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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

It is surely nothing less than remarkable that the Psalter, which was the hymn-book of the Jewish Church, should have had the further distinction of becoming, and in some sense of remaining to this day, the hymn-book of the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world. Nothing could have given the Psalter this phenomenal hold upon the heart of the centuries but its absolute fidelity to the deepest and most manifold experiences of the human soul. If in its words men still lift up their hearts unto God, it is because they are the words of men who spoke 'out of the depths.' The Psalter has the power that all great poetry has of seeing the universal in the particular and of snatching from the passing experience that aspect of it which is eternal.

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But while this is all true, it is not less true that the Psalter is an intensely national book. It is the expression of Hebrew experience, it was written for Hebrew worship, its prayers and its praises are addressed primarily to the God of the Hebrews, and its writers never allow us to forget that the Jehovah whose name is excellent in all the earth, is 'our Lord.' It is Hebrew history that is set forth as the stimulus to national gratitude or repentance (Ps 78, 105, 106); and although there are winged words that bear our spirits far beyond the confines of Judah—visions of 'all people that on earth do dwell' united in a common worship,

and visions of a reign of God that stretches down the ages and across the world—there are other places not a few in which, by topographical allusion (Ps 87, 133) or unholy tempers (cf. 58<sup>10</sup>), we are reminded that the Psalter is stamped with the limitations of Hebrew experience and achievement.

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Thus the critical and historical study, apart from the devotional use of it, will always be obligatory upon all who would truly understand it. Two books have just been published by the Oxford University Press, each of which is a real contribution to this scientific study of the Psalter. One, entitled *The Psalter in Life, Worship and History* (5s. net), is by Professor A. C. WELCH, D.D., of New College, Edinburgh; the other, entitled *The Psalmists* (7s. 6d. net), is a series of essays edited by Professor D. C. SIMPSON, D.D., of Oxford, on the religious experience and teaching of the psalmists, their social background and their place in the development of Hebrew psalmody. These essays, seven in number, were written by Professor Hugo GRESSMANN of Berlin, Dr. T. H. ROBINSON, Principal H. Wheeler ROBINSON, Mr. G. R. DRIVER, and Dr. A. L. BLACKMAN.

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Much as has already been written upon the Psalter, these books will come with great freshness to English readers, especially to those who have had no opportunity of keeping abreast of

continental criticism, more particularly that of Germany and Norway, for they open up lines of approach to the Psalter with which British criticism has not made us familiar. And there is the additional interest that while Dr. WELCH and the contributors to the larger volume agree, as against most recent criticism, on some major points, there are minor points on which the contributors differ from one another.

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Dr. WELCH deals in four successive chapters with Nature, History, Worship, and the Inner Life, as reflected in the Psalter, and he deals with all of them in his own virile and independent way. Even those who are most familiar with the innumerable discussions to which these themes have been subjected, will find again and again that Dr. WELCH has something not only suggestive and incisive, but really fresh, to say. Apart from occasional flashes of insight, as when, for example, he tells us that the attitude of the psalmists to Nature forms the needed corrective to the prophets' violent invective against Baalism, we feel that the whole treatment—the manner, for example, in which a powerful argument is built up in the chapter on Nature from a progressive comparison of Ps 29, 8, and 104, or, in the chapter on History, from a comparative study of Ps 93, 97, 82, 105, and 106—is the work of a penetrating and philosophic mind.

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But the chapter which will most powerfully modify the views of the Psalter cherished by most readers is that on the Psalter and Worship. It has long been the custom to associate the psalms wherever possible, with great historical occasions of triumph or sorrow in the life of the people; it is the peculiar interest of this chapter to show that the Psalter was far more intimately related to the cult-practice and its ritual than is commonly imagined. The ritual, we know, was carefully prescribed; but with the ritual were associated liturgies, and they, too, it seems, were carefully prescribed, and Dr. WELCH believes that some of these are to be found in the Psalter.

Ps 116, for example, is a specimen; it is 'the liturgy employed by a man who had come to the sanctuary in order to 'pay his vow.' Another specimen is Ps 107, of which Dr. WELCH gives a striking and vivid account. He regards its four strophes as specimens of the liturgies which would be used at one of the great festivals by members of four groups—not necessarily all present at any one festival—of men who took the opportunity afforded by public worship to express their personal thanks for deliverance: men who had lost their way on a caravan journey, men who had been in prison, sick men, and shipwrecked sailors. The correct liturgy was as important as the correct sacrificial ritual, and these strophes represent the correct liturgy for such occasions.

