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transformed into the precise opposite of its original character; that the victory of Christianity was not the victory of the proletariat, but of the clergy which was exploiting and dominating the proletariat; that Christianity was not victorious as a subversive force, but as a conservative force, as a new prop of oppression and exploitation; that it not only did not eliminate the imperial power, slavery, the poverty of the masses, and the con-

centration of wealth in a few hands, but perpetuated these conditions. The Christian *organization*, the Church, attained victory by *surrendering* its original aims and defending their opposite.'

Profoundly as readers may differ from KAUTSKY in his attitude to the whole problem or in his treatment of detail, all must admit that his book is written with knowledge, passion, and sincerity.

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## Religion and Healing.

BY THE REVEREND A. T. CADOUX, B.A., D.D., GLASGOW.

FROM many sides Christian ministers are being urged to resume a ministry of healing. They are told that it is a dishonour to the Church that the miracles of the New Testament are not repeated to-day. More than one institution claims to have recaught ancient and potent truth that rids its votaries of all bodily ills. And here and there in Christian Churches we hear that healings have taken place.

What is the ordinary minister of religion to do about it? He sometimes wonders whether he ought not to walk into the sickroom and say, 'Arise and walk.' He asks himself whether it is lack of faith that prevents him or presumption that prompts him. He thinks that such a proceeding might succeed in some cases, but doubts whether it would do so in all; and how is he to discriminate? And he shudders to think that he might say, 'Arise and walk,' and nothing would happen.

The difficulty of the problem seems to lie mainly in the failure to distinguish the nature and significance of two distinct classes of facts:

(a) There is no doubt that the state of mind affects bodily health, and that religion affects the state of mind. Religion can and ought to give courage, cheerfulness, and inward peace, and these things make for the health of the body.

(b) It is equally certain that specific disabilities, pains, and other bodily symptoms can, in some cases, be removed by direct and specific suggestion and that religion can give force to suggestions of this sort.

Many people, of course, will claim that healings

occur by the direct action of God in answer to the prayer of faith. But we may ask, If God acts directly thus, why does He not cure all disease in this manner? And the answer must be that faith is the needful condition. But unless we accuse God of arbitrariness this means that He works through our faith. And faith, in so far as it is directed to the cure of specific maladies, is the religious equivalent for suggestibility and suggestion. So that the above division is fairly inclusive of the facts with which we have to deal.

The first class of facts involves no special difficulty: the trouble lies with the second class. Facts show that religion can be used effectively to strengthen suggestions for the removal of specific bodily evils. Do these facts indicate that such cures ought to be sought as part of the work of the Church?

The difficulty of answering the question can be met only by a further canvassing of facts. And it will be best to begin on the simplest relevant level.

Amongst the higher animals any bodily ill is met by a twofold reaction:

(1) By involuntary and largely unconscious processes, such as modification of secretions and of the amount and constituents of the blood-supply and of cellular activities, etc. This action implies the existence of a highly organized and adaptable machinery under delicate nervous control, by which the resources of the whole organism are automatically applied to remedy injury or to overcome effects produced in the organism by deleterious substances or microbes.

(2) But injury and sickness also, by causing pain and discomfort, induce voluntary actions which co-operate with the reactions included under (1). The damaged part is protected, the wound is cleansed by licking, shelter is sought, etc.

This twofold reaction against bodily harm continues when the human level is reached, but with considerable differences. The most obvious change is the great development of scientific therapy. And yet despite this advantage civilized man is less healthy than the wild beast. This is doubtless due in large part to wrong bodily habits. But an important factor is that in men the natural reactions of the organism against damage are far less efficacious than in the animal world. And the reason of this is not far to seek. The limited intellect of the animal responds to the signal of pain with certain simple actions. But the mind of man is almost as highly organized as his body. Every striking event sets his whole mind agog, stirring memories and rousing anticipations. When an injury occurs or something abnormal appears in his body he grows anxious and apprehensive. He has known men die of such things. And this state of mind reacts upon the nervous system, reduces his power of resistance and handicaps the organism in the exercise of those curative functions which are so effective at a lower stage. And there seems no limit to the impediment which the mind can thus put upon the bodily functions that make for health and healing. Any man who has made up his mind that he is going to die lessens materially the likelihood of his recovery. And with people of a certain type the effect is even greater. The witch-doctor casts his spell and the healthy savage dies in two or three days.

