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"SMOOTH STONES OUT OF THE BROOK"

The object of this article is to be helpful to a very numerous class, whom the writer regards as well worthy of the deep interest, and anxious efforts, of all who revere "the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy Him." The class referred to is the great host of youthful inquirers and labourers, in our various churches—our Sabbath School teachers, our Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, our Guilds, our Bible Classes, and so on—who, with a supreme desire to glorify God aright, are often inexpressibly perplexed by the contemptuous rejection of those views of the Grand Old Book, which their fathers have taught them to hold fast, and to rejoice in. We hold that there is scarcely any task which is of more vital concern to the pastor and to the Christian teacher, than that of establishing the faith of Christian people, *and especially of the children of the Church*, in the absolute authority of the Bible. Is the Old Testament an honest, and a reputable production? Or is it little else than a tissue of most unreliable asseverations? Did divine direction lead the writers, "by divers portions, and in divers manners," to give us a "sure testimony"? Or, did men, of whose very names and existence we are uninformed, multiply the most daring fabrications, and yet get them immediately welcomed, and gloried in, as the very truth of God? No wonder if, both at home and abroad, such an issue arouses a most painful interest. If the Bible we preach from can be exposed as a cheat, small wonder if our churches empty, and if the wail of the foreign missionary comes home to us, that his appeals are derided.

REVIEWS OF RECENT LITERATURE

PHILOSOPHICAL LITERATURE

Ethics and Natural Law. A Reconstructive Review of Moral Philosophy Applied to the Rational Art of Living. By GEORGE LANSING RAYMOND, L.H.D., Professor of Aesthetics, George Washington University. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. 1920. \$2.

This is an ambitious work, and must be either a great failure or a great success. The reviewer will give a few reasons for pronouncing it a failure.

1. The preface shows that the author proposes to determine ethical questions without reference to God, a logical impossibility; for, if men are under divine law, their duties to one another may be, at least in part, determinable only by that law. If there could be produced a textbook on ethics satisfactory alike to theists and atheists, and it were to become the standard textbook on the subject in our schools, that would itself be the heaviest blow yet dealt to religion, and especially to Christianity, a convincing demonstration that Christianity is useless in our modern life.

2. The author makes desire primary in human experience in relation to thinking and feeling. Just as good a case could be made out for the primacy of thinking or of feeling; and perhaps a still better case for the primacy of that which is not distinctively any one of these three, but the root of all of them. Certainly a system of ethics that builds on this at least doubtful position in one department of psychology does not promise much beyond fine distinctions of words.

3. Raymond classifies all desires as bodily and mental, connecting the mental desires with sight and hearing, and the bodily desires with the other senses, and making these selfish and those altruistic. He thus lays the foundation for a system of ethics in which righteousness will consist in benevolence guided into the subordination of the desires connected with smell and taste and touch and the like to the desires connected with hearing and sight. If there were any reason whatever for the assumed classification and principle, the assumption would only lead us into a jungle of innumerable and impossible distinctions, and never into a plain path of rational living.

4. Such terms as ought, moral obligation, veracity, justice, and authority could be omitted by Raymond in the setting forth of his system, which is another way of saying that in his system a number of concepts basic in the science of ethics are wanting, and the system is therefore not really a system of ethics. It is a system of the esthetic of desires.

5. Raymond of course approves of falsehood in cases where rational kindliness prompts to falsehood.

6. In an elaborate index of fourteen pages "rights" and "trespass" do not occur. Raymond has succeeded to a considerable extent in pushing aside the ideas expressed by such terms.

7. The style is not that of a textbook; it is too diffuse. Moreover, too much space is given to repeating the author's fad over and over, and attempting to prove it. The book is excellent for light reading, but is weak in the concise and precise exposition that should characterize a textbook.

But these criticisms must not exclude the expression of surprised admiration of the beauty of the work and the nearly always high tone of its practical teachings. The explanation must be that the author has grown and lived in an ethical atmosphere purer and nobler than his theory, once accepted and put into practice by his disciples, will be able to create for them and their children. Among the causes of this better atmosphere for Raymond were his own father and Mark Hopkins, the great teacher. They made a better character out of Raymond than Raymond is likely to make out of those who come under the spell of his applied esthetic.

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Ethics, General and Special. By OWEN A. HILL, S.J., PH.D., Lecturer on Psychology, Natural Theology, Ethics and Religion, at Fordham University, New York City, N. Y. The Macmillan Co., New York. 1920. \$3.50.

The eminent Jesuit has given in this book a readable and lucid presentation of the Roman Catholic ethics, based on the medieval philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and the authorized teachings of the infallible Church, but applied to present-day conditions and questions. Those acquainted with this field will not need to read Part I., General Ethics; those not acquainted with it will find there, in brief and lucid form, the information they may wish about the underlying principles of this system of ethics.

It may be of interest to indicate some points of the lecturer's presentation in Part II., Special Ethics.

Concerning toleration he says, "When authority permits a practice as abominable in the sight of God as heresy, it may still be justified on the double ground of inability to remedy the abuse, and refraining from the crime of formal co-operation." He excuses our government from treating heresy as a crime: "Adherents of the true religion are not in the majority, and truth's victory would be uncertain," if the Roman Catholics undertook through the government to forbid every religion but their own. He makes it plain that he approves the government's toleration of Protestantism, only on the ground of its inability effectively to forbid Protestantism. If the time should ever come when in this country the Roman Catholics found themselves