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To sum up, 'the Psalter is largely a collection of these cult-hymns which were intended for the use of individuals or of the community, but which were originally associated with an act of the cult, one of the greater festivals, a procession to the temple, a sacrifice for sin, the payment of a vow.' This view, which to the English-speaking world was first and most elaborately presented by the late Dr. J. P. Peters in 'The Psalms as Liturgies,' is the view taken by all the contributors to the volume on *The Psalmists*, and it may be safely regarded as one of the definite and permanent gains of recent criticism. There could be no better introduction to it than Dr. WELCH's suggestive chapter.

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There are other points of much interest and importance in this book, notably the writer's protest against the too violently drawn contrast between the prophet and the priest in the Old Testament. The Psalter, he believes, with its fine inward quality and ethical emphasis, is one of many proofs that prophet and priest were brought into close association in all their work and 'mutually influenced each other.' It seems more certain, however, that prophetic ideas and ideals influenced the Priestly Code than that priestly ideas and ideals permeated prophetic thought. But unquestionably the two strains do meet in the Psalter

as they meet in Ezekiel, and Dr. WELCH's chapter on 'The Psalter and the Inner Life' helps us to feel the wonder of this blend—the undeniably prophetic spirit of the poetry in the closest possible association with the practice of the cult.

The other volume is no less full of interest and stimulus. All the contributors agree that there are far more pre-exilic psalms than used to be admitted—indeed Psalmody, says Professor GRESSMANN, is as old as sacrificial worship, and older than David. The same scholar, with delightful dogmatism, roundly affirms that there is not a single psalm of the Messianic King, and further, that he is convinced that 'there are no Maccabean psalms whatsoever' in the Psalter. The whole of this piquant essay on 'The Development of Hebrew Psalmody' is full of good things. Dr. GRESSMANN has no doubt whatever of the influence of Babylonia and also of Egypt upon the Hebrew Psalter.

Traces of the former he finds in Ps 19, with its God who is at once a bridegroom and victorious hero, and who had a tabernacle in the sea; traces of the latter he finds in Ps 110, with its king who sets his feet on the neck of his enemies. But his most interesting discussion is on Ps 104, to which other contributors to the volume recur—Mr. DRIVER in his essay on 'The Psalms in the Light of Babylonian Research,' and Dr. BLACKMAN in his essay on 'The Psalms in the Light of Egyptian Research.' Any one who knows the famous Egyptian hymn of Ikhnaton can hardly resist the temptation of assuming that there is some real connexion between the two. But the particular interest of Dr. GRESSMANN's discussion lies in the suggestion that the psalm or the thoughts and expression of it have come to Palestine from Egypt by way of Phœnicia, which had at one time been powerfully influenced by Egypt.

One proof of this is the reference to the cedars of Lebanon 'originally planted by Adonis the Baal of Lebanon.' As he puts it, 'behind Ps 104 we sense an Egyptian-Phœnician original, not specifi-

cally the psalm of Ikhnaton (as is often urged), but more generally an Egyptian psalm in Phœnician guise.' Dr. BLACKMAN who deals more in detail with the question of Egyptian influence reaches the interesting conclusion that the influence was not all on one side. The truth seems to him to lie 'in a frank admission that Egypt was indeed indebted to the Semitic world for certain ideas, and that the Semitic world was in other respects indebted to Egypt.'

Mr. DRIVER, however, offers a pretty stubborn resistance to this theory of influence, whether from Babylon or Egypt. He maintains that even between Ps 104 and the Hymn of Ikhnaton there is no necessary connexion; indeed, he thinks that the different order in which the various Creation themes are handled in the two poems proves that they are independent of one another. Subjects like these occur to poets all over the world, and similarity of treatment, he argues, does not need to be explained by the assumption of interdependence.

This is the spirit which pervades his long, interesting, and learned essay on 'The Psalms in the Light of Babylonian Research.' Like Elijah, he is very jealous for the Lord; he seems to repudiate the very idea that Israel could owe anything of any consequence to any other nation. Direct Babylonian influence is to be looked for only 'in such small things as the use of an Assyrian word for demons.' The attitude of true worshippers of Jahweh to foreign religious ideas would be more likely to be that of revulsion; and where Hebrew thoughts or expressions seem to betray connexion with Babylon, either they are such as could quite well have occurred to different thinkers independently, or both go back to a common Semitic original.

