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BOOK REVIEW

CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS JURISPRUDENCE

By

I. H. RUBENSTEIN

1948 Edition, 120 Pages, \$2.50

The Waldain Press, Chicago, Illinois

The present work in 120 pages covers the criminal and civil legal aspects of fortune telling, faith healing, and pacifism. It cites the English, Canadian, Australian and American cases in point. The author's purpose is to demonstrate how "law with its consequence in justice must act as the bulwark of society against those who would use religion as a sword to gain their fanatical desires and ends." He considers his work as a contribution towards a practical understanding and solution of this problem of the conflict of fortune telling, faith healing and pacifism with the public welfare, health, morals and safety of society.

One cannot help feeling that the author is unduly alarmed in regard to pacifism despite the experience of the courts during the war: in regard to faith healing—is there really any proximate danger that faith healers will ever become so numerous as to repeal "all medical and sanitary legislative safeguards?": and in regard to fortune telling. This last is indeed, a flourishing and lucrative racket as it has been for a long time without the disastrous results the author fears.

The major criticism of this work, however, is not in regard to what it is but in what it is not. From its title one would expect something vastly more comprehensive and more in tune with the really significant contemporary religious jurisprudence. The author's concept is very narrow and scarcely flattering to religion. One would expect some reference to the celebrated *McCullum* case, in regard to religious education, to school-bus, school lunch, text-book and religious garb cases.

A knowledge of the basic tenets of true religion would be the best (as it is the only) antidote for the dangers which the author fears from superstition and fanaticism. Religious jurisprudence is hardly the word for the matter incorporated in this work whose usefulness is, therefore, too limited for the reader who would purchase it in the hope that it is a survey of religious jurisprudence in the natural implication of that term.

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