Harvard Theological Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/HTR>

Additional services for *Harvard Theological Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

***Moral Values. A Study of the Principles of Conduct.* Walter Goodnow Everett, Ph.D. Henry Holt & Co. 1918. Pp. xiii, 431.**

J. Loewenberg

Harvard Theological Review / Volume 12 / Issue 03 / July 1919, pp 360 - 363
DOI: 10.1017/S0017816000010762, Published online: 03 November 2011

Link to this article: [http://journals.cambridge.org/
abstract_S0017816000010762](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0017816000010762)

How to cite this article:

J. Loewenberg (1919). Harvard Theological Review, 12, pp 360-363
doi:10.1017/S0017816000010762

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

"certainty with full power to the contrary." Will is now interpreted in such a way as to emphasize its intellectual elements. "Will in the last analysis is thought assuming control of reality" (p. 81), and consequently the transformation of the will is accomplished by the education of thought. The will is more closely defined as "the will to power" (the author was heroic, writing while the war was on, to keep the ominous phrase, although its fangs are effectually drawn), which, beginning as power *over*, is remade into power *for*, that is, selfishness is converted into service. How is this accomplished? In social conditions, generally considered, this instinct like others (pugnacity is taken as an example) has a natural dialectic of its own; but the process is hastened by the closer application of the selected best of these conditions through the institutions of the State, such as laws and schools, and most of all by the "divine aggressiveness," which is the author's way of putting the doctrine of grace. As the will to power is central among the instincts, all others should be correlated to it harmoniously. But it frequently happens that indulgence of other instincts contradicts the better idea lying behind the will to power; this is sin, and its punishment, remorse, means the emphatic reaffirmation of the denied idea.

It would be unjust to both author and reader to summarize the argument any further. Surely enough has been said to indicate that it is an exceptionally rich and rewarding book, which no one interested in the sort of questions to which the HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW is devoted can afford to neglect.

W. W. FENN.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

MORAL VALUES. A STUDY OF THE PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT. WALTER GOODNOW EVERETT, Ph.D. Henry Holt & Co. 1918. Pp. xiii, 431.

This is a book of which it is difficult not to speak in terms of enthusiastic admiration. Its greatness, however, does not lie in any one special feature that the reviewer could readily single out and emphasize. Great is the work as a whole, as the elaborate exposition of one central thesis, the systematic unfolding of one fundamental conception. Luminously simple is the ruling idea; it is the sustained and consistent application of it which reveals its depth. It has in common with all genuinely great ideas the distinction of being at once simple and profound.

So simple is the underlying theme of *Moral Values* that it can be stated in a few words. If one word could suggest Professor Everett's

moral philosophy, that word would be "sanity," in the sense in which Charles Lamb uses it as "the admirable balance of all the faculties," lack of sanity being "the disproportionate straining or excess of any of them." Indeed, nothing simpler and nothing more complex than the sane life is what Professor Everett defines as the moral life.

Of this philosophy of sanity, if it may be so described, only a few salient ideas can here be noted. "Ethics," according to the author, "is concerned with nothing less than the whole business of living" (p. 8). It is not the task of morality to create "a totally new life, but to bring order into the life that now is; not to break the will or uproot the desires that pulse within us, but to reveal their true meaning and to bring them into more complete harmony" (p. 35). Thus it may be seen that "morality is as wide as are the interests of life, and must extend to the control of every part of its manifold content. It is no separate interest but the principle of the order and harmony of all interests, the law of the whole" (p. 217). For this reason, no one *particular* good can be defined as the goal of our moral endeavor. "The perfect good . . . cannot be found in any single aspect of our nature, however exalted, but only in the integrity of all its parts and the harmonious realization of them as a whole" (p. 201). The content of the good life, therefore, must be sought in the rich totality of our human nature, nothing human being "alien to the moral task" (p. 187). The winning of the richest possible content of life — this is indeed "the task to which our human powers are called" (p. 161). But the moral ideal lies in the direction of "spiritual wholeness which comprehends and dominates all interests of life" (p. 220). The work of morality becomes thus creative. It is the work of unifying the interests and activities of life, "giving form and order to what would otherwise be lawless and capricious" (p. 203). Life with its natural chaos and strife is simply material out of which is to be fashioned an "inner order" and a "well-ordered polity."

