

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

DR. ARTHUR WRIGHT, Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, has sent a paper to the *Journal of Theological Studies* on the position of Judas Iscariot among the Twelve. He has been rejoicing in the way in which Dr. Swete has lately been overturning traditional assumptions. He also has a traditional assumption to overturn.

That assumption is that during our Lord's ministry, Simon Peter was the leader of the Twelve, and Judas Iscariot somewhere else. Dr. WRIGHT believes that Judas Iscariot was the leader of the Twelve, and that Simon Peter, though his force of character gradually brought him forward, began somewhere near the other end. What are the proofs?

First of all, Judas held the bag. Now the bag is the symbol of authority. There is an American anecdote, of which Dr. WRIGHT is not aware, that on the wedding eve the husband said to his newly-wedded wife, 'Is it you or I, my dear, that's going to be president of this concern?' to which she sweetly replied that she would be quite content to be the treasurer. The treasurer is the person in authority. So it is now. So it was then.

The bag is the symbol of authority—and the instrument of temptation. Judas lost while Peter gained, both in spirituality and in honour. Peter's

confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' which surprised himself, no doubt, as it surprised them all, brought every eye upon him. When the controversy arose as to which of them was greatest, Judas had long been losing ground, while Peter had been gaining ground. The dispute, in Dr. WRIGHT'S opinion, was a deliberate attempt to oust Judas from the primacy, and to give that place to Peter. But the Lord interposed. It was His rule to let both grow together until the harvest. It would destroy Judas's last chance of repentance if he were disgraced. And it would be ill for the future of the Church if every suspected officer were at once ejected.

But Judas had his warning. The words were addressed to the Twelve: 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in that which is least is unjust also in much.' The words were addressed to the Twelve, but they were specially meant for Judas, and would appeal powerfully to his conscience.

So at the Last Supper Judas is still the leader of the band. For Dr. WRIGHT has no doubt about the order in which the disciples leaned on the couches. He follows Mr. E. J. Lewis in his picture of the Last Supper. Judas is next to our Lord on the one side, and John on the other. Peter is manifestly out of reach of the ear of our

Lord. He cannot himself whisper the question, 'Who is it?' so he beckons to John to ask. 'John leans back to catch our Lord's ear, who whispers in reply. Iscariot whispers into the other ear, "Is it I?" None of them could have spoken out aloud, but if we admit the whispers all is plain.'

But Dr. WRIGHT reserves his best evidence to the end. In Mk 14¹⁰ Judas is called 'one of the twelve.' The Greek is peculiar. It is literally 'the one of the twelve.' Dr. WRIGHT has no doubt whatever that 'the one of the twelve' means the first or the chief of the Twelve. And he is glad to find Dr. Moulton agree with him. So he concludes that Judas by transgression fell not only from a place among the Twelve, but from the first place. He has become the last, as the last became first.

We have been well told that when the war is over we need not expect to see our churches crowded with soldiers. One chaplain has estimated, after the deliberate examination of a great number of them, that one per cent. of the men in camp were in the habit of attending church, and his belief is that after the war one per cent. will continue that habit.

What are we to do then? Clearly we must find out what kept them from attending church before the war. Two things kept them. The Christianity we had to offer them was not worth their acceptance. And even if it had been worth their acceptance we did not know how to offer it.

Let us ignore the second objection for the present. Why is the Christianity we offer not worth their acceptance? Because its offer is to the poor in spirit. The very first words of the Christian religion are 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' And this, which the men understand to mean poor-spirited, is the one thing above all other things that they will have nothing to do with. The religion, they say, of which the very first offer

is happiness to the man whom the world calls a shirker, is not worth looking at.

The objection is exaggerated and absurd. But it is there. And not only is it there, but in some form or other, more or less articulate, it is almost universally there. Nothing gives the ordinary soldier more surprise than to find the chaplain in a place of danger. And he is always on the outlook for an explanation which will restore him his normal idea of a Christian. Mr. John HARGRAVE writes an entertaining book entitled *At Swola Bay*. When he went out with the stretcher-bearers 'a parson came with us,' he was surprised to see. 'I marched just behind the adjutant, and the parson walked with me. He was a big man and a fair age. We went past the well and the bivouacs. *I could see he was very nervous.*' And from that he proceeds until he has taken away all the virtue from the parson.

How are we to meet that objection? It is very difficult to meet. There is nothing more difficult that we have to do. For the very heart of Christianity is in that sentence, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' And there it is, meeting every man in the face as he turns his face towards Christ. The objection is so difficult to meet that even so excellent a scholar as Dr. Selwyn has tried the desperate solution of translating the words, 'Blessed are the poor, by the Spirit.'