Here, however, we have reached a different, though related, class of facts. For not only may the state of mind impede the curative functions of the body, but facts seem to prove that specific pathological states of body can be induced by suggestion. This may happen either by suggestions of which we are fully conscious or, apparently with still more striking and evil results, by suggestions of which the patient is not conscious, as in the cases of hysteria of which the psycho-analyst has recently told us so much. It is stated that there is hardly a known form of disease the symptoms of which cannot be so produced, and that cases of this sort bear a considerable proportion to those of purely physical origin. There is little doubt that much

modern ill-health is due to this power of suggestion even in its simpler forms. The ubiquitous advertisements of patent medicines must alone be an important modern factor in suggesting ill-health.

These facts would lead us to expect, what other facts abundantly confirm, that suggestion can not only sometimes create pathological conditions, but can also sometimes remove them. The limits of this possibility have not been defined, but it appears, as we should expect, that suggestion is most effective to remove conditions which suggestion has induced.

This being so, the question arises, Ought religion to use its immense powers to produce direct and specific suggestions for the removal of bodily ailments? But before we consider the religious point of view certain general considerations are to be noted.

It is a frequently observable fact that the desire to employ religious or other means of suggestion for curative purposes leads to a dangerous and sometimes fatal postponement of the use of medical skill. This, of course, is most likely to occur in the case of those who believe that by these means all diseases may be overcome. Unless we do so believe, however, another danger will be obvious to us. For to apply suggestion and to fail would leave the patient depressed and hopeless and therefore worse. But only scientific training can qualify a man to judge when suggestion is likely to be successful, so that its use by the untrained may easily produce the opposite of the effect intended. Then, too, particular suggestion of this sort is aimed at the removal of the obvious symptom rather than of its underlying cause, so that the removal of a pathological state by this means is often followed by its reappearance or by the appearance of others. This is the psycho-analyst's objection to the use of suggestion in the cases with which he has to deal. Connected, too, with this aspect of the matter is the fact that the symptom which suggestion is invoked to remove may be one of nature's curative processes. It might be possible by suggestion to stop vomiting and so to prevent nature's attempt to rid the stomach of undesirable contents. And this confirms the conclusion as to the danger of the use of suggestion for curative purposes by persons without medical training.

To these considerations must be added those connected more especially with the use of religion as a means to curative suggestion. When the

suggestion is religious the result of failure is likely to be the more disastrous. Any failure to cure by suggestion is likely to dispirit the patient and so to diminish his power to resist disease, but the failure of religious suggestion is likely also to be a blow to the patient's religion and so to rob him of its consolation and its experience of a 'power made perfect in weakness.' It is interesting in this connexion to note that in the account which Luke (the physician) gives of the healing of the cripple at Lystra, he tells us that Paul, '*seeing that he had faith to be made whole*, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet,' which suggests that one of the essential qualities of a 'worker of miracles' was the ability to discern when they would work. Of course, it is always possible to explain failures by saying that the patient lacked faith. But it is surely dangerous to persuade a man that he lacks faith despite his utmost willingness and desire to believe. If he is made to conclude that he has not faith enough to cure his body, will he not be likely to fear that he has not faith enough to save his soul? Paul, in his own case, besought the Lord thrice, and the cure did not happen. Had he then concluded that his faith in God had gone, how would he have fared?

In any use of suggestion, to contemplate the possibility of failure is to invite it. Hence comes the temptation to shape one's thinking so as to give suggestion its maximum force. The interests of bodily comfort and health are thus made to bias our belief and tamper with our honesty of thought. The consideration of prayer will show how inevitable this is. There is no doubt that prayer gives a calm and courage that are helpful to health. But we are here considering the use of prayer for the removal of some definite bodily evil. If it is to have suggestive power to this end, then the prayer can no longer be, 'If it be thy will . . .' To give the prayer any power of direct suggestion we must make ourselves sure that it is God's will that we should not suffer. And how can we be sure of this without believing that God never wills that His creatures should suffer? It may be said that a good God cannot will pain, but when we remember that the goodness of God makes us in the first place sure that He never wills man to be unrighteous, we see that to extend a similar assurance to pain, is to assume that the bodily ease of His children is as important to God as their righteousness. And yet religious health cults

underpin suggestion with the assertion that God never wills that man should suffer. An alternative is to deny the reality of pain, to assert that it is a creation of evil imagination and has no real existence. All such attempts divorce religion from fact, and make it inwardly contradictory. They are committed to the assumption that pain is always either an evil in itself or the result of evil thought, against which stand the facts of the existence of pain in the animal world and the part it there plays in the interests of health. On the other hand, the argument that God, because He is good, cannot will pain or disease, implies that pain and disease can never serve any good purpose or be the unavoidable concomitant of any good. But if they can never produce, or be necessary to, any good, what are we to think of the God who allows them to exist even in imagination?

