

Book Notices.

The Republic of God: An Institute of Theology. By ELISHA MULFORD, LL.D. Cr. 8vo. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$2.00.

The title of this book seems to us in some degree a misnomer. The great theme of the author is the being and personality of God, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the redemption of the world. The thought of the Divine sovereignty—of the kingdom of God and righteousness—is the supreme conception of the book. Only in a very accommodated sense can the spiritual kingdom for whose coming we pray every day—the true Christian Commonwealth—be spoken of as “The Republic of God.” By whatever name it may be called, however, this great work is worthy of a place beside such epoch-marking books as Augustine’s “City of God” and Hooker’s “Ecclesiastical Polity.” There is in it a sustained elevation of thought, a clearness of conception, and a cogency of argument rarely equalled. The volume contains a philosophy of religion, based alike upon reason and revelation, that, it seems to us, should carry conviction to every mind open to the reception of the truth.

The being of God, says our author, is a primal truth. It is primitive in human thought: there is nothing before it nor apart from it, from which it is to be derived. It is not derived from the notion of causality. Causality in the “cosmological argument” is the transference of force, and the law of causality itself forbids a stop at a “first cause,” itself having no precedent. And if it could, there is in that “first cause” no intellectual or moral quality which is not in the effect. Neither does the teleological argument lead us to God. It gives us still no moral quality. “There is no discovery of God in the furthest researches into the elements of the suns, no traces of Him in the strata

of the rocks, there is no finding of Him in the roots of the trees nor in the dust of the stars.” The thought of God is an absolute condition of our intellectual and moral being.

The author proceeds in a series of noble chapters to discuss the personality and attributes of God, and the relations of religion and philosophy to the revelation of God in His Son Jesus Christ. The chapter on the conviction of the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, points out the true nature of sin as the alienation of the soul of man from God, which carries with it its own inseparable punishment here and hereafter; so also the kingdom of heaven is not a pagan elysium in the far future, it is here and now. It is within. It is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The world is redeemed—redeemed from the slavery of sin to the freedom of God. The life which we now live is the life of the Spirit under whose special dispensation the Church now exists.

But no outline can convey the noble spirit of this book. We dwell while reading it as in the pure serene air of some mountain-top, and, like the disciples, see the Master transfigured before us.

As a specimen of the beautiful style and tone take the following example:—

“The sacrament is the witness of that communion in which the limits of time and space and the separations of death are overcome. It is with an unseen host. It is ‘with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven.’ The sacrifice has been made once for all, but it is the ground of an eternal union. It has been made that men may be united with Him who has passed through death, who has entered within the veil, and who is presenting His finished sacrifice continually before the Father. It becomes the testament of a perpetually renewed life. . . . It bears us on toward the time when