

BOOK REVIEWS.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF MORALITY IN ITS RELATION TO THE GRACE OF REDEMPTION. By Robert B. Fairbrain, D.D., LL.D., Warden of St. Stephen's College, Annandale, N. Y. New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1887. Pp. iv., 331.

While this little volume, consisting of "lectures read to classes in moral philosophy," does not depart very far from the familiar path of the theological textbooks of ethics, it is by no means devoid of freshness and suggestiveness both in formulation and in content. The main outline of the thought is as follows: The work of the mere moral philosopher is of necessity incomplete, since formulating reflective principles does not make men moral. The work of the philosopher needs supplementing by the "still greater work" of showing the "relation of the moral life to the redemption and grace of the gospel." "It remains to show how the one depends on the other, and how the one cannot be carried into practical life without the other. This is the task which I set myself." The pursuit of this plan brings the author face to face with such questions as the well-known one concerning the relation of "natural" morality, as embodied in "Buddhist and other systems of morality," to the morality of Christianity. The author is very kindly towards the natural man, whose unaided conscience he regards as capable of remarkably high ethical formulations. Conscience he defines with considerable regard to its psychological complexity. "Conscience, from the very nature of the mind, is not a simple faculty" (p. 88). As Butler already suggested (p. 83), it is both a "sentiment of the heart" and a "perception of the understanding." Dr. Fairbrain meanwhile objects to treating conscience too much "as if it were an independent power of the soul" (p. 104), and corrects some of Butler's expressions accordingly. Man, as a moral being, in presence of the universe, sees indications of his place therein, and of his right relations to God,—indications which vary with his civilization, his light, and his careful observation. "God has so constituted and formed us, that we do certain things. It is just as much the voice of God when we perceive that the tendency of man's nature is to exercise charity, as when we listen to the declarations of the New Testament. There are certain indications in that nature, and in the nature of everything. . . . In this sense, the conscience is a part of nature; and it speaks a language, which, as far as it goes, is plain. . . . We are so made" (p. 104). The ideal is therefore furnished by the conception of a well-balanced or completely organized human nature (p. 148); and such an ideal, in various degrees of perfection, has been very fairly approached by that depicted in the moral philosophy of the Stoics (p. 154), and by the moral teachings of Buddhism (p. 245). Yet those who, because of the nobility of the moral teachings of extra-Christian systems, have put them upon a level with Christianity are ignorant "of what Christianity is in its essence" (p. 244). For although man is thus by nature a moral being, and cannot do well, or fulfil his purpose, outside of the highest moral life, the fallen state of man needs Christianity, not chiefly to teach man morality as such, for this the wise have well and frequently thought out as an ideal for themselves, but to "regenerate" man's nature, and "to give it the help of grace

to fulfil its destiny" (p. 292). The result of this attitude towards his problem is that Dr. Fairbrain is not so much disposed as theological teachers have often been to put the moral ideals of the New Testament, regarded merely as moral ideals, on an inaccessible pinnacle, or to make their superhuman elevation itself a warrant for their divine authorship. The divinity of Christianity is shown on its "dynamic" side. Only grace gives man power to overcome sin. And it is as revelations of divine grace that Christianity and its founder are indeed, in our author's eyes, supreme and superhuman. The little volume deserves appreciation for its humane and kindly tone, its learning, and its conception of the wealth and complexity of the problems involved.

JOSIAH ROYCE.

OUTLINES OF A CRITICAL THEORY OF ETHICS. By John Dewey, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Register Publication Company, 1891. Pp. viii., 253.

The author, one of the most brilliant, clearly conscious, and enviably confident of all our philosophical writers in America, has offered us in this admirable little volume a welcome gift. The backbone of his theory is "the conception of the will as the expression of ideas, and of social ideas; the notion of an objective ethical world realized in institutions which afford moral ideals, theatre, and impetus to the individual; the notion of the moral life as growth in freedom, as the individual finds and conforms to the law of his social placing." The author acknowledges, of course, most obligation to Green, Bradley, Edward Caird, and Hegel, together with one or two others near to the same general point of view. The Hegelian conception, both of the "individual" and the "universal" informs the whole exposition. The "moral end or the good" is the "realization of individuality" by a "person,"—*i.e.*, by "a being capable of conduct,—a being capable of proposing to himself ends and of attempting to realize them." And "individuality," which is the end that the "person" has to realize, has itself two aspects. "On one side it means special disposition, temperament, gifts, bent, or inclination; on the other side, it means special station, situation, limitations, surroundings, opportunities, etc. Or, let us say, it means *specific capacity* and *specific environment*" (p. 97). The "universal," meanwhile, which controls this realization of the individual, is the "fitting in," which gives the "law" of the "whole man" (p. 96). "What is required to give unity to the sphere of conduct is . . . a principle which shall comprehend all the motives to action, giving each its due place in contributing to the whole,—a universal which shall organize the various particular acts into a harmonious system" (pp. 87, 88). The law of a man's life should then be to find his place as "individual" in the "universal" of which he is an organic part,—to find this place not as a plant finds it, mechanically and unconsciously, but with consciousness both of his "specific capacity" and of his "specific environment;" and then, having defined this place, to live in it socially, to enlarge it, to organize his world, and so to grow, both inwardly and in outer relationships. Thus, then, "the moral end is wholly social," and this consideration guides us as much in judging the apparently "unpractical" activities of pure science and art as in judging the work of a social reformer. The "motive which actuates the man of science" is probably, even in the most