

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Thoughts from the Writings of Rev. John C. Learned. by

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THOUGHTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF REV. JOHN C. LEARNED. Selected by one of his Friends. St. Louis: Nixon-Jones Printing Company, 1894. Pp. 63. (Obtainable by addressing Mr. Wm. A. Bradenberger, 2348 Hickory Street, St. Louis.)

The late Mr. Learned, of St. Louis, was known during his life as a man of mark among the liberal clergymen of the West and of this country. The present collection, made from unpublished sermons by an editor whose name is not given, is intended to appeal principally to the circle of Mr. Learned's friends. It consists of brief paragraphs, sometimes rather too obviously torn from their context. Among the more noteworthy expressions of Mr. Learned's personal attitude are the following observations, which must be regarded merely as a very few chance specimens:

"We have no objection to one-idea men, for there ought to be more of them; but [we object] to *partial*-idea men. The great trouble is, men have no whole ideas, but fractions of ideas, which they mistake for the whole, and use as such." . . . "For myself I have no doubt that too much advice is usually given. It is only the word in season that can be of any avail, and the word in season seldom or never comes to those whose minds are constantly harrowed up and irritated by words out of season." . . . "The most imperative want, looking toward civilization, is law, is obedience." . . . "No man is an infidel who believes in a single virtue." . . . "No more in religion than in mathematics should any proposition be said or sung that does not embody verifiable truth" [a proposition which one might venture to call Mr. Learned's razor of the hymn-books]. . . . "The new attempt to disparage individualism in theory, and wreck it in practice, though doubtless men believe that thereby the good of society is to be served, is the revival of an old assault upon human freedom." . . . "Humanity must seek to mitigate the blow of fate. It must give sympathy where that is lacking. Nevertheless, humanity, however widely extended its charity or good will, cannot reverse the law of nature as some have feared. The unfit must perish." . . . "Any loss of faith in individual manhood is radical. Not long will men work for the race, for collective humanity, when this nerve is cut."

The healthy individualism thus suggested is closely connected with the stress that Mr. Learned everywhere lays upon inner spiritual culture, which he makes the primary feature of the moral life. Service, usefulness, social activity, the recognition of the universe as a moral order,—all these gifts follow, in his opinion, as a natural expression and embodiment of the inner cultivation, without which they apparently have, for our author, little meaning.

JOSIAH ROYCE.

[NOTE.—"Man and Woman," by Mr. Havelock Ellis, will be reviewed in the next number.]