The moral task thus viewed furnishes a standard for the estimate of the concrete values of life. The historical sources of these values, the relation they sustain to desire and impulse, the description of their exact meaning, the distinction between values that are instrumental and those that are intrinsic — these are problems interpreted in the light of the formal definition of ethics as "the science of values in their relation to the conduct of life as a whole." *The law of the whole* suggests in the briefest form possible the whole of the moral enterprise. It is at the basis of civilization as "the effort progressively to embody in institutions, laws, customs, and ideals,

all human values in just proportion" (p. 218). And what is progress but the extension of "the meaning of the whole"? "We of the present day regard it as our task to mould all that has since been won by science, philosophy, and religion, by political, economic, and social reconstruction, into a still richer and more harmonious order" (p. 218). The law of the whole acts as a unifying principle — "in spite of the fact that its very comprehensiveness baffles a too exact definition" (p. 220) — of the manifold goods of human life, distinguished as economic values, bodily values, values of recreation, values of association, character values, æsthetic values, intellectual values, and religious values. The resulting ideal worthy of our effort is an organic world of values, which, though a free creation, must manifest in every part the principles of unity and order. The law of the whole then with its categories of unity, order, harmony, balance, proportion — categories of sanity — is for Professor Everett a natural law as well as a moral law. Violation of this law results "in an inescapable deterioration of personality" (p. 318). The law of morality is a statement "of what ought to be, in view of what actually is" (p. 314); "it points to an ideal of good rooted in the very needs of our nature" (p. 315).

Laws in whatever realm they operate are general in nature and simple in statement. The test of their validity is both empirical and logical. The moral sphere is not exempt from the scientific requirement that a law to be true must "work" and must be inherently consistent. From this point of view, Professor Everett's procedure is strictly and eminently scientific. With the aid of a general and simple principle he has attempted to unify the manifold and complex facts and theories of conduct. Happiness and perfection, egoism and altruism, duty and conscience, virtue and freedom, and other opposing issues that have permanently held a place in ethical thought, receive here their due recognition and adjustment. "Simplicity is a merit," the author himself insists, "only when it is warranted by the data to be explained."

The critical reader, however, will feel that those problems of conduct which are bound up with metaphysical questions suffer somewhat from over-simplification. This is particularly the case in the otherwise skilful exposition of the problem of freedom. The problem of freedom is intimately linked with time and causality. Without a metaphysical interpretation of the temporal and causal structure of reality, the problem of freedom is scarcely touched. A judgment less final on this intricate question would have contributed to a greater appreciation of its complexity. The same criticism might

be urged against the author's interpretation of the relation between morality and religion. Professor Everett's analysis of religion is certainly profound, and the chapter which is devoted to it is perhaps the finest in the book. But what he claims for religion may be supplied by metaphysics. The distinction between the religious and the metaphysical attitudes toward the world is not made very clear. The impression gained is an identity either of religion and philosophy or of philosophy and morality. Here too a more critical examination of the problem would have added to its profundity.

In conclusion, a word about the form of the book. It is beautifully written. Professor Everett's language has distinction, lucidity, charm, and grace. His style is reserved and dignified, yet seldom austere; it is serene, yet always human; it is objective, yet never wholly impersonal. The book merits to be classed as a work of literary art. It manifests as a whole and in every part unity, order, balance, and proportion. It is itself a fine vindication of the principles of sanity it so earnestly teaches.

J. LOEWENBERG.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

FREEDOM AFTER EJECTION. A REVIEW OF PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL NON-CONFORMITY IN ENGLAND AND WALES. Edited by ALEXANDER GORDON. Manchester University Press. 1917. Pp. vi, 393.

The manuscript here printed and very competently edited is a survey of Presbyterian and Congregational ministers in England and Wales, prepared for and certainly used by a joint body appointed in 1689 or 1690 by the Presbyterian and Congregational organizations to administer a common fund for the assistance of poor ministers and congregations. Circular letters were apparently sent out and from them the information in this survey was compiled. The entries were made over a period of two years, 1690-92, and concern both Presbyterian and Congregational ministers and churches. There is information of grants of money to ministers, of grants to congregations, and of loans and gifts to young men studying for the ministry. Such subscription-lists as exist have been published. A valuable commentary by the editor provides an unusually precise account of the origin and development of the "Happy Union," the creation of the common fund and its administration, the vital split between the denominations, and the creation of two funds. The records also throw considerable detail upon the case of Richard Davis