The tendency to strengthen suggestion at the price of truth is visible in other than religious attempts. Most people in reading the account of M. Coué's method feel that it is an attempt to impose upon the subconscious the declaration that a certain thing is true, not because we believe it, but because we desire that it may become true. Another form of the same tendency is to exploit the more primitive levels of the human mind and to take man back to the days of high suggestibility, when the witch-doctor's 'medicine' was effective. Thus we have the use of charms and relics, of holy waters, and holy oil. And those who count this comparison odious should ask themselves why, if they are persuaded that with them God works through these means, they should deny that He helps the savage through means so similar.

We have also to consider what effect a cure is likely to have on the spiritual life of the patient. How is he to think of it? Is it a special Divine grace to him? If so, does God make favourites, since many go unhealed? Or is it that he has more faith than others? In either case the conclusion is likely to be that he is in some way remarkable and exceptional. It is likely to increase self-interest, especially as the cure has come in a way that gives him a claim on the interest of others. The effect of being so cured is thus very likely to be spiritually detrimental. We see this more than once in the case of those whom Jesus healed. The nature of their cure prompted them to disobey Him, and they answered His strict injunction to silence by immediate and diligent disobedience

(Mk 1<sup>45</sup> 7<sup>36</sup>). Gratitude would surely have shown itself in obedience, so that we have to debit their disobedience to the desire to be of interest to their fellows. And this exaggerated self-interest is unwholesome.

These considerations explain the frequently observed result that when religion is made the direct means to specific curative suggestion, there is a tendency for spiritual interests to be swamped by the interests of bodily health. In all religious cults which profess the elimination of disease and pain, this interest tends to become supreme and all-absorbing. So truth is avenged: refuse to give a fact its rightful place and you will find it occupying one to which it has no right. In Christian Churches this result is immediate and obvious. Spiritual healing will bring crowds that are interested in bodily rather than spiritual health. In proportion to its success, healing by religious means will tend to exalt the physical benefit above the spiritual. This was the experience even of Jesus. And this brings us to consider the part that healing played in His ministry, since it is to Him that appeal is made by those who bid the Church resume this function.

The second Gospel, which is our best authority for the life and works of Jesus, preserves for us an otherwise obscured but very interesting fact. Mark's account makes it evident that Jesus very soon found that His work as healer was impeding His more important work as teacher and preacher. At Capernaum on the Sabbath evening a great crowd is gathered by His fame as a healer: 'and in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed. . . . And they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee. And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth' (Mk 1<sup>36ff.</sup>). The demand for healing calls in one direction; His proper work, that of preacher, in another. After His experience in Capernaum, Jesus shows an unwillingness to heal. The leper's 'If thou wilt' is unrebuked, in contrast to the censured 'If thou canst' of the lunatic's father. And the reason is soon obvious. The healing of the leper is followed by such a gathering of crowds that Jesus has to cease His public work in the cities (Mk 1<sup>45</sup>). Mk 3<sup>7-13</sup> has a similar account of thronging occasioned by His fame as healer with a similar result, that preaching was made difficult

and Jesus was compelled to take special measures to protect His vocation as preacher. It accords with this that Jesus repeatedly enjoined silence upon the healed (Mk 1<sup>44</sup> 5<sup>43</sup> 7<sup>36</sup> 8<sup>26</sup>), the inference from which is that He did not want people to come for healing. The same inference is in the repeated statement that Jesus was 'besought' to heal (Mk 1<sup>40</sup> 5<sup>23</sup> 7<sup>32</sup> 8<sup>22</sup>), a word which implies that assent was not readily given. And the healings not only diminish in number, but at one 'He sighed,' and at the next the first attempt was only partially successful, and after that they disappear from the Marcan account, with the exception of the cure of Bartimæus, which occurred under circumstances in which it could not add to the thronging.

