

ARTICLE XII.

NOTES.

APPLICATION OF THE GOLDEN RULE.

ACCORDING to the Golden Rule, we are to do unto others as we would have others do unto us. In the application of this rule, however, we meet with various difficulties ; for it is at once seen that the last clause of the injunction really means, "what we ought to wish others to do unto us." It is absurd to suppose that every irregulated wish should be gratified. The criminal eagerly wishes that those who are cognizant of his crime should neither reveal it, nor punish him for it. But that, certainly, is not the rule by which we should be guided in our conduct toward others. An ignorant person may desire a thing which would be to his disadvantage. To do to another as we in our ignorance would have him do to us might be to confer upon him a positive evil. However much we might desire alms, if we were beggars, we should find in that desire little justification for indiscriminate almsgiving. We are to do to others only what, under the guidance of pure benevolence and the highest wisdom, we should desire others to do to us.

But the second and principal difficulty in the application of the golden rule is, that the others whom we would serve have conflicting interests. We have more than one person or class to serve. In our individual conduct, as in making laws for a nation, we have to consider the "greatest good of the greatest number." This makes an exceedingly difficult and complex problem out of every act of duty, especially amid the complications of modern business enterprises.

As man is constituted, and society organized, it seems impossible to conduct the business of the world except upon the principle of competition. Roughly speaking, society is divided into two classes, namely, producers and consumers,

though each is in turn both producer and consumer engaged in exchange of products. As producers supplying the wants of consumers, we are all competing to see which can supply the wants on the cheapest and most attractive terms.

Modern civilization has been largely produced by labor-saving inventions. But every labor-saving invention is a direct injury to those who have already invested their capital in appliances less effective than those brought forward by the new inventor. For example, when the modern mowers and reapers were invented, their use at once depreciated the value of all the factories where scythes and cradles were made. The individual owners of these factories, and indeed of these individual primitive instruments of harvesting, were injured by the invention. They lost their market. Their factories ceased to run. Their scythes and cradles were suffered to hang unused in dusty attics. But the general public had been benefited. It henceforth cost less to produce wheat, and the main staples of food for all classes became more abundant and cheap. If the inventor of the mower and reaper had been in the place of the manufacturer of scythes and cradles, he would have objected to this diminishing market, brought about by the new invention. And so when the reaper was improved by the addition of the binder, the original inventor of the reaper was injured by the new invention, but the public was benefited.

What, then, is the duty of an inventor? Shall he hesitate to bring forward an invention, because it will render useless the investments of his competitors? That would indeed be doing to them as he might wish them to do to him, but it would not be doing for the public what was to their highest interests. The "others" whom he should have in view are not merely his competitors, but the whole body politic, whose interests are not single, but diverse.

It is not otherwise in the organization of business. Waste is saved by proper organization. The losses consequent on imperfect business methods fall, in the end, on the whole community. A shovelful of dirt uselessly thrown is a burden upon the industries of the world. A railroad or canal unwisely

located, a factory built in a situation unfavorable for the purchase of raw material or the distribution of the finished products, is in great part a dead loss. He is a public benefactor who constructs a more economical line of communication, or chooses a more favorable point for manufacturing or distributing, though his enterprise may depreciate the value of the unwise investments of others.

Even the loud outcry against department stores overlooks the interest of the general public. The Stewarts and the Wanamakers do indeed work an injury to various smaller retail merchants, but they make it possible for a great host of helpless ladies to make purchases at cheap rates, and with little outlay of strength, of goods of whose quality they can be assured. The organizer of the department store can appeal to the benefit rendered to the great number of purchasers, in justification of his interpretation of the golden rule. If he does to these as he would have them do to him, he cannot but work evil to his less skillful and less fortunate competitors.

There is no escaping from this dilemma, whatever be the business in which one is engaged. Life is so complex that duties will always seem to conflict. This becomes most apparent in the affairs of state which lead to the organization of political parties. In the United States, for example, the people have always been divided over the question of a protective tariff. The consumer of sugar urges that he should be allowed to purchase it wherever he can at the lowest price; whereas the planter urges that he should have the benefit of the higher price secured by the tariff of a cent a pound upon all sugars that foreigners send to our market. In whose place shall we put ourselves? If we are consumers merely, we shall wish for the low price of untaxed sugar. Whose interests shall decide? In the case of iron, there is a tariff of seven dollars per ton, whose benefit inures entirely to the great Steel Trust, since no iron is imported, and the price in this country can be kept up seven dollars higher per ton than it is in foreign countries.

But these seeming injustices must be considered with reference to the broad principles of the national welfare. Those

who defend the protective tariff contend that the maintenance of national independence and the stimulation of home industries compensate for the incidental injustice that seems to be wrought by the inequalities of tariff legislation. We need not discuss the correctness of these contentions upon the one side or the other: it is sufficient simply to call attention to them as an illustration of the complex character of all great public ethical questions. Both the advocate and the opponent of the protective tariff appeal with equal confidence to the golden rule. The opponent asks, Would you not have the cost of living reduced to its lowest terms? Would you not buy in the cheapest market? while the advocate of the protective tariff answers, Would you not have the independence of your country maintained? Would you not wish to have some industries promoted? He who thinks it an easy matter to settle these questions either has not read the history of his country, or has misjudged the wisdom and integrity of its leading statesmen.

