



The Origin and Propagation of Sin by F. R. Tennant

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ble, often not desirable; that they should influence *all* his actions. (2) That different men have different ideals of worth, and even each man, in general, a great many different ideals. That the realization of all of these would in each case be identical with the "restoration of the individual's distinctive nature," certainly require more proof than Mr. Irons offers. (3) That, even if a man's ideal of worth were the "realization of his distinctive nature"—even if he did think this realization a good thing, he would be mistaken. For all men (I believe) have some "distinctive capacities" (p. 159) for evil; and all men certainly have some capacities which it is desirable they should not realize.

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THE ORIGIN AND PROPAGATION OF SIN; being the Hulsean Lectures delivered before the University of Cambridge, in 1901-2, by F. R. Tennant, M. A. (Camb.), B. Sc. (Lond.), Student of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. Cambridge: The University Press. Pp. xv, 231.

This is a most interesting and valuable contribution towards that Metaphysics of Theology of which we want so much and get so little. The place of sin in the universe is important enough, and its place in Christian doctrine is perhaps even more prominent. Mr. Tennant could scarcely have taken a subject so much in need of intelligent treatment, and the result of his labors has justified his choice.

The first lecture deals with the views on the subject which have been held by professed theologians. Mr. Tennant begins by pointing out that the fact of the existence of sin—which cannot be denied—must not be confused with the truth of the theory of Original Sin—which is only one of various possible ways of accounting for the fact (p. 9). It is also to be noticed that, while the denial of the need of grace would involve disbelief in the Fall, yet disbelief in the Fall need not involve the denial of the need of grace. (p. 13). The difficulties involved in the conception of the Fall are then discussed, and the lecture concludes with an examination of the possibility of the transmission of corruption from Adam to his descendants. Then I am inclined to think the author goes too far in saying that heredity, in any strict sense, can only appertain to the rational side of our constitution—unless in-

deed we fall into Traducianism (p. 34). If it were a law of the universe that the soul whose body was begotten by A.'s body should in certain respects resemble A.'s soul, should we not have strict spiritual heredity without Traducianism? This possibility might furnish no escape for the opponents against whom Mr. Tennant is here arguing, but it would invalidate his general proposition.

The subject next considered is the treatment of Sin in philosophical speculation. The account of the views of the pre-Kantian rationalists is clear and judicious. Kant is treated at greater length. "He feels profoundly what we have already seen to be the great *crux* of the problem of sin: the apparent antinomy, furnished by our experience, between the direct deliverance of conscience, on the one hand, behind which it is not possible to go, that we are chargeable for the guilt of sin, and the fact that, on the other hand, the bias to evil in us seems to be given to any conscious act and therefore born with us." (p. 50.)

In Mr. Tennant's exposition of Hegel he has done me the honor of adopting my own theory, (p. 63) and I must not presume to call him accurate. I think, however, that he goes rather too far when he says that, for Hegel, evil ceases to be real evil (p. 66). The reality of evil is of a very low degree, but it is scarcely to be called altogether absent. The discussion of this point, however, would carry me beyond the limits of a review.

Mr. Tennant appeals from my theory that "the harvest of virtue which sin inevitably yields is to be reaped in a future life" to "universal human experience, according to which sin, of itself, produces nothing but further sin, and makes amendment even less possible" (p. 203). But the road from sin to virtue is through retribution. Now, either there is something in man's nature with which sin conflicts or there is not. If there is not, he has not committed sin, for he is not a moral being at all. But if there is, must not every sin in the long run bring about or rather become—its own punishment?

The lecture ends with the systems of Lotze, Schleiermacher and Ritschl. The author is, I think, right in finding in Lotze (pp. 62, 67) the most Christian of the great philosophers. The serious difficulty would be, not in making some aspects of Lotze's theology agree with Christianity, but in making them consistent with other respects which appear to be not less fundamental for Lotze himself.

