

Democracy: Its Defects and Advantages. By C. Delisle Burns, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929, pages 217.

The Function of Reason. By A. N. Whitehead, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1929, pages 72.

The Quest of the Ages. By A. E. Haydon, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1929, pages xiii, 243.

There are intellectual questions growing out of practical life today urgently calling for answer. The force of them is being widely felt by practical men no less than by professional thinkers. And the fact that there are in reality questions of philosophic import increases rather than lessens their interest for more and more people. Examples of such questions are: Is it really possible for science and the scientific method to become in some way a philosophy of all life to the point where one must accept the conclusion that the principle of sequential causation is not merely a description but is evidence that mechanism and mechanical causation explain all life? Is materialism therefore the logical derivative of the effort to be scientifically honest? Is the role of human purpose and desire thus shown to be illusory? Is the expression that human purpose takes in efforts toward democracy therefore equally fatuous, or is democracy an outgrown or inadequate method, process or ideal?

Mr. Delisle Burns, who is concerned in his book with the last of these questions, is already known to some American readers as an English social philosopher of remarkable acumen. In the present volume he is answering the critics of democracy both from the governmental and the more subjective points of view. His theme is developed in terms of English experience so that the book does not become so intimate or persuasive for American readers as the splendid comparable work of T. V. Smiths on "The Democratic Way of Life." But he does make a strong, clear and psychologically sound case for the democratic method as the way of assuring development and power in the generality of individual lives. His warnings about conserving the value of original, pioneering personalities are especially timely. "There are some," he says, "who would not be happy in heaven—even a heaven devised by themselves. They are not sociable, for they think and feel most keenly alone. . . . It would be disastrous if a democratic society could not find a place for such men and women, for they make revolutions, and they are also the best artists and scientists. . . . They are the growth-points of a community." The point of view of this essay is in harmony with the best modern thought which says that however groping may be our attempts to translate democracy into forms of effective self-governance, the ultimate objective of developing, training and challenging each individual to his best accomplishment is unassailable and proves itself by its results.

Professor Whitehead, as one of the most eminent of modern scholars, edifies us in this long address with a statement about reason which supplements the somewhat comparable pronouncements of Professor John Dewey in a helpful way. Discussing the uses of science he says that "as a methodological device it is an unquestioned success so long as we confine attention to certain limited fields." But he questions "the authority of science in the deter-

mination of the ultimate categories of explanation." By way of building up his case for the actual efficacy of speculative and practical reason he reminds us that "one main law which underlies modern progress is that, except for the rarest accidents of chance, thought precedes observation." This is one of the clearest and simplest of Professor Whitehead's writings and it can be heartily recommended for lay reading by those endeavoring to clarify their minds on the several questions suggested above.

In a similar spirit and vein, but carrying his discussion much more directly into the field of conduct and human purpose, is Professor Haydon's analysis of religion as essentially the "shared quest of the good life." This book has a significance for today that is hard to overstate. It is an answer to much utilitarian thinking and feeling. Krutch's "The Modern Temper" represents the kind of utterance which, in a quite uncontroversial way, it is in effect replying to. The book is positive and hopeful in tone; but it is strictly objective, historical and dispassionate in its tracing of the multifarious efforts to improve human life down through the ages. It reaches no easy conclusion; and is essentially "tough-minded" in its outlook. But for many who have today thrown over what William James called "over-belief" by the score, the book is immensely helpful in revealing the final kernel of faith or hope or vision that remains. It is strongly recommended to all who "have no use for religion" but are willing to admit that efforts to improve the quality of human living are still valid, still consonant with a scientific outlook on nature and human nature.

These three are admittedly books that carry us into the profound yet troubled waters of cogitation upon life's meaning, value and significance. But in an hour when spiritual unrest, confusion and anguish are so widespread, there is point in the occasional consideration of matters that go beneath and behind methods, and deliberate upon the assumptions on which those methods rest and on which also the successful use of methods depends—whether those methods be in the field of scientific management or of any other human institutional activity. For this reason each of these books is of value for that practical scientist, engineer or executive who finds he cannot refrain from occasionally asking—what is life all about, anyway?

ORDWAY TEAD⁴

Economic Democracy. By Robert S. Brookings, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929, pages xxviii, 151.

This companion volume to *Industrial Ownership* commands attention because of its predecessor and because of the author's personal standing in the fields of practical business, public service and theoretical economics. The book is a collection of articles written or speeches delivered upon occasions where some significant economic or political problem was the subject of discussion. This form is

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utilized in order to add weight to the argument, but the author's main theses are maintained throughout.

