

A PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNIVERSE

Design and Purpose

By Prof. Frederic Wood Jones. Pp. 84. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1942.) 5s. net.

IN this little book, an expanded version of his Purser Lecture at Trinity College, Dublin, Prof. Wood Jones expresses his general philosophical convictions. The whole universe, he argues, forms one system, a chain of being including both the animate and the inanimate. Man has his place in the system along with all other creatures and is in no way apart from or above it. The system is not to be considered as a mechanical aggregate but as exhibiting design throughout and as the sphere of purposive action; as, in fact, the outcome of the creative purpose of the cosmic mind. The author invokes, in support of his view, the animism attributed to primitive man, the systems of Buddha and Lao Tze, and also of Plato and Aristotle—rather a mixed bag of authorities.

What is more surprising is that Prof. Wood Jones also invokes the support of Paley. For Paley surely, like practically all those of his time, was arguing for a purely mechanical universe in which living organisms were just more elaborate and automatic machinery, and all was designed and run by the Great Artificer. It may be granted at once that Paley was more clear-sighted than many of the Darwinians of a later day who supposed that automatic machinery could somehow design, produce and run itself by pure luck, coupled with the blessed word 'evolution'. Still Paley stands for two doctrines that are otherwise anathema to Prof. Wood Jones. As to the first, Paley's system was not conceived in terms of a theory of pantheism or of a purely immanent world spirit, such as Prof. Wood Jones approves, but in terms of a personal and transcendent deity. That is a view that Prof. Wood Jones attacks fiercely, seeing nothing in it but an unfortunate survival of the tribal god of the ancient Hebrews. Clearly you can have either a mechanical world run by a transcendent mechanic or the world as organism animated by a world soul. By itself each is a reasonable view, but the two are not easy to reconcile; certainly the advocate of one can scarcely claim the support of the advocate of the other.

The second difference is that Paley, necessarily as a Christian, held that the human soul is in some way separate, distinct from and above the material and mechanical world. Plato also held this view, though he did not believe in a mechanical universe. For Prof. Wood Jones such a theory savours of false pretensions and arrogance. There is a very dangerous kind of humanism which puts man above Nature, and it has been very prevalent since the Renaissance. Against this his attack is well and properly directed, but it has nothing to do with Christian or Platonic theories about the soul, which are perfectly compatible with his view, and which I believe he misunderstands. His point may be put quite simply. Analytic, sophisticated urban thinkers tend to imagine man as something separate from his environment, superior to it and therefore entitled to interfere with other creatures to make them serve his own ends. A true appreciation of the facts comes easily to man living under primitive conditions. The facts were clearly seen by synthetically minded thinkers of earlier times. The same lesson can, however, be equally well learnt from biological science when the view of the whole is not obscured by partial views of mere specialists. If we realize that organism and environ-

ment are inseparable and each adapted to the other, that men like all other creatures have a part to play in a cosmic purpose greater than any individual, then we are likely to take a humbler and more balanced view of ourselves. This is worth saying. In this connexion Prof. Wood Jones does well to remind us of Samuel Butler, even though Butler's biology was not always very sound. It is true that science in the strict sense can tell us nothing about a cosmic (or any other) purpose; it is a metaphysical notion. It is also true that if there is no kind of cosmic purpose, then the purposes of individual human beings are futile.

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ECONOMIC FORCES AND WORLD ORDER

The Economics of 1960

By Colin Clark. Pp. x+118. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1942.) 8s. 6d. net.

MR. COLIN CLARK is easily the most daring of statisticians. We have known since he published his "Conditions of Economic Progress" that there is almost no degree of inadequacy in the data that is enough to deter him from arriving at some sort of a quantitative conclusion, however provisional it has to be. In his new book he applies to the future the methods he has made his own in handling the present and the past. His general thesis is that the course of economic development over the next two decades will probably be affected very little by political events. War may retard the processes of growth, but will scarcely alter their character; and changes in social system and class structure can also be disregarded in measuring the probable movements of the world's economic life. In the past, Mr. Clark maintains, wars and revolutions have been unable to override fundamental economic forces; and we and our children are likely to find it so again.

To be sure, Mr. Clark postulates, for the purpose of his prophecies, a world not dominated by economic nationalism, and a freedom for the exchange of commodities and services in marked contrast to the tendencies of the past twenty years. But he seems to think that this freedom will be forced on the world by economic forces, whatever politicians may plan. His thesis is that historically economic development reveals an alternation of 'capital-sated' and 'capital-hungry' periods, and that, after a period of satiety, the world is due to pass into a period of capital-hunger which will be intensified by war-destruction. He therefore looks forward to a very active resumption of international investment, accompanied by, and indeed involving, a big shift away from primary production to manufacturing and service industries, as well as a sharp alteration in the 'terms of trade' in favour of primary producers as against manufacturers.

These shifts, he believes, will be part of a process which will add immensely to the world's total wealth and especially to the productivity and income of the countries which are behindhand in economic development. He expects China, India, Eastern Europe and other backward areas to absorb huge masses of capital and, while becoming industrialized, to become at the same time greatly improved markets for the consumers' goods as well as for the capital goods of the already developed countries. He expects not only the United States, but also the U.S.S.R., to