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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

A NOTEWORTHY exposition of *The Doctrine of God* (Abingdon Press; $3.50) has been published by Dr. Albert C. KNUDSON, Dean of Boston University School of Theology, and Professor of Systematic Theology. Dean KNUDSON'S pen has been busy in the spheres of Biblical Theology and Religious Philosophy, but his books do not appear to be known on this side of the Atlantic. This new book will enhance his reputation in America, and is likely to extend his name and influence to Great Britain. No doubt it will have a mixed reception in America, where theological thought runs more to extremes than in Great Britain. But here it should meet with general commendation. For it strikes the notes at once of modernity and of conservatism which are so accordant with our theological tendency.

While the volume deals with the central doctrine of religion, it contains also an elaborate introductory section on the nature of theology in general and its place in modern thought. It is to be followed by another volume entitled 'The Doctrine of Redemption.' The whole will constitute a treatise on Systematic Theology which, if the promise of the first volume is fulfilled in the second, will be a welcome addition to theological literature and might well be adopted as a text-book in many of our Schools of Divinity. In making this last remark we have the following, along with other, considerations in view: Dean KNUDSON is a master of clear exposition; he is in touch with the most recent developments of his subject; he is tolerant, sympathetic, and broadminded, yet pursues his own way steadily and consistently, refusing to turn aside from the main stream of Christian thought, whether with the Ritschlians or with the Barthians.

In the introductory chapters on the Province of Theology he defines theology as the systematic exposition and rational justification of the intellectual content of religion, and in support of this definition argues—first, that religion has a valid intellectual content; and, secondly, that this content in its Christian form admits, to a certain extent, of rational justification. The first position is maintained as over against illusionism (the various types of which are clearly distinguished), and the second as over against 'both an authoritarian and a romantic irrationalism.' Indeed, it is a leading position of the book that while theology is not to be identified with metaphysical philosophy, it needs—if it is to be adequate—a metaphysics that is theoretically as well as ethically grounded. But the type of theistic philosophy which it favours is not the traditional Platonic-Aristotelian; it is the personalistic, derived through Leibniz, Berkeley, Kant, and Lotze. Obviously Dean KNUDSON owes much in this connexion to the writings of Borden P. Bowne, an exponent of Personalistic Theism, from whom—as we may recall—the late Principal J. Iverach of Aberdeen used also to derive much intellectual and spiritual satisfaction.

Among the topics discussed in the Introduction are the relation of the Christian faith to reason or knowledge, its relation to mysticism, and its claim to be the absolute religion. Under the second of these the views are criticised of Barth and Brunner, who have sought to establish a still more radical distinction between faith and mysticism than that advocated by the Ritschlian school. Faith, they say, comes from God and forms no part of human experience. It cannot be translated into religious experience without being distorted. The religion of Schleiermacher and 'modern' piety in general are, like Catholicism, a hybrid mixture of Christianity and heathenism. Consequently the great need of our day is to establish the essential antithesis between faith and mystical, or any kind of religious experience. But Dean KNUDSON, while allowing that the Barthian theology has a considerable value as a reaction against a one-sided stress on the Divine immanence and against the easy-going humanism of our time, regards the attempt to establish this antithesis as a 'theological misadventure,' and as being a lapse into an 'obsolete supernaturalism.' For his reasons we must refer the reader to the book itself.

In treating, in the chief section of the book, of the Doctrine of God, Dean KNUDSON concentrates on the questions of the existence of God, His absoluteness, His personality, His goodness, and the Trinity. On all these questions he writes with vigour and clarity and in the terms of vital theology. With his discussion of the Doctrine of the Trinity he enters definitely into the sphere of Christian Theology, showing himself both critical and appreciative of the traditional dogma. Before concluding this note let us give a résumé of the points of strength and weakness which he finds in the Trinitarian teaching of the Church. He begins with the former.

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(1) Orthodox Trinitarianism has this primary advantage over all deistic forms of Monarchianism or Unitarianism; it gives us a *living* God, in the sense that His inner being is eternally active, and also in the sense that He is immanent in the world. (2) Another significant element in the traditional doctrine is the provision it makes for the moral absoluteness of God. How can He be Love, if in His essential nature He is one and alone? (3) A third important religious value in the Trinity is the support it lends to the doctrine of the Incarnation, self-sacrifice in its sublimest form being carried up into the very heart of God. 'That God at infinite cost to Himself redeemed men is the most moving thought of Scripture; and it is this thought that lies at the basis of the Doctrine of the Trinity and is the inspiring source of all vital faith in it.' (4) A fourth element of strength in the Trinitarian doctrine is its philosophical value, as saving philosophy from the impasse to which it has been often brought by the assumption of an ultimate simple and distinctionless unity, and as protecting theism against deism on the one hand, and pantheism on the other.

