REVIEWS

GOD AND PERSONALITY (Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Aberdeen, 1918-19. First Course). By Clement C. J. Webb.*
London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. Pp. 281. 10s. 6d. net.

Readers acquainted with Mr. Webb's earlier volumes will probably come to these Gifford Lectures with high expectations, and the book is not likely to disappoint them. It deals with its high theme in a manner marked both by great learning and by real philosophical acumen. There are perhaps some important points on which one would like to know Mr. Webb's judgment rather more fully before one would care to say how far he has presented us with a doctrine of Divine personality which does full justice both to the demands of religion and to those of a thoroughly rational philosophy. This is notably the case with regard to the insistent problem of human immortality, on which Mr. Webb seems to speak with great reserve, if not with an uncertain voice. But it has to be remembered that what we have before us is only the first half of a complete work. Mr. Webb has reasons of his own for discussing personality in God before approaching the study of personality in man. But it is only, of course, when both problems have been treated that we shall be able to understand fully the whole of Mr. Webb's view of either Divine or human personality, and we shall not judge the present volume fairly unless we are careful to bear in mind that it requires completion and supplementation by the issue of the second half of the author's Aberdeen Lectures.

Mr. Webb's own philosophical position is a highly interesting one. In the main his master in metaphysics is Mr. Bradley, but what he gives us is the metaphysical doctrine of Mr. Bradley as understood by a trained theologian, who is also a professing and practising Christian with a profound sense of the importance of the historical and institutional elements in religion. He is, I think, quite successful in showing how completely the most fundamental theses of Mr. Bradley's philosophy are compatible, to say the least of it, with a definitely Christian theism. This is important, since a certain impatience with crude popular presentations of Christian doctrines, which no careful theologian would admit as orthodox, has caused Mr. Bradley's own utterances to be understood in many quarters in an anti-theistic sense which they will hardly bear on an impartial construction. In fact, if I may say such a thing without intending to be in any way flippant or disrespectful, Mr. Bradley himself seems too often to write as though the ultimate

* [We hope to publish Professor Taylor's review of the Second Course of Professor Webb's Gifford Lectures in September or October.—Ed.]

seat of authoritative interpretation of Christian dogma were the pulpit of a fervent, but theologically uneducated, Evangelical preacher. This makes it easy for a philosophical opponent, such as the Dean of Carlisle, to maintain, no doubt with the fullest conviction, that the philosophy of Mr. Bradley and the Christian religion are in irreconcilable antagonism. I do not believe this to be Mr. Bradley's own view, and it is certainly not mine. I should, indeed, agree with the general conviction that one notorious metaphysical doctrine of Mr. Bradley's, his theory that no proposition asserting a relation can be "ultimately true," is fatal to Christian theology, as it seems to be fatal to everything else. But this doctrine can, I believe, be denied without affecting the main value of Mr. Bradley's contribution to philosophical thought. Even if we regard it as a dangerous philosophical error, it is an error which Mr. Bradley shares with the very greatest of the Christian mystics. Hence in the ultimate things it has always seemed to me that Mr. Bradley is in many ways more at one with the great body of Christian saints and doctors than the Dean of Carlisle himself, whose theology always reminds me a little unpleasantly of the deists of the eighteenth century, at least in all that part of it which deals directly with the nature of God. If Mr. Bradley seems at times to be a direct descendant of the mystics who virtually abolished all positive theology, I cannot help feeling that Dr. Rashdall is blind to the real and permanent significance of the negative way.

If it is Mr. Bradley who is plainly, of all our living philosophers, the one most after Mr. Webb's heart, he has also much to say about two other thinkers who have exercised a profound influence on the generation to which both he and I belong, Professor Bosanquet and Lotze. Indeed he, in a way, takes the point of departure for the whole of these Lectures from a well-known difference between these two thinkers. Lotze, who refuses to call his Supreme Being an "individual," emphatically insists that the Supreme is a person, and, in fact, that He is the only complete person; Dr. Bosanquet, who holds that the Absolute and the Absolute only is truly individual, is as nearly contemptuous as so urbane a writer can be of the very notion of Divine personality. The central problem of Mr. Webb's Lectures is precisely the issue raised by this disagreement. In my own judgment he is philosophically amply justified in deciding the controversy in favour of Lotze. His discussion of Dr. Bosanquet's position is a model of philosophical sobriety and courtesy, but it leads to the conclusion which could scarcely be avoided, that with every intention of recognizing the right of religion to exist, Bosanquet, in fact, politely bows all real religion out of the world. For, to put the matter with perhaps unphilosophical bluntness, religion means worshipping something with all one's mind and soul and

