

It is possible to discover the same governing principles in the general mediæval view of the state. Dr. Carlyle reduces them to three. First, the purpose of the state is moral,—“the maintenance of justice and righteousness.” It may, indeed, have “originated in sin” but that means simply that it was a divinely appointed instrument for the restraint and removal of human wrong-doing. It was, therefore, the creation of God: and its ruler was God’s vicar by divine right, but only when and in so far as he carried out God’s purpose of justice. Hence secondly, the law of the state, the embodiment of justice, was the supreme principle of its constitution.

“Decet regem discere legem,
Audiat rex quod præcipit lex,
Legem servare, hoc est regnare.”

And finally, consequent on these two, the relation between king and subjects depended on the mutual obligation to maintain justice and law.

This is the barest summary of the conclusions which Dr. Carlyle backs by a wealth of learning in the jurists and lawyers of these centuries. But it will serve to show how systematic his treatment is, and how vital the thought with which he deals. It is not the least of the merits of this book that it decisively saves us from thinking of the Middle Ages as a kind of death in life. It was rather a period when high intelligence tried to formulate and to apply great political principles to a most complex and changing social world.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS. By G. A. Johnston, M.A. Macmillan & Co., 1915. Pp. x, 254.

This small book consists of Mr. Johnston’s lectures to students in training at Glasgow. Among the many odd subjects which the government requires teachers to have heard about, ethics is included. It is rarely that these unfortunate beings get really good lectures from a really good lecturer such as those who listened to Mr. Johnston’s course have enjoyed.

The book seems to me to be an admirable introduction to ethics. Mr. Johnston has, from the nature of his audience,

often had to try and bring his ethical doctrines into close connection with teaching. This is doubtless a necessary evil, but it is so far an evil that it has led to some rather startling remarks which the lecturer would probably have omitted or altered had circumstances been different: *e.g.*, on p. 39, teachers are advised to recommend children "to choose the best of their companions as friends." If the children acted on this suggestion (of which, happily, there is very little fear) we should have the spectacle of the bad children trying to make friends with the good ones and the good ones sternly repelling their advances. Again, on p. 152, at the end of an excellent chapter on the Sanctions of Conduct, Mr. Johnston informs the teachers that "it is impossible to give any *particular* reasons for being good that will be absolutely true, not because there are no reasons for being good, but because there is every possible reason." This is a fine epigram; but I am afraid that, like most epigrams, it will not stand criticism. If there is *every* reason for being good, why should no particular reason be absolutely true? If I can prove a proposition in six different ways this surely does not make all my six proofs only partially valid. And surely the fact is that there are dozens of reasons for not being good, but no reason for it except—that it is good to be good.

Mr. Johnston first asks what is the good for man and answers that it is "the development of a strong character in the activities of a socially valuable position in the community." As a definition this appears to me to be circular; for I suppose that a position in the community is only socially valuable if it makes for the good of man. But it forms an excellent peg on which to hang the very useful discussions of the rest of the book. Part I is largely psychological. It traces the development of character under the influence of heredity and environment, including in the latter definite moral teaching. Impulses are developed into desires, and emotions are organized to sentiments; finally the whole must be unified into a formed character. The self is treated in its two aspects, as conscience which judges about good and bad and as will which acts according to these judgments.

Mr. Johnston makes some excellent remarks on the conclusions which eugenists have drawn from the Edwards and the Jukes families, pointing out that the environment of Edwardses has generally been favorable and that of Jukeses unfavorable. I

am less convinced by his remarks on p. 27 that we are all born with unlimited capacities for good or evil, though with strictly limited ones for doing mathematics. I should have thought that many people were as incapable of the highest degrees of goodness or badness as of doing higher mathematics.

Mr. Johnston is anxious to prove that in spite of heredity and environment we are responsible for our actions. I agree with his conclusions, but do not quite see the force of some of his arguments. One argument (p. 31) is that heredity and environment are not mutually exclusive. This seems to me quite irrelevant to the question of responsibility. Another argument is that we react to environment in our own peculiar way, and that we make our own character by acts of will. But might it not be that my first act of will is entirely due to heredity and environment (mainly heredity)? If so, the fact that this first act is a joint cause with heredity and environment of my next act of will, and so on, does not alter the fact that the ultimate causes of my character are heredity and environment. My own feeling is that these causal questions are irrelevant to the ethical one of my moral responsibility; however I may have been caused it is true that I am the sort of being who is responsible for his voluntary acts. And this is none the less true if other persons, *e.g.*, God, my parents, and society, are *also* responsible for my acts as partial causes of them.

I have one criticism to make on Mr. Johnston's Chapter IV about Impulse and Desire. On p. 65 I do not think that it is made quite clear in what sense desires always have a reference to the self. The point, I take it, is that as a matter of psychology all desires have a reference to the desiring self, and that as a matter of ethics all desirable objects get their desirability from their reference to *some* self. But it seems to me that the nature of the psychological reference might have been made clearer in view of the great plausibility of psychological hedonism, and that it should be made quite clear that the self which makes a desired object desirable need not be the self that desires it.

In Chapter VII on Will and Conscience I should like to draw attention to Mr. Johnston's excellent remark that "Conscience is indeed simply consciousness dealing with moral life."

In Chapter IX we have a valuable discussion on the standard of moral judgment which Mr. Johnston takes to be Reason, used in no mystical sense but simply as intellect dealing with a

special subject matter. And we may commend to many readers his remarks on the opinion that Mr. Ramsey MacDonald and his friends are to be blamed for trying to do what Dr. Liebknecht and his friends are to be praised for trying to do.

Chapter X describes the Motive and Sanctions of Conduct. Mr. Johnston takes the balanced view that the rightness of an action depends on the goodness of its motive, taken in the sense of the feeling that prompts it, plus the foreseen consequences. This seems plausible enough, but we need some means for deciding what weight is to be given to each factor in the complex. Here Mr. Johnston does not seem to me to be clear. *E.g.*, a foreseen punishment is part of my motive in his sense, but he will not allow that an action based on this alone can be good. It is surely not sufficient to say that the punishment is external to the act; for it may be attached by ordinary laws of causation in a society with as much certainty as physical consequences are attached by natural laws.

I have only one more criticism to make. Why are we told in Chapter XI that consciousness of moral obligation is only possible to a self that is aware of its own imperfection and also of an ideal perfection to which it has not yet attained? A self that has always acted rightly but which is in time and has to do new acts continually might surely be morally perfect and yet have a sense of moral obligation at each new decision.

The book concludes with chapters on the place of Pleasure, on Vocation, on the Virtues, and on the Institutions of the Moral Life. It may safely be recommended to all students beginning ethics, and to many who have long passed that stage.

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GENETIC THEORY OF REALITY, Being the Outcome of Genetic Logic as Issuing in the Aesthetic Theory of Reality called Pancalism. By James Mark Baldwin. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915.

Professor Baldwin's work on *Thought and Things, or Genetic Logic* was to have been completed in a projected fourth volume. Owing to considerations, however, partly of an external character, the author has been led to publish as a separate work the discussions which draw the general philosophical conclusions