So far the merits, and now the defects. (1) The most common objection is that the doctrine of the Trinity is tritheistic; and if each Person, or Hypostasis, is regarded as having self-consciousness and making self-decision, it is difficult to see how the objection can be completely met. (2) Another objection is that the ethical and religious values of the doctrine would be provided for by a Divine duality, and that there is no adequate reason for ascribing a distinct personality to the Holy Spirit. To this objection some weight must be allowed. (3) If we adopt the view that the word Person, like Hypostasis, denoted a mode of being midway between a person and an attribute, we lose the moral and religious values contained in the idea of a Divine society. (4) The doctrine of the Trinity was constructed against the background of Platonic realism, in which personality is subordinated to essence. But there is nothing more basal than personality, and essence is an abstraction from it. (5) The identification of the Divine element in Christ with the Logos on the one hand, and with the ego of Jesus on the other, is open to serious question from the standpoint of modern thought. What differentiated Jesus from all other men was, as Schleiermacher put it, 'the constant strength of His God-consciousness, which was *a veritable existence of God in Him*.' (6) One of the chief

reasons for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity was the belief that redemption was a mystical-metaphysical process which consisted in the communication of the Divine life to men, and which could be brought about by such a substantial union of the human and Divine in Christ as was provided for by the Trinitarian theory. But with the Reformation a new conception of redemption was introduced.

'Considerations such as the foregoing have led the Church to be less insistent than it once was on the orthodox form of the Trinitarian creed.' 'The feeling . . . is that the doctrine in its older form is of permanent value, but that it in some respects transcends both the limits of reason and the demands of faith, and that it does not, consequently, have the finality once attributed to it.' 'So far as its underlying motives are concerned we affirm them as confidently as ever.' 'Yet . . . we are not convinced that the traditional Trinitarian theory has pointed out the only way in which the highest values in the Christian idea of God can be conserved.' At this point the author would pass from Platonism to personalism.

The Proceedings of the Fifth International Congregational Council, held at Bournemouth, in July of this year, have been published under the title *The Living Church* (reviewed elsewhere). The meetings opened with an address by the Chairman, the Reverend J. D. JONES, which occupies the place of honour in the volume. The address was a notable one for both its subject and its substance. The main subject might be expressed as 'a survey of religious conditions in our day,' and there are some rather remarkable contentions in the survey, to which attention may well be directed.

Dr. JONES is not a pessimist. He thinks that things are very bad indeed religiously, but he deprecates any kind of defeatist temper or attitude. He quotes with approval Dean Church's remark: 'A faith which has come out alive from the darkness of the tenth century, the immeasurable corruption of the fifteenth, the religious policy of the sixteenth, and the philosophy of the eighteenth, may face without shrinking even the more subtle perils of our own.' Talk of dying churches and dying religion brings about the very defeat it fears. It is essentially atheistic. The New Testament note is very different. It holds up to us the picture of a world full of God, and of the knowledge of God.

All the same, let us face facts, and not hide our heads in the sand or comfort ourselves with vague optimism. Things are worse, much worse, than in the days of our fathers, or (if you are sixty or seventy years of age) in your own early days. Many people can recall the lean time of Huxley and Tyndall, the arrogance of materialistic science, the whoop of delight with which a well-known writer predicted the approaching demise of Christianity, and the aggressive and blatant atheistic campaigns of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. Conditions were dark then, but Dr. JONES affirms that they are darker to-day.

The Church is largely neglected. Religion seems to be losing its hold over masses of men. And all this is symptomatic of a deeper evil, the widespread denial of the existence of God. 'That is the tremendous battle in which we are engaged to-day—a fight for faith in the reality of God.' All the conflicts of the past, Luther's battle for freedom, the controversies about the Bible, even the fight that raged round the question of the Person of Christ—all these were affairs of outposts. To-day the attack is not upon the outworks, but upon the citadel itself.