strength. And you cannot really worship Bosanquet's Absolute when your eyes have been opened to its real character any more than you could worship a "fortuitous concourse of atoms." You can only worship what is through and through good, and only that of which personality is the *essentia* is good. This brief and blunt way of putting the point which Mr. Webb develops cautiously and elaborately is, as I say, unphilosophical in form, but in substance it seems to me absolutely sound. And I would make two remarks as corollaries. It is this line of thought which justifies Christian theology in its conviction that the Trinity of "persons" in the Godhead must be, as the phrase is, "essential" and not merely "economic." Signs have not been wanting in modern times of the tendency to revert from the commonly accepted standards of orthodox belief to the conception of a merely "economic" Trinity. But philosophically the reversion is a mistake. To make the Divine "persons," as Mr. Webb happily puts it, *personæ* merely in the sense of "parties" to such diverse transactions as the creation, redemption, and government of the world, so that it is, after all, the same undifferentiated individual who appears alike as the Divine "party" in all transactions, is in the end to deny that personal love and personal understanding are more at best than mere accidents of the Divine nature.

My second corollary is that Mr. Webb has, in my opinion, a right sense of a fundamental difference of spirit between Mr. Bradley and Dr. Bosanquet. Mr. Bradley's religion may be a heterodox one, but he always writes like a man who has a religion and is very much indeed in earnest about it. Dr. Bosanquet never, like Mr. Bradley, falls foul of the Christian pulpit in heated language. But that is precisely because he has not a religion of his own, or, at any rate, not one which is a vital interest. Where Mr. Bradley speaks as one contending for a faith, Dr. Bosanquet speaks with the calm of a curious observer from the outside. The fiercest blows from Mr. Bradley are, after all, the wounds of a friend; even approval from Dr. Bosanquet has something of the tone in which we may fancy Caiaphas would have commended our Lord if He had confined Himself to controversy with the fanaticism of the Pharisees. The mere intellectual formulæ of the two philosophers are so much in accord that superficial critics usually overlook this marked difference in temper, and I am the more glad that Mr. Webb has very properly called attention to it. He does well, also, to comment courteously, but incisively, on the singular parallel which Dr. Bosanquet seems to be in the habit of drawing between himself and Dante—a parallel, one might say, if one thinks of the temperaments revealed by the works of the two writers, between ice and fire.

As is only natural, a great deal of the interest of Mr. Webb's volume is historical. He has to trace for us the early history of the words which were adopted in Greek and Latin respectively to denote the distinctions within the Divine nature, *ὑπόστασις* and *persona*, and most of his discussion centres round the famous definition of the latter term by Boëthius, *persona est naturæ rationabilis individua substantia*. At first sight one might be tempted to be a little impatient with all this ancient philosophy. Why, it might be asked, cannot we discuss the attribution of personality to God on its own merits without troubling ourselves about the history of Greek and Latin Neoplatonist terminology? Mr. Webb has an admirable answer, which is also his justification for giving ten lectures on personality in God before saying a word about human personality. Ancient philosophy ran its whole course from the Milesians to the last Neoplatonists without ever feeling the need of the category of personality. "Socrates is a person" is a sentence which it would be all but impossible to translate into Greek or Latin at all. The truth is that, as Mr. Webb says, our modern interest in personality as characteristic of man himself has very largely arisen out of the elaborate attempts of the early Church to arrive at satisfactory conceptions about the nature of Deity and the mode of union of the human and Divine in Christ. The theology has begotten a psychology, and the psychology is not itself intelligible if we forget the theological discussions in which it originated. Mr. Webb does not say, but I think he might have said, that it is precisely because Mr. Bradley begins with personality as a category of psychology that his treatment of personality both in man and in God strikes some of his sincerest admirers as perfunctory and not quite worthy of him. We find ourselves thrown back on the theology of the ages of creed-making when we mean to discuss personality for the same reasons for which we have to go back to Ionian cosmology in any serious discussion of "matter." Every philosophical concept is of the nature of an answer to a question, and we cannot estimate the worth of the answer until we understand the precise import of the question. To understand that is impossible unless we know something of the considerations which have led to its being asked. Philosophers have too long treated the problems which engaged the interest of the early Church too much in the spirit of Gibbon, as though they were idle speculations of no practical import to the life and practice of any man. As Mr. Webb is careful to point out, it was precisely their tremendous practical import which led to the concentration of interest on them. The starting-point for the whole development is the felt necessity of finding a rational theory of both Divine and human nature which will do justice to the practical relation to life revealed in the acts and words