It seems also that the sort of faith that made healing possible was not the sort that was spiritually valuable. Jesus 'could do no mighty work' in Nazareth, but was confined to healings of a minor sort 'because of their unbelief' (Mk 6<sup>5</sup> 6). We infer that where mighty works were done the requisite faith was found, and yet we read that He has to 'upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not' (Mt 11<sup>22-24</sup>, Lk 10<sup>12-15</sup>). We note also that, apart from demoniacs, we are not told that any one whom Jesus healed was amongst His permanent followers, which is remarkable despite the fragmentariness of the record.

All this suggests that, apart from the casting out of demons, which belongs to a separate category and needs special consideration, cures wrought by Jesus were rare and exceptional after the earliest days of His ministry. Against this may be urged Jesus' reply to the messengers of the Baptist, 'Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them' (Mt 11<sup>4-5</sup>, Lk 7<sup>22</sup>). But it seems probable that those New Testament scholars are right who think that the cures here named were intended to be understood as figurative of the spiritual. For if we take them literally we have not only the difficulty of such a demonstration, but also that in that case the last clause is an anticlimax. In that case also the words that follow, 'And blessed is he that shall find none occasion of stumbling in me,' are not apposite, whereas if they followed purely spiritual triumphs they are meaningful and necessary. Another

indication is that the casting out of demons is not mentioned, which is inexplicable if the list is literal, for that was the most frequent and important of Jesus' miracles and the only one to which He otherwise appealed as evidence of His mission (Mt 12<sup>28</sup>, Lk 11<sup>20</sup>). If, however, the list was intended to be figurative of the conquest of spiritual maladies, the omission is intelligible, for demoniac possession was itself a spiritual rather than a physical evil. And it is important to note that if these terms of disease and cure are figurative, the whole passage suggests very strongly that their literal counterparts did not form part of what Jesus regarded as His work.

Another item of evidence is found in several statements that describe the work of Jesus and the Twelve as that of preaching and casting out of demons, no mention being made of other healings (Mk 1<sup>39</sup> 3<sup>14, 15</sup> 6<sup>7</sup>). This in all probability represents the oldest tradition, for the development of tradition in such a matter is much more likely to be in the direction of addition than omission; for example, Matthew in taking over these very statements adds to exorcisms 'all manner of disease, and all manner of sickness' (Mt 4<sup>23</sup> 10<sup>1</sup>). Further evidence that the miracles were generally confined to the casting out of demons is found in the scribal calumny, 'By the prince of the demons casteth he out demons,' which was evidently intended to dispose of Him altogether as a wonder-worker, and would otherwise have been pointless.

In endeavouring to understand the place given by Jesus to the casting out of demons, it is idle to explain demoniac possession by referring it to the common primitive notion that all diseases are the work of evil spirits. Disease and demoniac possession are regarded in the Gospels as two quite distinct things (e.g. Mk 3<sup>10-12</sup>). A deaf man is a different sort of case from one with a deaf demon and is differently treated (Mk 7<sup>33f.</sup> 9<sup>25</sup>). There can be no doubt that this phenomenon was important to Jesus because of its moral and spiritual elements. He regarded it as a triumph of spiritual evil in the soul and as a defiance of God's kingship. It is probably not necessary to suppose that in all cases of possession there was serious mental abnormality. 'Savage priests or medicine-men who have been converted to Christianity have often declared that they did really believe themselves possessed by the god or the devil during their religious ecstasies or wild dervish-dances and felt the corresponding

emotions' (Dr. Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, p. 473). Some cases seem analogous to the mediumistic trance, and there were others in which the abnormality was more serious. Demoniacs appear to have been highly suggestible: their susceptibility appears in their frequent acclamation of Jesus as the Son of God (Mk 1<sup>24</sup> 3<sup>11</sup> 5<sup>7</sup>; cf. Ac 16<sup>16, 17</sup>). Belief in the possibility of obsession by demons, the evil fascination of the belief, and the feeble resistance which the combination of an evil conscience and excitable mind could offer to the idea, would probably be enough to account altogether for some cases and to give the definite colour of possession to others. It is noticeable that we never read of any mental case being brought to Jesus except those of demoniacs. This suggests either that Jesus confined Himself to dealing with this class, or that other mental troubles under pressure of the prevailing belief in demoniac possession tended to develop into it. Probably both conditions were at work.