In the third lecture Mr. Tennant develops his own theory of the origin of sin. "Can we find," he asks, "the ground of the possibility and occasion for sin in our actual constitution regarded as the properly moral result of a process of development through which the race has passed previously to the acquisition of full moral personality; and can we assign the rise of evil itself simply to the difficulty of the task which has to be encountered by every individual person alike, the task of enforcing his inherited organic nature to obey a moral law which he has only gradually been enabled to discern?" (p. 81).

In support of this view he quotes Archdeacon Wilson and Professor Pfleiderer, and supports it by considerations drawn from the lives of savages and of children. Sin comes into existence gradually, for it only arises when the gratification of certain impulses, which had originally been non-moral, and perhaps beneficial, is recognized to be bad, and yet is still continued. "The sinfulness of sin would gradually increase from zero; and the first sin, if the word have any meaning, instead of being the most heinous, and the most momentous in the race's history, would rather be the least significant of all" (p. 91).

The theory has a distinct resemblance to Hegel's, in making Sin a consequence of the advance from a non-moral state to the higher state of morality. But while "this account of sin sees in it something empirically inevitable for every man,—which of course accords with all experience,—it by no means implies that sin is theoretically, or on *à priori* grounds, an absolute necessity" (p. 110). There, no doubt, we have an important difference, and one which may very possibly be sufficient to save the theory from taking sin as happily (*sub specie aeternitatis*, a distinction to which Mr. Tennant scarcely does justice) as the true Hegelian must.

The fourth lecture discusses the compatibility of the existence of Sin with a morally perfect God. Mr. Tennant is inclined to take Sin as a necessary accompaniment of the Divine purpose rather than as part of the purpose (p. 124). He recognizes that this involves "very real limits to the action of Omnipotence." (p. 129). (Surely the retention of the word Omnipotence is merely confusing, if the power is limited.) These limits he thinks can be treated as only self-limitation (p. 130). And their existence need not shake our faith in "the ultimate Divine government and preservation of the world" (p. 137).

Much might be said on this subject, but it would scarcely be

sufficiently relevant to the main subject of the lectures. If the author has succeeded no better than anyone else in solving the ultimate problem of Evil, he has thrown great light on the particular form of Evil which we call Sin. The merits of his present work will leave his readers impatient for the historical study on "The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin," which will be published shortly.

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PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT. A treatise of the Facts, Principles, and Ideals of Ethics. By George Trumbull Ladd, Professor of Philosophy in Yale University. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1902.

Professor Ladd has the pen of a ready writer. The present volume, the text of which runs to 656 pages, follows hard on "Philosophy of Knowledge," 1897; "Philosophy of Mind," 1895; "Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory," 1894, and "Introduction of Philosophy," 1890. Frequent references occur, moreover, to "A Theory of Reality," 1899; "Outlines of Psychology;" "Elements of Physiological Psychology," etc., by the same author. It is indeed one of the worrying elements in this book that extraordinarily frequent reference to fuller treatment in his other books, seems to Professor Ladd sufficient excuse for incomplete and unsatisfactory treatment of particular points, even when they are fundamental to his inquiry. The best things seem always to be in other books, either in those that have been written, or in those that are to be written by Professor Ladd. This is very irritating to any reader to whom time is an object, and it gives rise to an uncomfortable feeling that the writer is "dodging" his subject rather than grappling it in earnest. This is the more to be deplored, as an undoubted spirit of moral earnestness is apparent throughout the book. Indeed in his preface Professor Ladd somewhat disarms philosophic criticism by avowing his interest and aim to be practical. He wishes to further "the rational and practical betterment of the life of conduct." He does not anticipate philosophical criticism; but "opposition" from (1) "the current theory of biological evolution," (2) "the reigning spirit of commercialism," and (3) "the relatively low and nerveless condition of the current Christianity." It is not surprising therefore to find his book a popular discussion of popular "Ethical" problems, of-