of Christ. It makes all the difference in the world to each of us whether or not Christ's attitude to God and man is the right one. If it is the right one, it must be possible to express it in a doctrine which is satisfactory to the intellect. Or, at least, so much must be conceded by everyone except those extreme "pragmatists" and "anti-intellectualists" (if there really are any such persons) who are content to make an absolute separation between truth and practice, and to say that a rule of life is none the worse for being based on an absurdity. If you do not quite seriously hold with the legendary schoolboy that "faith is believing what you know ain't true," you must have a theological dogma of some kind, even if it is only the simple dogma of the atheist of the parks. The only alternative to a dogma, as I believe Mr. Chesterton once said, is a prejudice.

I am not competent to follow Mr. Webb everywhere in his account of the history of the words *ὑπόστασις* and *persona*. To deal with them satisfactorily one would have to be at home, as he is, in patristic and scholastic literature, and also to be at home, as he modestly confesses he is not, in the whole of Neoplatonism. I feel that the discussion of the word *ὑπόστασις* in particular is a little perfunctory. The world could hardly be treated satisfactorily without a very special knowledge of Neoplatonic terminology. This knowledge Mr. Webb disclaims, and it is indeed certain that the first prerequisite for it is the construction of something which does not as yet exist, a full and trustworthy *Index Græcitatibus* to the *Enneads* of Plotinus. As it is, I am sure that Mr. Webb's account of the meanings of the all-important word is too simple for the facts. It is true enough, as he says, that it was used to signify the mode of being—if I may be allowed the phrase—of the individual which is a subject of predication, but can never itself be predicated of anything. In this sense it answers, for example, to the German *Gegenstand* in the terminology of Frege. But this is by no means the only sense of the word. Indeed, if it were, there would be a difficulty about the supreme Neoplatonic "hypostasis," the One. Since, according to Neoplatonism, nothing can be predicated of the One, it is not a subject of predicates at all. And many things which are not individuals at all—e.g., space, time, number—are regularly said by Neoplatonic writers to be *ἐν ὑποστάσει*. In fact, in the commentaries of Simplicius, *ἐν ὑποστάσει* is repeatedly contrasted with *ἐν ἐννοίᾳ* exactly as in scholastic Latin *in re* is with *in intellectu*. I mention this merely to illustrate the impossibility of fully discussing the problems connected with the ascription of personality either to God or to man until a really trustworthy account has been rendered of Greek Neoplatonist terminology. Liddell and Scott is defective on this matter, not altogether by the fault of the editors.

But in view of all the work which has been done in the last thirty years in the way of producing scholarly texts of Neoplatonist writers and in the elucidation of Neoplatonic metaphysics, we may perhaps hope that the projected revision of L. and S. will do something to remedy the defect. Meanwhile, Mr. Webb would, I believe, do well to supplement his very great knowledge of the literature of Theism by a serious study of Plotinus and Proclus. Even if one's main interest is in the scholasticism of the thirteenth century, one cannot afford to neglect those philosophers. St. Thomas is commonly thought of with reason as an Aristotelian, and the remarkably able neo-Thomists of our own day seem to make it a matter of duty in consequence to exalt Aristotle, the least original of all the major philosophers of the world, at the cost of men so much his superiors in originality as Plato and Descartes. But it is astonishing to note how much of the metaphysics of St. Thomas, if one only divests it of its verbal expression in the terminology of Aristotelian logic, is just Proclus. Indeed, the one definitely and exclusively Aristotelian feature in the metaphysics of Thomism seems to be also the one Thomistic tenet which it is quite hopeless to attempt to revive, the doctrine of the "incorruptibility" (Aristotle himself would say the "divinity") of the material "heavens." This is, of course, a survival from the old nature-philosophy to be explained by the fact that Aristotle was an Ionian, and remained an Ionian at heart, even after twenty years in Plato's Academy.