Dr. JONES traces this fundamental scepticism to two large causes. One is the destructive criticism which has deprived the Bible of authority. To-day it is received as a book of wisdom, but not a wisdom that comes from God, not a wisdom that is the issue of revelation. The second cause is the new conception of the universe which science has given us—a universe so vast, so indifferent, so bound in chains of stern necessity. Many men, contemplating it, can see no room for a personal God.

And this teaching of scientists is backed by the contention of the 'New Psychology' that God is a projection of the human mind. These are the causes; and the scepticism of our time runs deep. The irreligion of our time is radical to a degree to which there is no counterpart.

But this is not the end of the matter. With the dissolving of the belief in God has come a challenge to the whole Christian ethic. Whatever may be said of men like Huxley and Tyndall and their religious beliefs, they at any rate were men of high ethical standards. And in their days even the agnostic accepted the Christian ethic. But that was illogical. Our day is more thorough. The whole Christian morality is challenged, and especially its conception of sexual morality. And it is well known that in actual practice this moral revolt has been widespread.

Nor is even this the total picture. Dr. JONES finds a serious defect in the Church itself to-day. It is that people widely lack a real religious experience. James Douglas wrote some time ago that what England needed for its salvation was 'to make room for God.' And that is what multitudes even of outwardly religious people have not done. People will believe in the reality of God when they see He is a reality to us. And the real apologetic for our time is not intellectual but religious, a deeper and fuller and riper religious experience. God is outside us even when we believe in Him. 'Our religion runs pretty thin.' Dr. JONES makes a stout defence of the religious standpoint on intellectual lines, but in the end he returns to the contention that we must get back to God, we religious people, and sink our roots deeper in Him, so that He becomes, not a negligible quantity, but the Living God, living in our life. This faith will conquer the world.

Is Dr. JONES right in his diagnosis? In spite of his protest against pessimism, his picture of conditions to-day is very dark. Is it true? In particular, is our state worse than thirty or forty years ago? A very good case can be made for exactly the opposite conclusion. Forty years ago it was very difficult for a young man to believe in God. All that was authoritative in science seemed against him. He had to fight hard for his faith. Moreover, secularism was a powerful force among the working classes. Bradlaugh had great audiences for his atheistic lectures. There were shops in every town that sold atheistic literature of a peculiarly blasphemous sort openly. There was no religious movement in the universities.

To-day, it is infinitely easier for a youth to believe in God. Science is not irreligious. Philosophy is far more spiritual, and far more in sympathy with the religious point of view than it was forty or fifty years ago. There are practically no secularist shops to-day, and no secularist lecturers. There is a great and powerful religious movement among students. The most influential forces among boys and girls, such as the Boys' Brigade and the Girls' Guildry, the Scouts and Guides, are all religious. It is true that the passing of the old conception of Bible infallibility has caused some of our religious indifference. But we are beginning to reach a better conception of the authority of Scripture. It is hardly true, however, to say that the universe of Science *to-day* is bound in chains of necessity or is really a godless universe. In short, one might hazard the assertion that all the streams of influence to-day that count are making for positive religious belief.

It follows that the indifference and irreligion of our time are not due to fundamental scepticism, but rather to something else. Are they not due to the wave of practical materialism that has been passing over mankind? People do not deny God. They are indifferent to Him, because they are more deeply interested in other things, in comfort and pleasure. This is a far harder thing to reach than intellectual scepticism. It will be overcome by the working of the power of God in the life of man. The truth of God has triumphed over worse enemies in the past. Science was to kill it. And it survives. Criticism was to kill it. And it survives. To-day the real intellectual enemy is the newer psychology, but the truth will weather this newest attack as it has done the others.

Dr. JONES, of course, believes that also. And, if his diagnosis is open to doubt in some ways, at least his appeal for religious reality touches the true heart of the matter. God will become real to the world when the world sees Him in us who profess to believe in Him.

For religious thought the problem of personality is central. It is said that the idea of personality is being overworked; but, in fact, it is impossible that it can be overworked, for all problems lead up to it. Dr. STEPHENSON of Oundle, in the Fernley Lectures of 1930, has made very effective use of the category, and has shown in a most luminous way its bearing upon the central problems of theology and philosophy.

The title of his lectures as published is *Divine Providence in the Light of Personality* (Epworth Press; 5s. net). It is a work which manifests wide reading and clear thinking, and in it an attempt is very successfully made 'to bring the implications of personality, human and divine, to bear on the chief problems and aspects of the Providential Order.' The central thesis is that God is personal and deals with man as personal; whence it follows that the whole ordering of the world is governed by this relationship. Corresponding to the constructive activity of our own mind, which enables us to know the material world as a system of relations, there must be the constructive activity of another Mind, essentially akin to our own, which produces and maintains the system of relations that we know.