But it is evident that, so far as Jesus was concerned, the dominant element in this phenomenon was not the mentally pathological, but the morally and spiritually evil. The demoniac was regarded as the absolute slave of an evil power. He was not a man who had chosen freely to be utterly evil, but one whose sin had allowed the entry of a Power which his will was powerless to evict. It was the complete tyranny of evil in men who were not completely evil. It was a triumph of evil in its own right which Jesus could not but challenge. And He combated it, not by questioning the theory on which it partly depended, but by facing the power of evil with a greater majesty of good. To do so was a necessary element in His proclamation of the kingdom. The blind or lame might have the kingship of God in their hearts: the demoniac could not. The immediate interest in casting out demons was to make room for God. Without that the empty mind would suffer reversion and the last estate would be worse than the first (Mt 12<sup>43-45</sup>, Lk 11<sup>24-26</sup>).

There is reason therefore to conclude that Jesus speedily found that the exercise of His power to heal was incompatible with His work as a proclaimer of truth, and that He therefore refrained from all healings and confined Himself to the casting out of demons, in which He brought the sufferer not wholeness of body but peace of mind and the possibility of enjoying the presence of God.

We must now glance at the attitude and practice of the early Church in this respect. The nature of the narratives in Acts suggests that such healings were extraordinary and rare. Some people assume that the early Church treated all bodily ailments in this 'miraculous' way by religious suggestion, but this is improbable. That a fellow-Christian could be called 'the beloved physician' indicates that they did not despise the medical knowledge of their time. Paul, in speaking of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Co 12<sup>4-31</sup>), thrice distinguishes 'miracles' (*δυνάμεις*, powers) from 'healings' (*ιάματα*), making it clear that he was thinking of two quite distinct activities. This distinction implies either 'miracles' that were not 'healings,' or 'healings' that were not 'miracles.' The former is unlikely. The word *δυνάμεις* is regularly used both in the Gospels and Acts for miracles of healing, and especially for the casting out of demons (cf., e.g., Ac 19<sup>11ff.</sup>). And if 'miracles' in 1 Co 12 has this meaning, 'healings' would be of the non-miraculous sort accomplished by the use of the medical skill of the day. Indeed, the word *ιάματα* seems generally to mean 'means of healing, remedies.' In confirmation it may be noted that Paul ranks 'healings' with 'helps and governments' on a rather mundane level. This suggests that the care of the sick by the then known means was a branch of the Church's regular activity and that cures by religious suggestion, i.e. 'miracles,' and the casting out of demons were regarded as quite a distinct activity to be exercised by those who were specially gifted. We have no means of determining what proportion healings by religious suggestion bore to exorcisms in the 'miracles' of the early Church. But it need not surprise us if, in regard to the former, the Church returned to what Jesus had discarded: in the 'speaking with tongues' also we have a religious phenomenon that plays no part in the ministry of Jesus and hardly seems compatible with the general spirit of His methods.

These considerations may help to explain the subsequent history of activities of healing in the Church. The casting out of demons disappears only when belief in 'possession' and cases of 'possession' are no longer found: whenever these reappear there is a reappearance of the Christian exorcist. Healing of specific bodily ills by religious suggestion may be expected to develop along several lines. It may be discovered, as it was by Jesus, to militate against the proper work of the

Church and may be therefore disused. It may be encouraged and may automatically bring itself to an end by lessening the spiritual intensity of which it is sometimes, as it was with Jesus, a by-product. Or it may be fostered and retained by shaping thought and practice to this end, the result of which seems to be the obtaining of certain doubtful advantages to health and certain spectacular advantages of advertisement at the cost of a considerable danger to intelligence, honesty of thought, and spirituality.

So far as the question of our present duty is concerned, we have seen that the action of Jesus confirms the conclusion to which we came on general grounds, that the direct application of religious suggestion to specific maladies is possible and often effective, but that it is a dangerous practice for those whose supreme duty lies in witnessing to the truth and proclaiming the gospel. And we saw that it was not without danger to both the bodily and spiritual health of the sufferer.