At the present time, the application of the golden rule to railroad rates is much in evidence. Since the railroads are "public carriers," all patrons should have fair and equal terms. To be sure; but what are fair and equal terms? Shall a shipper who fills a car full be compelled to pay the same amount per ton or per cubic yard of space that another pays who fills the car only half full? If he does, the railroad is favoring the smaller shipper, for the dead weight of the car is the principal item in the cost of its transportation. The shipper who only partly fills his car and only pays the same rate per ton compels the railroad to render for him a great amount of unnecessary gratuitous service. To charge the same rate for a full car that you do for a half car is to do injustice to the large shipper.

A question which has been actively agitated in the Standard Oil Company turns upon what is the proper unit for wholesale prices of railroad transportation. Is it the carload or the trainload? Mr. Rockefeller maintains that it is the trainload; while the smaller refiners maintain that it is the carload. Mr. Rockefeller is undoubtedly correct. The great burden upon our railroads is that they are compelled in much of the traffic to

employ their engines and crews and tracks, not only in hauling half-filled trains, but in picking up a carload here and a carload there, thus lengthening the time of transit, and making the traffic so irregular that at some time there will be more business than can be attended to, while at others the whole force and whole plant will be idle. The Jeremiahs who have been hurling their invectives against the Standard Oil Company for obtaining better rates than others, have generally overlooked these fundamental facts, and so have spoken without knowledge. Their Jeremiads are without justification in fact. Full trainloads furnished at regular intervals can be hauled at a cheaper rate than partial trainloads at irregular intervals. The skillful organizer should get better rates than the unskillful. The smaller shippers have no right to ask a common carrier to make good their misfortunes by gratuitous service. The golden rule is not an easy solvent of all questions of duty. There is still call for use of all the intellectual powers God has given us to untangle the knotty problems which the progress of society has thrown upon us.

York, England, August, 1905. G. FREDERICK WRIGHT.

NOTES ON BRITISH THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

IN his newly published work, "The Metaphysics of Nature,"¹ Professor Carveth Read, M.A., Professor of Philosophy of Mind and Logic in University College, London, has made a notable contribution to British metaphysical thought.

The scope of the work may be gathered from its divisions. The two introductory chapters, dealing with "Belief and Knowledge" and "Reality and Truth," are followed by Book I.—Canonic, dealing with the tests of truth and like matters, Book II.—Cosmology, Book III.—Psychology, and Book IV.—the Categories. The writing is solid, and yet is interesting,—very interesting, indeed, to a philosophical student, who soon finds himself in the hands of a live and competent thinker. The author of this work will be an ornament to the chair that

¹ London: Adam and Charles Black, 1905; New York: The Macmillan Company. Pp. viii, 354.

was occupied by Croom Robertson and Sully, and we give his work our heartiest commendation, so much have we enjoyed its perusal. One might easily be critical of points of detail, but it seems worthier, in such a case, to follow rather a certain prevailing largeness of appreciation. There is no lack of suggestiveness, nor is the author devoid of a certain humor which at times well befits the work, usually severe. One judges it certain, however, that many philosophical readers, who are not extreme idealists, will think somewhat fuller justice might have been done to the idealistic elements in our thought's final construction of world-reality. For if we allow a world of reality outside of us, and independent of us, shaping our thought-constructions of the world, it is still in the end as the mental construction of us, as perceivers, that the world is known. But perhaps, in days when we have suffered much extreme idealistic writing, something more moderate should not be too closely scrutinized. It is at least a change from idealistic monotony and iteration, and, after all, we want to feel that the world here has some reality. Empirical Reality, our author says, "existed before any conceptual system, has survived the failure of many, and may see the passing of many more" (p. 77). Again, our author concludes "that to speak of Nature as itself the Universal Reason or Thought, is an abuse of language; that the objectifying or hypostatizing of thought does not give us the differential characters of inorganic Nature; and that it does not explain the fact of Empirical Reality, where thought and sensation meet in the perceptions and experience of normal men" (p. 164). This sort of tendency Professor Read carries at times farther than we should care to go, as when, for example, he asks, on page 190, "Is it not plain that science is what every one now trusts, and believes in, more than in anything else?" If that is so, it is for professors of philosophy like Professor Read, to show a more excellent way; and, indeed, ground and reason might be drawn from parts of this very book for trusting and believing in something more primary and securely grounded than what is called "Science." The philosopher must be just

the last man, in a preëminently scientific age, to be swept away in the current of what "every one" believes, and this independence our author usually so well maintains that it is a conspicuous merit of his work. Emerson, in his "Circles," reminds us that "there is not a piece of science but its flank may be turned to-morrow," and how could it be wise, or even rational, to put our trust, "more than anything else," in that of which this can be said?

