

*The Soul of a Christian: A Study in the Religious Experiences.*

By FRANK GRANGER. London, Methuen & Co. 1900. Pp. ix + 303.

I think Mr. Granger is justified in saying that his inquiry 'will be of interest to the psychologist, the philosopher of religion, and to the theologian,' and though 'The Soul of a Christian' perhaps falls more properly within the sphere of the religious philosopher than of the psychologist, it calls for brief notice in this REVIEW.

The author's thesis is that such phenomena as the religious emotions, inspiration, poetic invention and genius, which 'are not very well understood as yet even by professed students of the mind,' may be seen in clearer light by approaching them from a new standpoint. More specifically, "It is the purpose of this essay to describe the Christian life, as far as possible, in the terms, and with the methods, of psychology" (p. 1). The whole method of psychology, however, has to be modified (24). "Psychology can mark off and classify the products of consciousness; but it is almost incompetent to seize the processes" (25). "Just as the methods of psychology have been extended in one direction, namely, that of psychophysics, so it would seem that they may be capable of extension in other directions, and in particular in the direction suggested by the mystical temper" (23). This is the keynote of the book. Ordinary psychological methods are inadequate for dealing with the religious experience. Some psychologists seek to explain the deepest religious experiences as pathological in character. Mr. Granger seeks to account for them by Emerson's hypothesis of the 'oversoul.' The individual comes to his full right in the oversoul (71), while the oversoul is a unity which does not find its center in any individual (51). The oversoul is beyond personality, the one process of which personality is like an aspect repeated at different centers (49). Two aspects of the oversoul 'seem to be manifested in the religious experience. On the one hand, such souls find not only their ground, but their unity and communion within the oversoul, and on the other there seems to be a special disclosure of the oversoul in inspiration' (67).

This is the basis of the author's 'romantic' psychology. The central hypothesis of the oversoul is introduced to explain personality (47). In the light of this fruitful principle Mr. Granger discusses *The Depths of the Soul*, *The Soul's Awakening*, *Ecstasy*, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, *Visions and Voices*, *Human and Divine Love*, *Symbol and Ritual*, *Prophecy and Inspiration*, *Illumination and Progress*, *Direction*, *Confession and Casuistry*, and *Mystical Theology*—these being the titles of ten of the twelve chapters which compose the book, the

other two being *On Method* and *The Oversoul*. The principle which is introduced to explain personality of course serves also to explain all the 'experiences' of the religious life. The idea of the average must be distinguished from the idea of the normal. The mystic's experience is not to be adjudged abnormal by the extent to which it diverges from common experience. Suppose that after all the experience of Blake is the more true one. Apart from the universe to which it belongs the religious experience is in itself meaningless; and the 'universe' here spoken of is of course that denoted by the term 'oversoul.' "In coming to God the soul also finds itself" (Chaps. I. and II.).

This brief objective statement perhaps sufficiently indicates the general tenor of Mr. Granger's inquiry. The student will find in it a pleasant relaxation from the tedium of Mr. Starbuck's painstaking statistical study of the 'Growth of the Religious Consciousness'; and while their methods are radically different, Mr. Granger's metempirical inquiry is quite as illuminating as Mr. Starbuck's 'Empirical Study.' (For notice of the latter, see Vol. VII., No. 5, of this *REVIEW*.) One comment must suffice. I do not understand why the author speaks of Emerson's doctrine of the oversoul having been passed over with contemptuous silence—unless he means that it has been neglected by the psychologist; in which case it is fair to suggest that possibly this is because the theory in question falls rather within the sphere of the metaphysician than of the psychologist. I had supposed that *processes* of consciousness are just what psychology is concerned with; if *it* cannot 'seize' them, it is open to ask, What can? It is quite possible that psychology cannot give a final explanation of all the processes of consciousness, and for this some such hypothesis as that of Mr. Granger may be necessary. He appears to me, however, to jump from history over psychology into metaphysics. That is, given the experiences of the religious consciousness as we find them in the autobiographical writings of the 'saints,' we are introduced not to a psychological treatment of them, but to a popular metaphysical explanation of their origin and meaning. If, however, it be true that beyond the small aspect of experience with which psychology can deal there is a religion where the truly characteristic part of the individual life is to be sought (49), one may be less surprised at the author's failure to confine himself to the psychological standpoint, than at his purpose of attempting to describe the Christian life 'in the terms and with the methods of psychology.'

As to the neglect of Emerson's doctrine, although the word oversoul is not often used, the ideas which it represents are common

enough; they are not peculiar to Emerson, but came to him through a long line of mystics and transcendental philosophers. Nor are they now neglected; for most, if not all, theologians account for the 'soul's awakening' or the mystical experiences of religion in a way not unlike Emerson's, namely by the communion of the individual soul with 'the one spirit.' On the intellectual side, theists, in accounting for the origin of the idea of God, quite as frequently lay emphasis upon the Divine initiation *in* the individual soul, as upon the latter's seeking after God if haply it may find Him. And Calvinism (which Mr. Granger is prone to cavil at, without, I think, properly understanding it), has at least this in common with mysticism, that it attributes the quickening of the religious life directly to the influence of the indwelling spirit.

The author's specific views, as well as his fundamental principles, suggest the influence of Emerson and the Ritschlian theology, and his book has much of the stimulating suggestiveness as well as of the mystical vagueness of these types of religious thought.

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*Pragmatism.* W. CALDWELL. *Mind*, October, 1900.

Professor Caldwell's paper is a review, in amplification and criticism, of Professor James' address before the University of California on 'Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results.' The doctrine there set forth was that of pragmatism or practicalism—the doctrine, namely, that our conceptions of reality are the outcome of practical needs. Professor Caldwell's treatment of the subject, which is very suggestive, is too detailed for adequate reproduction. In his criticism of Professor James he seems to take the latter too seriously, overlooking the limitations of a spoken address before a partly popular audience. But his main point of criticism is well taken, however we may share the point of view from which it is made. Professor James, in allowing us to choose for a future conception of reality that which satisfies practical necessity, seems to overlook the fact that we must have some basis in the world as it is now for knowing which of a set of alternatives will give the desired consequences. Professor Caldwell's criticism is that, to secure a statement of the possible alternatives, it would be necessary for Professor James to resort to the *a priori* criticism of the categories of which he has so sorry an opinion in Kant; the outcome would still, however, in Professor Caldwell's view, be determined by teleological considerations. But (I suggest the question)