We are therefore left to find the legitimate influence of religion on health in the effect of a quiet, cheerful, courageous, joyful mind upon those bodily functions that make for health and healing. This will put the Church at an apparent disadvantage with those cults that are willing to use religious suggestion for the removal of specific bodily ills. They will attract those who prefer bodily well-being to soundness of mind and are more eager for physical ease than for truth.

On the other hand, we should do wrong to expect too little. For a good state of mind removes the impediment of anxiety and fear from, and adds energy to, the curative functions of the organism, and their range and efficiency are great. Baudouin tells us that the subconscious is 'a clever physiologist,' 'we have merely to suggest the idea of cure, and the subconscious makes it its business to discover the physiological means for realising the cure' (*Suggestion and Autosuggestion*, pp. 212, 270). Whatever truth there is in this statement must depend ultimately upon the highly organized and adaptable curative functions of the organism common to us and the higher animals. For this subconscious Physiologist is a strange fellow: you must not tell him what you want him to do: you must tell him that a certain thing is happening, and then he will make it happen. Surely, so far as this method is effective for health, what really happens is simply this—that, by persuading our-

selves that our bodily evils will disappear, we remove the anxiety and depression that arise from them and so remove what has been impeding the natural curative processes. This is confirmed by the fact that better results are obtained by directing autosuggestion to general health rather than to the removal of particular evils (*ibid.* p. 157). The beneficial effect of suggestion in counteracting morbid suggestions and in inducing a state of mind that allows the organism to get on with its own curative functions must therefore be clearly distinguished from the specific physical effects that can be induced by suggestion and are of questionable value, especially when the person giving the suggestion has had no medical training.

And it must be here noted that though Christianity has no particular advantage in the matter of specific suggestion, it has unrivalled power to give joy and inward peace.

It seems, therefore, that we ought to live upon, and teach, the truth that the Christian mind must not be expected to eliminate all disease, but that it will certainly have a beneficial effect upon health, which may be expected to be great and the limits of which are unknown. But directly to seek health in this way is something like the search for happiness—we are likely to find it only if we look for something greater. There must be fearlessness and self-forgetfulness. The tendency of a particular malady to draw attention to itself must be

resisted; and this may best be done by giving it just so much attention as the practical steps towards cure demand and no more.

This may involve the doctor's help, which is demanded by another factor. Inward peace is unreal unless it has its counterpart in fulfilled duty. And it is a duty, a right response to nature and to God, to use the best means to the remedy of ill. The obtaining and intelligent and hopeful use of the best medical advice will be an essential condition of a sane inward peace in face of sickness. And the effect of the good mind upon the body by releasing and energizing the organism's natural curative powers will co-operate directly with medical skill, which to a very large extent aims at assisting these natural functions.

And from this point of view, while the maximum power of mind and body are working for health, we can recognize and do justice to the spiritual possibilities of pain and disease. We can recognize that they are sometimes inevitable and may be the means of good. For sincere hearts have never found suffering an unrecompensed evil. In it they have learnt reliance on God, they have found freedom from the obsession of self-concern, they have learnt to sympathize with their fellows. If suffering could not bring a man into unique fellowship with God, the scriptures of saintship would be dimmed of half their light and the Cross would be shorn of its power and glory.

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## Literature.

### THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL.

PROFESSOR RUDOLF KITTEL's lectures on *The Religion of the People of Israel* (Allen & Unwin; 7s. 6d. net), which have been admirably translated by R. Caryl Micklem, constitute a fine treatment of a great subject. The writer brings to his task every quality that is necessary—a keen historical sense, wide knowledge, a critical instinct that is at once courageous and cautious, and a religious instinct without which the secret of Israel's story remains impenetrable. Persuaded of the profound influence exercised upon the religion of Israel by the religions of the various peoples with which she came into

definite contact, Kittel prefaces his discussion by an elaborate and illuminating sketch of the Canaanite background; he also justly emphasizes, much more than would have been possible thirty years ago, the influence of Egypt upon the literature of the Hebrews. But throughout the whole discussion he is careful to assert the extraordinary power with which Israel adapted and transformed such material as she borrowed, or, as he puts it, 'the remarkable independence with which she rejected or amended polytheistic ideas and such as were beneath her.' More particularly does he insist on Israel's unique distinction—a distinction which he dates from the time of Moses—that in her