I fear I am straying a little from my immediate subject. Let me hasten to get back to it with an expression of heartfelt thanks to Mr. Webb for the accuracy with which he has formulated the Christian attitude to the problem of personality in God. I have myself always felt that the language so common now in Christian circles about the importance of the doctrine that God is "*a person*" is not wholly consistent with the accepted confessions of Faith. It is at least hard to combine the two doctrines that God is a person and that God is a Trinity of persons in *one substantia*. Of course, one can try to make the combination sound less difficult by refusing to translate the word *ὑπόστασις* and contenting one's self with a transliteration. But if one does so, one usually goes on to explain *hypostasis* in some way which does less than justice to the independence of the three *hypostases*. One is almost certain to think of them merely as "aspects" of the one Divine "person," and from thinking of them as "aspects," it is not a very long step to degrade them to the level of "appearances" (in the depreciatory sense of the word). Hence it is very interesting to me to learn from Mr. Webb that the proposition that God is *a person* seems to have been originally characteristic of Socinianism, and that until well on in the nineteenth century only writers who are unfriendly to the doctrine

of the Trinity are in the habit of speaking of the personality of God. When one sees, as one often does, hesitation to call God *a* person treated as tantamount to a repudiation of Christianity, it is well to remember that the expression forms no part whatever of the vocabulary of traditional orthodoxy. I should have liked a little more information about Mr. Webb's own view of the "unity of substance" which orthodox Christianity asserts along with the distinction of persons. I think I can tell in general what Mr. Webb's view is, but I could have wished that he had been a little more explicit. I should like to know, for example, how his conception of Trinity and Unity compares with that of St. Thomas. I have a suspicion that it lays rather more stress on the real distinction and rather less on the real unity, but I am far from sure. Strictly speaking, no doubt, Mr. Webb only promises to deal with "personality in God," and it is not in the bond to say anything about the unity of substance in God. But I think I shall not be the only reader who will wish that Mr. Webb had allowed himself to expatiate.

If I may be allowed, where all is so excellent, to single out a particular part of Mr. Webb's book for special recommendation to all thoughtful men, I should like to express my particular appreciation of Lectures VI. to IX. In the first of these, the Lecture on *The Doctrine of a Finite God*, Mr. Webb is specially concerned with the theology of my valued friend the Dean of Carlisle. I hope I may say without offence that the Dean's work has always seemed to me to be of higher quality in ethics than in theology proper. In ethics he appears to me (and I cannot speak in words which, coming from me, would express higher admiration) the worthy successor of Butler and Price, and I wish to say so all the more emphatically that he has seen fit to speak with what I think asperity about some youthful utterances of my own. But his theology has always had in my own eyes the defect it has in Mr. Webb's; it offers me a God whom I can admire and love, but not one before whom I can feel absolute and utter reverence and adoration. I can only feel that for a God who is all that Plato called "the Good." And a God who is "finite" is necessarily something less than "the Good." I suspect, indeed, that the Dean does not really mean all that his language commits him to. His object is to deny that God is what philosophers have called "the Absolute," on the ground that this makes God the whole of what is and thus denies the reality of human personality, and so saps the foundations of a genuine morality. I should agree that the doctrine the Dean has in view—Spinozism, in fact—has the defect in question, and that it is a very serious one. But the blunder, as I take it, does not lie in the identification of God with the Absolute; it lies in the identification of the Absolute with the Real. Within the Real there is the room for and the

necessity for the distinction between the Absolute, the primary and original source of everything else, and the dependent and derivative. God is the Absolute, not in the sense that God is everything, or that we do not really stand in relations to God, but in the sense that there is nothing in any being other than God, not even in the Devil's power to rebel against God, which is not derived from God. As I understand the Dean, he does not really deny this. But his language might naturally lead his readers to suppose that he does mean to deny it, and if they understand him so, then I believe Mr. Webb to be right in saying that if they act consistently on their theories, they will end by becoming unable to worship.