Mr. DRIVER's essay reads in places almost like a criticism of Dr. GRESSMANN's. If it could be proved, as most scholars think it can be, that Israel owed much to other countries, surely, when we remember how wondrously she transmuted all

she borrowed, that fact does not detract in the least from her dignity or worth. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and in no land has He left Himself without a witness. But whether or not we agree with the dominant idea of Mr. DRIVER's argument, his essay, which rests upon an intimate knowledge of Babylonian religion and literature, is one from which we can learn much.

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In the other essays perhaps the most challenging suggestion is that of Dr. T. H. ROBINSON, that the psalms are not so decidedly or so pervasively monotheistic as most people suppose. 'Our Lord is above all gods'—phrases like this have, he argues, perhaps to be taken seriously; and if they are, then the consequences are far-reaching. One happy consequence of this view, if it is true, is that these psalms might be claimed for the pre-exilic period.

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Enough has perhaps been said to show how profoundly these two books enrich our appreciation of the Psalter; and after reading them we shall go back to it with renewed curiosity and gratitude.

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A book of very considerable importance has just been issued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and written by 'Members of the Anglican Communion.' Its title is *Essays Catholic and Critical*, and it is edited by Mr. Edward Gordon SELWYN (10s. 6d. net). It is, in its way, a new 'Lux Mundi,' and may be regarded as a manifesto of the Anglo-Catholic party. The book is too big in every sense to be criticised hastily, and a review of it will appear in our next issue. There is one essay, however, which is so interesting and so vital to the standpoint of the volume and its writers that we may draw attention to its conclusions now.

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It is on the subject of 'Authority,' and is in two parts, one by Dr. A. E. J. RAWLINSON on 'Authority as a Ground of Belief,' the other by the Rev.

Wilfred L. KNOX on 'The Authority of the Church.' Dr. RAWLINSON states the position as between the Catholic and Protestant traditions in this way. Is the Church the creation of the gospel? Or is the Church the supernatural creation of God, a Divine institution, the spirit-filled Body of Christ? He has no difficulty in answering the first question in the negative, and the second in the affirmative. A very great deal would seem to follow this. And as a matter of fact the writer does seem to go a good length when he asserts that it is not irrational for a man who in religious matters elects, even to the end, to submit his judgment to authority. But this position is tacitly abandoned later when the writer refuses the 'oracular' conception of authority and lays it down that authority as such can never be its own guarantee, that the claims of authority must always be in the long run verifiable claims. 'The final appeal is to the spiritual, intellectual, and historical content of Divine revelation, *as verifiable at the threefold bar of history, reason and spiritual experience*' (the italics are his).

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The weight of authority that attaches to any religious pronouncements of the Church must then be in proportion to the extent to which they represent a genuine consensus of competent and adequately Christian minds. Now this standpoint is common to the two writers named, and it seems a sensible and reasonable one. But Mr. KNOX rides a good length on it in his part of the essay which deals with the authority of the Church. He begins by discussing the 'infallibility of Scripture,' which he unhesitatingly rejects. The claim that the Bible 'without some standard of interpretation' can be taken as a sufficient guide for souls seeking Christ is also rejected. We cannot therefore find the source of religious authority in Scripture alone.

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Christian experience, and that on a broad field, is the real test of truth. But this experience is found in the 'Catholic tradition.' The Church not only contains it, but is also the only body capable of recognizing and interpreting it. But at this point

a very important distinction has to be made. It concerns the attitude of the individual to this authority. We must distinguish the faith by which the individual submits his mind and conscience to the authority of Jesus in the Catholic Church, an act of pure private judgment, and the faith by which this individual, having decided that the Catholic faith as a whole is true, proceeds to accept from the Church the detailed filling-in of the main outlines which he has already accepted.

