

## CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Journal of Philosophical Studies*,

### MORAL VALUES.

SIR,

Judging from its title, I expected to find in the article on "Moral Values" in the July number of this *Journal*, by Professor J. L. Stocks, a description and outline of these values—in other words, some practical information as to what the values consist in and how they may be attained. This expectation met with disappointment in considerable degree. Professor Stocks contends that moral value lies rather in certain qualities of actions than in any ends to be attained, and thinks the ends cannot be satisfactorily defined. He says, page 304: "the system of all goods . . . escapes definite description, and must therefore fail to serve as the recognized justification of human action."

Professor Stocks is responsible for another disappointment in my quest of definite presentations of moral codes. He reviewed favourably in the January number Professor E. F. Carritt's *The Theory of Morals: An Introduction to Ethical Philosophy*, and in his comments said he hoped he could "tempt everyone who has to conduct a class in introductory ethics to adopt Mr. Carritt's book for the purpose." But Professor Carritt also is agnostic rather than positive, demolishing to his own satisfaction every known theory of morals and presenting none of his own, except individual intuitionism, which asks each person to meet his or her own difficulties, with little or no assistance from moral rules.

These two writers have many associates in their views, but this fact is all the more regrettable. If no definite truths can be presented, why study the subject at all or write about it?

I write not as one lost and calling for help in life's wilderness, though it is true the paths are not as dependable as might be desired. There was a period in my life when the ways were indeed strange and confusing, when conventional teachings gave no guidance. Those years are long past, and happier and more confident times have come. But the successful emergence into light was due more to good luck than wisdom, and I shudder when I think of the narrow escapes from disgrace and ruin. I say it is nothing less than criminal to ask the individual to face the perplexities uninstructed and untrained.

As I passed through the various miseries and perils, I determined more and more to codify the knowledge that was gained, both for my own benefit and for that of others. About fifteen years ago or more I had formulated a general code. I have constantly endeavoured to improve it, but the salient features have not changed radically, and I have found it capable of solving practically all the questions that have arisen.

My studies led me to conclude that human life has at least five fundamental features or characteristics: (1) We have bodies. (2) We have minds. (3) We are plural—that is, there is not only one but many individuals. (4) We propagate our kind, rearing new generations and not living everlastingly. (5) We are active. The last of these is the foundation of conduct, and its interrelation with the other four features and with the environment gives rise to four primary divisions or classes of conduct. Actions with respect to the body consist in the pursuit of food, clothing, comfort, safety, and health. Actions in the interest of the mind comprise those in pursuit of knowledge, æsthetic enjoyment, and character. Actions arising from the plurality of individuals are those involved in social intercourse, business, government, etc. Actions pertaining to reproduction include of course sexual relations, family life, child-rearing, and care of the aged.

We thus have four cardinal classes of duties—physical, mental, social, and reproductive. These are incumbent upon humanity in general, but not uniformly upon

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each individual. There is still another fundamental feature in human life, but one which may be regarded as largely emergent, namely, organization or functionalism, whereby individuals, both because of genius or defects and because of the division of labour, specialize along certain lines and are in some degree excused from other lines. For instance, an especially fit married couple would rear a large family, while an unfit couple would have no children or only a few. An artist or writer, with rare gifts, might be excused from family life.

Under each class of actions, and in some cases common to several, are moral rules, or virtues. A few are: temperance in eating, truthfulness in social relations, chastity and filial love in reproductive conduct, open-mindedness in intellectual pursuits, patriotism, and public spirit in government.

Actions may be classified also with reference to the persons affected. Those in the interest of the actor are egoistic; those in the interest of other persons are altruistic; those for the benefit of society are social or functional. This plan of division is fundamental in part, but it is interwoven, needless to say, with the classes in the other outline.

There should, of course, be more definition of premises and explanation of details, but lack of space at present forbids. These outlines are not regarded as faultless, but have been devised in the absence of any light that has seemed adequate. In the main they seem to be sound, and they not only describe conduct that is completed, they reveal developing principles that point into the future.

CYRUS H. ESHLEMAN.

LUDINGTON,  
MICHIGAN, U.S.A.  
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TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Journal of Philosophical Studies*.

### THE RELATIVITY OF FREE WILL.

SIR,

I am writing to make a few observations regarding Sir Herbert Samuel's very interesting article in your July issue entitled "The Relativity of Free Will." Is not the essential element in the concept of free will the existence *at times* in human life of *open alternatives*? I say at times, for it would only be an impossibly extreme form of that doctrine which would regard such open alternatives as always existing. I face a given situation. How shall I act? Does the fact that I live in a given environment, and possess a given inherited character, preclude me from taking any but one pre-determined course of action? Or are there open for me at the moment of seeming choice alternatives, one of which I select? If the former is true, I do not possess free will, and to speak of its relativity seems only to confuse the issue; while in the latter case the use of the qualifying word is unnecessary. In the sense that I have used the word, free will must be—for the occasion on which it is exercised—either absolute, or an illusion.

If one turns to some of Sir Herbert Samuel's illustrations, one finds that they do not fit the case under discussion. The sun does move round the earth; it is only a question of our frame of reference. When we sit down we are at rest in the sense that the word "rest" is used. Likewise, our bodies are solid in the sense that we use the word. But at our moment of "choice" there are either alternatives open for our thought or action, or there are not. The one proposition excludes the other. If there are not such alternatives, free will is an illusion—one which is, of course, inevitable; also, possibly, one which is useful and interesting, but an illusion nevertheless.

At times Sir Herbert Samuel expresses his determinism in language which is the property of the libertarian. For this he cannot really be blamed, as, in an ultimate sense, on his own theory he has no choice in the matter, but one may point out the confusion of thought involved. Consider the following quotations, in which the italics are mine.

"... it is shown by experience that people who have received a general education, or who have had a good moral training, conduct themselves better than people who