The influence of this dominant conception is to be traced everywhere. It becomes the master-key to unlock the ultimate meaning of the universe. Natural science, of course, takes no account of it, because the view of science is expressly limited so as to exclude ultimate problems. This, for practical purposes, is a most useful mode of procedure. Working within its own self-enclosed circle natural science has made wonderful progress. But as soon as we set out to discover the ultimate meaning of things we are brought face to face with the problem of personality, and are ultimately led to the conclusion that this whole universe is fundamentally a realm of personal relations. Dr. STEPHENSON uses this idea in a thoroughgoing way, and shows its bearing upon such doctrines as the Being of God, the Trinity and the Incarnation, Creation and Evolution, Providence and Prayer, Pain and Moral Evil, Life and Immortality.

Take, for example, his treatment of the Miraculous. Christian theology accepts a personal God, Father and Creator, who has created the world for spiritual ends, and has put in it spiritual beings whom He guides and perfects. 'Are we now to say that God's guidance, as far as man's outer world is concerned, will be always and only quasi-personal, through the laws of matter, so that men's bodies are, from the point of view of Nature, things, and nothing more? Or can God, and does He, ever take any special action within the physical sphere for the succour of any particular persons? . . . The position I should support is, that as the divine guidance of persons is not quasi-personal, but fully personal, it will issue in particular aid and succour of individuals, chiefly within the limits of regular law, but may, and sometimes does, go far beyond this, in what, for science, is contravention of that law. . . . So it is wise to keep open the door, even in this world of marvellous orderliness, for the unprecedented which goes outside all ordinary rules.' There is a tendency to-day to introduce a sort of determinism into the Divine nature itself, as if for God Himself there could never be more than one way open. But, if freedom is anything real for finite persons, God must meet them, moment by moment, on the level of their freedom, and adjust His guidance to their needs. 'If we say, "given His character, His action is necessarily determined," we seem to be introducing into the realm of spirit that mechanical sort of interpretation which Streeter calls "mechanomorphism."'

On general theistic grounds, with its fundamental belief in a personal God, the possibility of miracles is at least *suggested*. One difficulty in accepting the

miraculous is the utter impossibility of imagining the mode of its working, but this difficulty belongs to the whole set of questions about the relation of mind to matter. 'It does not seem that the problem of the contact of the divine mind with finite minds and with material things is, in principle, any different from that of the contact of finite minds with one another and with material things.' Miracle is not so much a breach of natural law as an event due to Divine action of another order from that which can be codified by science. Science, by a process of cyclic definition, forms a closed system which excludes all that concerns the spiritual problems of man. This works very well for the most part, but it will not carry all the facts in a world which has in it moral and spiritual factors, as well as physical ones. 'The desire to maintain a valid meaning and an open space for the miraculous, is by no means due to a narrow traditionalism which cannot discard effete points of view or make terms with new facts. It is rather a desire to be faithful to the implications of the creative evolutionary activity, which is marked by continuous increase in the range of control of mind over matter.'

So much for the possibility of the miraculous; now what about the actual occurrence of miracles as events in history? We find that opposite sides are taken by theists, some rejecting miracles outright, not because of any reduced conception of God, but by the expedient of bringing under the idea of Nature everything actual that has at any time been deemed to be miraculous. What tends to make the whole argument merely academic is that it never once takes up the implications of personality as fundamental to the whole problem. Science deals with the class, not the individual, but Providence and miracle, for theism, are essentially happenings of individual significance. The right procedure surely would be to consider the evidences of Divine guidance in regard to particular acts believed to have a private and personal significance in the first place, though they may well be evidential to others also. In regard to Biblical testimony to the miraculous there is an idea frequently expressed that the writers of the New Testament had no conception of the uniformity of Nature, or of fixed laws as we know them. Anything might happen, and anything unusual was put down to a supernatural agent. This statement needs to be greatly qualified. To 'say that the men of our Lord's time had little or no idea of an ordered world is simply an error. The very word "cosmos," which we use so much, was used then, in essentially the same sense in which we use it to-day. . . . I believe that the men who had to do with Jesus were as competent to understand and record His words and works as we ourselves would be, if we were transported into that age. I do not think that a committee of the Society of Psychical Research would get any nearer to the truth than His disciples did. We have plenty intimations that on every hand, among the people generally, and also among His intimate friends, there was not the least disposition to believe anything and everything.'