Adherents of an eighteenth-century type of Theism are fond of arguing that refusal to be content with a "finite" Deity leads by logical consequence to the denial of the reality of evil, and therefore to an unethical attitude towards sin. It would be hard to show that, as a matter of historical fact, the theologians who have had most to say of the Divine infinitude have had a less keen sense of the poignancy of sin than the Dean of Carlisle or J. S. Mill (I do not say they have necessarily had a keener sense). Mr. Webb, at any rate, cannot be charged either with any attempt to deny the reality of evil or with a tendency to underrate the heinousness of sin. I would urge those who think that ethical considerations require them to derogate from the unique *aseity* of the Deity not to make up their minds finally on the question until they have studied the very careful discussion which Mr. Webb gives us in Lecture VIII. (*The Problem of Sin*), and the treatment given to the notions of Forgiveness, Justice, and Sacrifice in the closing lecture of the course (*Divine Personality*). I would also specially commend to the thoughtful Christian Lecture VII. (*The Problem of Creation*), with its excellently thought-out statement of the meaning of the doctrine of the intermediation of the Word in creation and its vindication of "mythology," in the Platonic sense of the word, as a necessary and proper vehicle for religious thought where it has to do with the meeting-point of the eternal and the temporal. Myth plays only a subordinate part in the Christian religion, as Mr. Webb says, because the place which would be assigned to it in the Platonic scheme is so largely filled by the historical narrative of our Lord's life among men. But when you come to ask questions about the historical which actual history provides no data for answering, as, for instance, when you try to picture to yourself the formation of our "world" in the unrecorded past, or the life of the risen and glorified Lord "at the right hand of the Father," you inevitably have to content yourself with a story, as Plato's *Timaeus* puts it, "as like the truth" as you can make it. Myth, in this sense, is thus the necessary "surrogate of history"—in fact, it is constantly

used in this way even by the chemist and the biologist. The attempts of the botanist to make us understand the life of a flower, or of a physiologist to make us understand the life of the phagocytes in our own bodies, to say nothing of the tales of the physicist about the relations between atoms and electrons, are every bit as "mythical" as anything any theologian has taught about the creation of the world.

No reader of Mr. Webb's earlier books will need to be told that he is careful throughout his work to insist on two points of fundamental importance, the impossibility of a separate "religion of Nature," detached from all that is characteristic in the distinctive teachings of the great positive religions of the world, and the impossibility of ever making the best system of philosophical thought replace actual religion. He is nowhere in happier vein than in his criticisms of the attempts of that slightly over-rated "superior person," Benedetto Croce, to eliminate religion from the educated mind in favour of his own philosophy. And he is admirably clear on the point that, though the religious life presents problems to the philosopher, just as art and science do, when all is said, philosophical theory remains philosophical theory, and religion remains religion, an attitude of the human mind towards reality as independent of any other, and as necessary for a complete humanity as morality or art or science. Mr. Webb is to be congratulated on so truly philosophical an apologia for Christian faith in an age in which some philosophers who ought to know better still seem to regard disbelief in Christianity, or even perhaps disbelief in God, as a qualification for being taken seriously in metaphysics. It is to be hoped that the promised second volume of Mr. Webb's Gifford Lectures will not be delayed much longer.

One can only condole with the author on the inferiority of the paper on which his work has had to be printed. There are a number of errors of the press, most of them corrected in the *Errata* slip. To the corrections given there one may add, p. 142, l. 9, *for propiee read proprie*; p. 141, l. 20, *delete* the accent placed on the last letter of the word *cerchio*; p. 68, l. 8 from below, *for αὐ τοῦ read αὐτοῦ*. Professor Burnet's name is misspelt in the *Index*.

A. E. TAYLOR.

ST. ANDREWS

THE LOST APOCRYPHA OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: THEIR TITLES AND FRAGMENTS. Collected, translated, and discussed by Montague Rhodes James, Litt.D., F.B.A., F.S.A., Provost of Eton College. London: S.P.C.K. 1920. Pp. xiv + 112. 5s. 6d. net.

Fabricius's *Codex pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* was published at Hamburg in 1713 (second edition, 1722), and is not always