

with an adult "who didn't try to teach her anything or to correct her, who seemed to understand things when all the words wouldn't come, who somehow made the whole business of life seem a little less desperate and hopeless." It is by the attempt to understand, and, above all else, by the studied avoidance of even a suggestion of blame, that assistance can be afforded. It is made clear that the problem is never the fault of the child alone. The parents, the school system, and only too often the teacher, may be at least equally concerned. The share of the school in producing these difficulties is discussed in an additional chapter, written by Prof. Henry C. Morrison, of Chicago. M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

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*God and Reality.* By MARSHALL BOWYER STEWART, D.D. New York and London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1926. Crown 8vo. Pp. x + 220. Price 8s. 6d. net.

The term "God" has been, and still is used in many different senses. As Dr. Stewart remarks, everybody is talking about God without anyone knowing what anybody else is talking about. And, we may add, many people use the word without any clear idea as to what they themselves are meaning. It is not, therefore, surprising that there is unbounded confusion.

The author's object is not the enunciation of any new definition, but an attempt at the clarification of the existing confusion. And in this attempt he has attained much success. He assumes that the idea of God implies the existence of superior power, or of superior goodness, or of both, although this superiority does not necessarily proceed to the idea of supremacy in either attribute. And he then gives a lucid, although a brief account of the gradual development of the idea of God. We would remark that it is, perhaps, a little misleading to represent, as is done in one passage, Spinoza as holding that God is "all substance." The essential element in Spinoza's system is that there is but one substance—that is God. Incidentally, Dr. Stewart shows us that some of the distinctions which have been drawn are by no means, as is often asserted, mere ecclesiastical hair-splittings. The differences indicated by these verbal distinctions are of considerable moment. Whether the differences justified quarrelling, not to speak of persecution, is quite another matter. Of course, a great part of the history of the idea of God has gone on in the minds of people who knew nothing of philosophy. The culture tradition and the popular tradition run side by side.

It is next pointed out that no highest common factor can be found for all these different ideas. But three main currents of thought begin to appear. God is conceived as Proximate Reality, or as Supreme Value, or as Ultimate Reality. The first of these conceptions corresponds to the view held of God as a distinct object of religion. This particularism passes easily into the doctrine that God is finite—a doctrine which was held by William James, and which is maintained by certain living writers, notably Mr. H. G. Wells. It is also the root idea of the devotional system of

several, otherwise divergent, religious bodies. People pray for a God concomitant rather than for a God immanent. God, in this view, is the great "ideal companion," and is sometimes personified as the spirit of social service. (We wish that the author had worked out more fully the influence of fantasy in producing the many different conceptions of Deity.) This view of God is, on the surface, strongly ethical. But the author contends that it is not satisfying to the religious consciousness, nor, we may add, to the mind which, apart from formal religion, is looking for an explanation of the universe.

The doctrine of God as supreme value may be traced from Plato, through Anselm, to Kant. In this connection, the argument of Kant was, Can there be moral values without a moral governor? It is the great wish-fulfilment idea of God. And its influence may be seen in the tendency to make up for distrust of metaphysics by setting a high standard in the emotional realm. There is a desire to reduce religion to the dimensions of morality. But the doctrine is open to the grave objection that it implies, ultimately, that God is to be judged by our human value standards. It easily slides into complete subjectivity. And the author maintains that to hold this doctrine is to break with every considerable religion.

The conception of God as ultimate reality results from an insistent reaching out beyond value. It is a comparatively late idea of God. But it can be found in Aristotle, and has been held, although with verbal distinctions, by many other great thinkers. (An interesting discussion of Herbert Spencer's "agnosticism" is given.) In this view we face the facts. It is the most "metaphysical" of the three main views. But the author holds that the human mind is incurably metaphysical. And he maintains, we think rightly, that men to-day are more vitally interested in metaphysics than in ethics. We believe that this view of God is more tenable by the scientist than any other. And Dr. Stewart maintains that it is the best doctrine from the religious aspect. This may lead to a synthesis, of which more presently.

Finally, Dr. Stewart discusses the manner in which the three main doctrines are combined into the orthodox Christian view. Into this it is not our place to follow him. But the sending of such a book to this Journal for the purpose of review seems to us to be a fact of some significance. Dr. Stewart writes with comprehension and sympathy with the modern psychological position. We on our side realize that, as psychologists, we cannot study religion too much. The situation at the present time is not wholly unlike that which existed in the third century, when (as is described in this book) the traditional Jewish idea of God emerged into the Græco-Roman world, to which the present new world of science and philosophy corresponds. Dr. Stewart despairs of any modern synthesis. Is he not unduly pessimistic? We cannot look for complete agreement between psychologists and orthodox teachers of religion. But is it unduly sanguine to hope for some harmony? For it is harmony which, as Dr. Stewart happily says, "furnishes the test for reality and for value."

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