All these considerations, however, are really preliminary to a study of the question of miracle where it should properly begin, and that is in connexion with the life of Jesus Christ. Let us repeat, it is fundamentally a question of personality. 'The higher the level of personality, the more likely are we to find evidences of control over the powers of nature.' So we should expect that this control will be most adequately manifested in connexion with the supreme human person known to history. In Him we see a compelling authority in every region of experience, and the gospel miracles fit into the picture perfectly. To deny the Nature miracles and to put down the healing of the sick to the power of suggestion is to distort the gospel testimony altogether. 'If there could be a perfect life we should expect to find in its history evidences of transcendent power over Nature.' The question may be asked, Is the emergence of such a person possible? But if the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation be accepted we have here miracle in its most impressive form. The supreme miracle of the Incarnation carries with it a series of included miracles. The Virgin Birth, the sinless life, the Resurrection, the mighty works recorded in the Gospels are, to say the least of it, congruous with

all the requirements of the situation. Looked at in this light the miracles are not, as is so often said, an encumbrance to the gospel. 'If we believe that they were an essential element of the self-manifestation of Christ to His own generation and people, they *are* evidence even now. If they had not taken place, He would not be what we believe Him to be.' And as for the dictum that miracles don't happen we must leave room in religious experience for the present activity of the Lord Christ Himself. 'He is still personally interested in His servants here on earth, and, in answer to prayer, He may intervene. . . . So, generally, faith, for ordinary people, in ordinary circumstances, has its response well within the bounds of Nature's routine, and is constantly being justified by its results. But we must not exclude the possibility that in great crises, both for individuals and nations, faith may rise to exceptional demands, which receive exceptional answers.'

The Passage of the Red Sea.

By Howard H. Scullard, M.A., Ph.D., Hackney and New College, London.

The object of this article is twofold. First, to illustrate the Israelites' passage of the Red Sea by citing an incident recorded in Roman history, which presents somewhat similar features—the capture of New Carthage by Scipio Africanus. Second, to try to give a concise statement of the various modern theories concerning the topography of the crossing of the Red Sea. For when the present writer was seeking to compare the New Carthage with the Red Sea episode, he was unable to find any such statement in English. I have discussed elsewhere (*Scipio Africanus in the Second Punic War*, Camb. Univ. Press, 1930) the difficulties arising out of the account of the capture of New Carthage given by the ancient historians. The conclusion to which one seems forced is that the miraculous sinking of the waters of the lagoon there, which enabled Scipio to storm the town, was due to the action of an unexpected wind arising at the critical moment, much in the same way as, according to the earliest account of the OT, the sudden wind enabled the Israelites to cross the Red Sea. Before the parallel can be drawn, however, it will be necessary to examine in some detail the various explanations put forward regarding the crossing of the Red Sea. For the simple explanation of the wind as the natural cause, which is given by the document J and accepted by most scholars, has not met with universal approval, and has been supplemented by the volcanic theory of H. Gressmann and his followers (*e.g.* recently by Dr. Oesterley in *Hebrew Religion*, and tentatively by G. Harford in *Peake's Commentary*). Thus a preliminary step must be the brief examination of the various theories advanced regarding the geography of the Exodus —the equally vexed question of the chronology luckily can be left on one side. The scope of this article precludes any detailed examination of the evidence on which these theories rest, and it only aims at trying to give an orderly conspectus of the whole, in order to see to what conclusions we are led if certain premises are accepted. Then with the way cleared, it can be seen what bearing the New Carthage episode has on the crossing of the Red Sea.

The complexity of the geographical problems involved has made the question of the route of the Exodus a happy hunting-ground for scholars. For the evidence is susceptible of such varied interpretations that, so far from any general agreement having been reached, it seems to be a sphere where almost any theory can find some support and scarcely any theory can be with certainty rejected. Amid such disagreement the amateur rushes in where the OT scholar fears to tread, or at least walks warily. The present writer is only too conscious of the folly of rushing in, but hopes that his ὕβρις may be mitigated by the limitation of his scope—namely, the attempt to ascertain what is held, rather than the proposal of any fresh theory.

The site of the episode was the Red Sea, or more correctly the Sea of Reeds (Weeds), the *Yam Suph*. The Red Sea itself, in the modern geographical connotation, does not come into the question, but only