If the individual be not a 'plain person' but a competent theologian, what then? Even then he will do certain things. He will recognize the value for others of things that do not appeal to him. He will also recognize that every part of the Catholic system has an element of truth in it. Further, he will regard the Catholic faith as a whole as something that has been guaranteed by past experience, and he will reverence its definitions on that account. But something more will be required of him. Even if he cannot believe in the absolute truth of the Church's doctrine 'he will realize that it contains an element of truth which any new definition must preserve, and he will also respect the right of the Church to restrain him from putting forward his own views where they differ from the authoritative statements of the Church in such a manner as to disturb the faith of the simple or to lead to unedifying controversy.' (The italics are ours this time, and they express our respectful wonder that a statement in such terms secured the assent of the able men who collaborate in this volume.)

There are two notes at the end of the essay, one dealing very respectfully with 'The Holy Roman Church,' the other dealing not quite so reverentially with 'the religious experience of Protestantism.' With regard to the first, Dr. RAWLINSON repudiates the claim of the Papacy to be the organ of the Holy Ghost for the whole Church, but seems willing to accept the primacy of the Pope as a representative of the whole Church whose function is to regulate the general line of Christian thought in so far as it may be necessary to save the simple from the dis-

turbing effects of false teaching. This is a delicate way of putting it. As to the religious experience of Protestants, it only witnesses to parts of the Catholic faith and is a kind of testimony that the Catholic tradition is valid.

Such is the ground on which these Anglican teachers stand. It raises many questions which are not answered here. What is the Church that is thus authoritative? Is it the Anglican, or the Roman, or the Eastern? Or all three? That would mean that it is the Catholic Church in all three. But are the great Free Churches outside the Catholic Church? Is the great Church of Scotland with its noble history outside? And the Lutheran Church? If it is religious experience that is decisive, how is this expressed? By what organ? By the Pope or by a General Assembly of the faithful? Or by a body of bishops, and which bishops? Where is the authority for this view of authority? Is it in Scripture? Or is it to be found in the course of development? How do the divisions of the Church affect this necessary consensus? There are, for example, nearly as many Presbyterians in the world as Episcopalians. What majority supplies a consensus? Are we really going back to the view that faith in Christ is an act of personal freedom and responsibility, but acceptance of the doctrines or practices of the Catholic tradition as a whole may be fitly a surrender of personal responsibility? And are we going further back still to hold that a 'competent theologian' may be forbidden to think aloud if the 'simple' are hurt by his thoughts? There are other questions, but these thrust themselves forward at once.

Is it possible to *prove* the existence of a Supreme Being? The negative answer has been returned from two different standpoints. Some Christians have maintained that the existence of God is and must be assumed. Westcott, for example, held that 'No arguments can establish the existence of an Infinite Personal God. It is a primary intuition

and not a deduction.' On the other hand, from the perfect mechanism of the natural world materialism and naturalism have tended to draw the conclusion, the only logical conclusion as it seems to them, of the total absence of any directive mind.

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If human reasoning is in place here at all, is it possible to resuscitate and transform the argument from design in such a way as to make it carry conviction to any one who has kept in touch with the developments of physical science and of metaphysics? That is the task which Mr. J. E. TURNER, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in Philosophy in the University of Liverpool, essays in *Personality and Reality* (Allen & Unwin; 7s. 6d. net). He claims, and many will judge that he makes good his claim, by an argument that seems to evolve of itself, to establish the existence, if not of a God or a Divine Being, at least of a Supreme Self in the universe.

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The reasoning differs from traditional Paleyism, not only in the use that is made of the argument from design, but in a more vital way. We are familiar with the apologete who, in discussing Christian evidences, knows, and whose readers also know from the beginning, whither those evidences are going to lead him. But Dr. TURNER assures us that he approached the subject with no preliminary bias whatever in favour of his final conclusion; he simply followed where his arguments led, and wrote the opening chapters with no least suspicion of the direction ultimately to be taken by the reasoning. While this is true, there is in this author an intellectual and moral sanity that assures the reader he will reach none but robust conclusions.

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If we are to discuss the supreme self, or any self, we must first know what we mean by 'self.' We are warned against the popular fallacy which compares the self to a geometrical point-centre in a circle. This self-point as the centre of a circle has no more existence than the point-centre of a geometrical circle.