Similarly, there are detailed points elsewhere to which some exception might be taken. But of the book in whole, one must repeat that it is an excellent and interesting work, with freshness and individuality in the thinking and the writing. And it is wonderfully free from the miserable partisanship to which, in things philosophical, we are still so often treated. He will not even impose one ideal on all men; "the attempt to set up the same ideal for all men is one of the greatest errors of philosophy." This, although philosophy or mental culture seems to be for him "the chief good of every normal man"—the "greatest good in itself" (pp. 350-351); which statements would require some qualification and further elucidation to be quite adequate and satisfactory on moral and religious sides.

An important text-book of Apologetics is "Pro Fide: a Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion," by C. Harris, B.D., Lecturer in Theology, St. David's College, Lampeter.¹ Mr. Harris says, in his preface, the work is intended for three classes of readers (1) theological students, (2) ministers dealing "practically" with modern unbelief, and (3) the reading public, or that mysterious entity called the "general reader." Thus the work does not primarily appeal to theological experts, but for the needs of the three classes specified, the book may be said to be excellent. It is not unsympathetic towards criticism and science, but seeks to show "how little the full acceptance of them prejudices the Christian Faith." Though modern in knowledge and sympathy, the work will yet be found conservative and orthodox.

We are glad to note the author's strenuous maintenance,

¹ London: John Murray, 1906. Pp. xv, 571. Price 10s. 6d., net.

philosophically, of Personality, but regret so complete an adherence as he shows to Berkeley, and to the rather narrow and unsatisfying philosophy which certain English writers have recently set forth under the name "personal idealism." The opening chapter is on "the Argument for a First Cause," and the author disarms criticism by saying it "seems to him obscure and inadequate," but that he found the "complete recasting" of it "impossible." This is much to be regretted, for the treatment of this all-important subject is very slender indeed, and wanting in clearness and cogency. Also, the literature recommended is too stereotyped and limited to help matters. The second chapter, "The Nature of the First Cause," is, in some respects, better. A good and useful chapter on the Moral Argument follows, and this is succeeded by one, equally useful and good, on Design in Nature. While there is nothing new in these chapters, the treatment is yet more practical and sensible and relevant than is wont to be found. Objections to the Design argument are dealt with in the fifth chapter.

We are thus brought, in the sixth chapter, to "Berkeley's Argument for God's Existence," of which no more novel use has probably ever been made in a text-book of Apologetics. The argument for the Divine Existence is here rested quite confidently upon Berkeley's theory, of which the author is a convinced believer, and of which he says that its influence is predominant in the Anglican Church of to-day. A reviewer has certainly no call to undertake the refutation of Berkeleyan idealism, but one may very well question the wisdom of making any philosophical theory, whether Kantian, Hegelian, or Berkeleyan, occupy such a place in relation to Christian thought. It is extremely interesting, however, to observe the use here made of it, which may help the "plain man" awake from his dogmatic slumbers. Still, no one with an expert knowledge of philosophy can fail to feel how many are the philosophical difficulties with which Berkeley's form of theistic idealism bristles, and of which there is not even discussion in this book. The theory is, however, forcefully pre-

sented in brief compass, and the presentation is clearly and succinctly given. The inadequacy on which I have touched is that common to all such cases, namely, the treatment of the objectivity of Nature—of the “that” of the question. There follows a chapter on “the Argument from Religious Experience,” dealing with Ontologism, the Psychology of Religion, and Mysticism. Though brief, it is fresh and up-to-date.

Each of the succeeding chapters—on “the Argument from the Consent of Mankind,” “the Utility of Religion considered as Evidence of its Truth,” “Agnosticism and Faith,” and “Creation in Time”—has something to commend it, but utilitarian aspects or values of religion, though of apologetic value, do not greatly attract us, or enhance for us the power and dignity of religion.

Interesting chapters (twelfth to fifteenth) follow on “the Human Soul,” “Free-will and Determinism,” “the Problem of Evil,” and “Human Immortality.” The discussions on these subjects are timely, and the author manages in short compass to pack a great deal that will be extremely useful and helpful to the average theological student, whose reading is guided into further study by bibliographies appended to each chapter. The work is remarkable, indeed, for the width of its apologetic range of treatment, rather than for the fullness with which any one of its subjects is handled. But this is what will most commend it to those for whom it is specially intended.

Miracles, prayer, revelation, and inspiration are next taken up, after which we have chapters dealing successfully with the teaching, person, miracles, resurrection, and influence, of Jesus. These chapters are excellent for their purpose.

Throughout the whole book are many forcibly expressed statements of the author’s apologetic position, and the work shows a wide and praiseworthy familiarity with the most recent scientific and theologic literature bearing upon his purpose. All the classes of readers specified in the preface will do wisely to make good use of a volume preëminently successful in presenting helpful and interesting material.

Kilmarnock, Scotland.

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