intentions and actions in ethics. At the close of such a masterly study in coherence, a notable example of its own subject-matter, it is with genuine disappointment that one finds the metaphysical and epistemological poverty of the system showing itself. 'Poet, lover, and worshipper . . . are the only ones among us to realise Aeternitas in our own time; but they must not expect a logical as well as an imaginative triumph. There is not to be a science of theology . . . in the sense in which I have been investigating the possible meanings of scientific truth.' Faith is relegated to 'a disciplined and controlled imagination'. Even the fallacy of the consequent is allowed to peep out when it is suggested that a logical demonstration of the existence of its truths is possible for science.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

THE TIMELESS MOMENT. By Warner Allen. (Faber; 10s. 6d.)

It is sad that a review of this serious and intelligent attempt to interpret a moment of strong contemplative intuition of Being, so strong that it transformed the seer's life and thought, should have to be taken up mainly with criticism and disagreement. It is a sign not only of the spiritual disorder of our times but also of some degree of failure on our own part when a man so sincere and unprejudiced as Mr Warner Allen, setting out to interpret his moment of experience, dismisses so lightly, as impossible to accept, the greater part of the traditional wisdom of Christendom, and, though he will read the Catholic mystics, out of their context of the Faith, does not seem to think that the Catholic theologians and philosophers can be of service to him in his search. It is all the more regrettable because he has the intelligence to see that the Oriental traditions (though he rightly regards them with respect) will not give him the guidance he seeks, and to turn to Plotinus as his principal authority. Plotinus, though by no means a Christian, is the nearest to the Truth of all the pagans who prepared the *Philosophia Perennis*, and, in the present reviewer's opinion, if Mr Warner Allen had interpreted the thought of Plotinus more accurately and followed it more closely he would not have gone as far as he has out of the way. For in spite of his sincerity and intelligence, his clear recognition of eternal spiritual being and his attempts to make use of parts of the Catholic tradition, the author has arrived at some very false conclusions; and it is the duty of a Catholic reviewer to point them out because they are to be found in a number of other modern mystical writings and there seems to be in process

of formation a widely accepted false philosophy of mysticism, the most dangerous of all kinds of false philosophy.

Mr Warner Allen's first defect is one about which it may seem both presumptuous and unkind to speak: but it does seem that he is rather incautious in his estimation of his 'timeless moment'. It seems hardly likely from his description that the experience which he was privileged to enjoy during a performance of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony was what Plotinus speaks of as union with the One, and Plotinus's union with the One, though no doubt a true mystical experience, does not seem to be at all the same thing as what Catholic mystics mean by the Transforming Union. There is a very long road between. Besides the innumerable counterfeits of mystical states, often due to physical causes, which are not at all easy to distinguish from the real thing, there are a great range and variety of states and experiences which are genuine 'timeless moments', stops of the ordinary movement of the soul, touches which are outside the bounds of thought and not expressible in language. Most of them are not mystical in the proper sense at all and are very far indeed from the final Union with God. Failure to distinguish between the nature and effects of these states and moments, all in their way genuine and valuable, and to assign them to their proper place in the spiritual life according to the traditional wisdom of the Church, can lead to very serious confusion.

But our deepest disagreement with Mr Warner Allen must be over the two most essential parts of his interpretation of his moment. He holds that the mystical union is not properly speaking a union at all but a consciousness of our pre-existing identity with the Absolute Self: we are not raised to union with God, we *are* God and become for a moment conscious of it. There is no need to spend more words on the deadliness of this error. It may be as well however to mention that the present reviewer has elsewhere given reasons for supposing that this is not the normal thought of Plotinus about union with the One, as Mr Warner Allen thinks, and it is doubtful whether any passage in the *Enneads*, interpreted in the whole context of Plotinus's thought, necessarily bears this meaning.

The second point on which we must utterly disagree with the author is his contention that the cosmos, the world of experience, is the 'incarnation', the necessary and everlasting expression of the Absolute. The two together make his philosophy of mysticism one absolutely opposed to Christianity.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

POLITICS AND MORALS. By Benedetto Croce, translated by S. J. Castiglione. (Allen and Unwin; 8s. 6d.)

The book is a collection of distantly related political studies based on the philosophic Liberalism of the author. Signor Croce is eighty years of age, but he preaches with unremitting vigour his doctrines of the utilitarian nature of politics (and non-moral character of the State), a spiritual unity that can be understood only in terms of