The self has, in fact, the characteristics of every real. While its manifestations are transient, the self itself persists; it persists, moreover, as a system, a point often overlooked by the psychologists. This system is one of psychic activities, never of merely passive constituents. Indeed, it is these activities, the psychic processes of remembering, perceiving, thinking, willing, and so forth, that form the actual self. It is complex, with a structure inconceivably delicate; it is definite, with a definiteness that does not exclude plasticity. As in an orchestra, different instruments predominate at different times, yet the symphony remains a distinct composition, so the prominence in the self of different psychological entities at different times, does not make the self cease to be a self.

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The self responds to its environment; and in the more primitive forms of consciousness this response is almost completely passive, the self being dominated by the environment. In the course of evolution, the tables are turned; the evolutionary process is towards an increasing measure of dominance of the environment by the self. To use one of the apt illustrations by which the discussion is illuminated, in earlier times the self was conceived as a king, kingship being a mysterious attribute almost as much beyond understanding as it was beyond criticism. For the newer psychology, the self may be compared rather to the British Cabinet. As the Cabinet is part of the nation, so the self is part of its environment. The collective responsibility of the Cabinet is analogous to the complex unity of the self, in which, as in the Cabinet, certain personal factors are more important than others. As the Cabinet may study its own constitution, so may the self survey its own character and status.

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Using the word 'self' in some way like this, does the universe show evidence of a Supreme Self in it and behind or above it? It is common ground that there is in the universe a marvellous amount of beautiful mechanical adjustment. When we talk in a disparaging way of action as 'merely

mechanical,' we are apt to forget the extent to which the successful functioning of social life in its various departments depends on certain relevant activities being carried out with machine-like precision; a severe snowstorm soon convinces us of this.

Progress consists of selfhood exercising an increasing dominance over not only the material but also the social environment. In our experience, material mechanism is an expression of the activity of mind; and when we use the word mechanism we are thinking not only of the manufacture of the requisite constituents, but also of their orderly arrangement. And now we come to the point.

The more complicated the mechanism, whether material or social, and the more successfully co-ordinated the parts in their joint working, the more effectively is the personality behind the mechanism *concealed* from any observer whose mental capacity is of a much lower order, so that he is accustomed to simpler instruments or to none at all. In other words, if mind is dominant in the universe, the indispensable instrument of its

effectiveness is an automatic mechanism which hides the agent from all but the initiated.

The word 'design' is ambiguous. In the sense in which the artist uses the word, the design is more or less obvious, and it is embodied in a finished product. But Dr. TURNER is thinking of 'design' in a larger sense: of a mechanism that solves a simple problem only to turn to a more difficult problem, of a mechanism which, indeed, implies the dominance of mind, but of mind with an inherent capacity to expand and transcend itself at every stage. This is the principle of 'automatic mechanism,' markedly distinct from all the earlier arguments from design.

Thus, instead of the matter of the materialist, matter dominated by physical necessity and invariable causal sequence that are antithetic to mind, what we find is matter that has been elevated by mind, and by mind alone, to its own superior level, thus providing mind with the sole means by which it can achieve its freely determined purposes. Matter apart from mind is as helpless as mind apart from matter.

## The Parable of the Unjust Steward.

BY PROFESSOR J. F. McFADYEN, D.D., KINGSTON, ONTARIO, CANADA.

By common consent the most difficult of all the parables is that generally known as 'The Unjust Steward' (Lk 16<sup>1st</sup>). Trench tells us that Schreier, in a work entirely devoted to the parables, gave an 'appalling list' of explanations. Beginning with Trench, commentators, generally speaking (e.g. Jülicher, Bruce, Goebel, J. Weiss, Adeney, Lonsdale Ragg, Klostermann, and Easton), and with certain shades of difference, regard the Parable as teaching that the followers of Jesus must show in spiritual matters the same long-sightedness which enabled the steward to escape from his difficulties, and as inculcating the generous distribution of wealth with a view to a good reception in the next world. Some of them are manifestly uneasy at finding Jesus using

an unsuccessful business man and a cheat to point a moral that looks uncommonly like sheer worldly wisdom, and J. Weiss makes the interesting suggestion that the story was taken from real life, and in relation to it Jesus half-ironically remarked: 'Take an example by this man.' The other rock on which all such explanations come to grief is that the money the steward used so generously was not his own money.

Modern criticism has delivered us from the necessity of supposing that this Parable was spoken at the same time as, or has any logical connexion with, the teaching that precedes and follows. We can easily see why Luke, or the tradition or document he followed, put it where it is. The prodigal made