The author discusses co-operation versus competition in business practice, big business and the public, the tariff in its relation to a European economic union, the relation of raw materials to peace and prosperity, agriculture, over-production, industrial management, education for political leadership and industrial defense.

Within this range of subjects the author has opportunity to set forth his independent and trenchant ideas. His statements that have attracted wide attention in *Industrial Ownership* are matched by similarly significant ones in this volume. For example, he says,

The economic well-being of a people depends entirely upon the amount of their production per capita.

Production per capita depends upon the division of labor, the adoption of labor-saving devices, the standardization of mass production, and the achievement of economy in distribution.

The distribution of standardized mass production is primarily dependent upon the existence of a wide home market. Extensive home markets are made possible only by a customs union between states of adequate population with co-ordinate interests and a wide distribution of production among the people.

And again:

If we could only form the habit of visualizing international trade as analogous to double-entry bookkeeping, where each dollar of import must show a corresponding dollar of export (either in commodities, services, or credits which we discuss as visible and invisible items), it would probably save the world a lot of waste resulting from a lack of clear thinking.

And:

Considering the vital importance of wisely solving the tariff problem the Tariff Commission should have, in my opinion, advisory supervision over all tariff matters and should function as a scientific body as independent of political parties as is the Supreme Court of the United States.

Similar excerpts might be quoted from his other chapters. The discussions of the relations between labor and capital and of agriculture are peculiarly far sighted, constructive and hopeful. One closes the book with profound respect for a man of such practical affairs and such vision.

MOLLY RAY CARROLL⁵

Psychology for Students of Education. By Arthur I. Gates, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1930, pages xv, 612. (Revised Edition).

This edition replaces the 489-page 1923 edition. The general arrangement of the book is the same. The organism as a reacting mechanism is described in one chapter instead of three as before. Heredity, growth, and development are discussed in 113 pages as compared to 71 in the earlier edition. Motivation gets 72 pages, instead of 26. The discussion of learning is increased from 191 to 233 pages, and the results of measurement are presented in 115 pages where 85 pages sufficed in 1923.

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Although the general arrangement is the same, the book is nevertheless materially revised, in that it has been brought up to date. There are over twice as many references at the ends of the several chapters as there were in the 1923 edition, and two-thirds of them have been published since the earlier edition appeared.

Some of the changes which characterize the revision are: less neurology, omission of the chapter on conscious states, greater recognition of maturation as a factor of development, description of certain urges as practically universal and important rather than as instinctive, greater emphasis upon the development and adjustment of the individual pupil, justification of the Law of Effect based upon its practical value, rather than upon its adequacy as an explanation, greater recognition of the importance of concomitant learnings, omission of statistical definitions, fuller treatment of achievement and capacity and of personality.

J. W. TILTON⁶

Electrical Utilities: The Crisis in Public Control. By William E. Mosher and Associates, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1929, pages xx, 335.

Part I of this volume describes the methods by which the public interest in the utilities is represented through commission regulation, under the conditions of private organization of the operating companies and the far-flung system of holding companies, also in relation to the increasing significance of interstate movement of electricity. The study applies generally to utilities, notwithstanding the limited title with respect to electrical utilities.

Part II is devoted to "consideration of various types of public control that might contribute to the solution of the crisis described in Part I." The several types included are control through contracts, public competition, control by league of municipalities, and control through a national planning commission. The discussion of contracts is based largely upon proposals made in Massachusetts and upon the Boulder Dam and Muscle Shoals bills. Under the league of municipalities, a survey is made of the Ontario Hydro-Electric System, while the plan of the English Central Electricity Board is presented under the national planning commission.

The outstanding chapters are the first three, which take up control through public service commissions, the role of the courts in regulation, and the structure, functioning and control of holding companies. The description of the commissions, together with discussion of their functions and procedures, viewed from the public standpoint, is the best that has been presented in any book to date. The second chapter follows generally the analysis that had been previously made by the reviewer.⁷ The chapter on holding companies brings together compactly and clearly materials that had been widely scattered. The three chapters together well justify the book.

The title raises the question whether there actually, is a crisis, or in what sense there is a crisis in public control. Except for the concluding chapter in each part, one would

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⁷Bauer, John, *Effective Regulation of Public Utilities*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1925, Chapter V.