In an article in the *Journal of Theological Studies* Canon SLOMAN deals with that translation, and dismisses it. He comes back to the Old Testament. In the Book of Psalms the true servants, of Jehovah are often represented as humbled and oppressed. They are encouraged by being told that nevertheless the Lord is with them. Take Ps 34¹⁸. Driver's translation is, 'The Lord is nigh unto the broken in heart; and he saveth them that are crushed in spirit.' Now these servants of Jehovah who are so often broken in heart and crushed in spirit are sometimes called the poor, for the simple reason that they generally

did belong to the poorer classes. And so in the Septuagint the terms 'crushed in spirit' and 'poor in spirit' became interchangeable. And where St. Luke, with his Gentile associations, simply says, 'Blessed are the poor,' St. Matthew the Jew goes back directly to the sense of the Psalms and makes the meaning clear by saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.'

That is Canon SLOMAN's interpretation, and it is no doubt the right one. Is the difficulty removed? By no means. The fact is still to be faced by every man who would come to Christ, that he must seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness before everything else, and that the search will often find him among the poor in spirit. Not among the poor-spirited. If he can only see it, just the opposite of that. But among those who are broken in heart and crushed in spirit, and that not only on account of their own sin, but often also on account of the oppression of the ungodly. That is Christianity. And if the soldier says that such a Christianity is not worth having, is there anything more that we can do with him?

One of the Chaplains to the Forces tells us that he was talking with a junior officer about church-going. The officer admitted that he did not go much to church. You keep telling us, he said, what we ought to do. We know that already. Why do you not tell us how to do it?

The Rev. Charles E. RAVEN, M.A., Dean of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, has determined to answer that officer's question. He does not seem to have been an army chaplain. But he has had a wide experience of men. And he has come to the conclusion that wherever you are, in the army or out of it, it is quite useless to continue telling the people what they ought to do. You must tell them how to do it. And you must tell them that first. Now to tell them how to do it is to bring them to Christ. It is to let them know who Christ is. He has accordingly written a book with as

much simplicity and plainness of speech as he can command, and has called it *What Think Ye of Christ?* (Macmillan; 4s. 6d. net).

There is just one way of telling a man who Christ is. It is to make clear to him what are the doctrines of Christianity. These doctrines, the essential doctrines, are not numerous. Nor are they really difficult to understand. We have first of all to see that we understand them ourselves. And then we have to take some pains to put them into intelligible language, language that will be intelligible to junior officers. We have to prove what a distinguished theologian and preacher used to assert, that there is no doctrine of the faith too deep to be expressed in everyday English. Mr. RAVEN has been a teacher of theology in Cambridge University. He has also had the oversight for some years of a common country parish. He has had to understand what the doctrines of Christianity are. He has taken trouble, he takes trouble in this book, to make them intelligible to ordinary men.

The essential doctrines of Christianity, we said, are not many. There are numerous things that may be said about Christ, and if they are true they are all essential to a full understanding of Him. There is the revelation that He has made to us of God. There is also His oneness. And there is His many-sidedness. All these aspects of Christ Mr. RAVEN considers pretty fully and most attractively. But our purpose at present is to know Christ in such a way that we shall be able to do the things which it is our duty to do. And to that end two doctrines are quite sufficient. One is the doctrine of His Divinity; the other is the doctrine of His Atonement.

Now it is not to be denied that there are difficulties in both these doctrines. There are insurmountable difficulties. But neither is it to be denied that with these insurmountable difficulties we have nothing necessarily to do. We have to know Christ in such a way that He will be to us

—what is the usual word?—a Saviour. That signifies that He will be to us the means of the forgiveness of our sins. And not only of the forgiveness of our sins, but of our deliverance from them. We have so to know Christ that He will be to us who already understand what we ought to do, the desire and the strength to do it. And for that purpose there is enough in the doctrines of the Divinity and the Atonement that is quite within the comprehension of every one of us.

Take the Divinity first. The Doctrine of the Divinity has to tell us that Christ is able to forgive us our sins. Jesus did this when He was upon the earth. 'Son,' He said, 'thy sins are forgiven thee.' Had He this power as a man? No one would for a moment allow it. For no one believes that one man can forgive the sins of another man. The Jews were entirely right when they said, 'Who can forgive sins but God only?'

It is provoking to find that just here Mr. RAVEN deserts us. He has said so much about Christ that is altogether acceptable, and he has said it so supremely well, that it is with the keenest disappointment we discover that his doctrine of the Divinity of Christ stops short of Godhead. He knows quite well that the doctrines of Christianity are useless unless they give us a Christ who can save. In his Introduction he says, 'A theology if it is to be acceptable must not only be subjected to the enquiry, "Is this true?" but to the sterner question, "Does this work? Does it save souls?"' And it is not that he is troubled about the difficulty of understanding the doctrine of Christ's Divinity. He stops short of Deity quite unexpectedly. The only reason we can find for it is that he is determined not to introduce anything that would be offensive to the scientific reason. But to admit that there is a God at all is to exceed the range of physical science. To admit that Jesus was God may be one step more, but after the other it is a perfectly reasonable step. In any case, Mr. RAVEN concludes that Jesus the Christ did not differ in kind, but only in degree, from such

men as we are, and thereby makes His Divinity of none effect. If Jesus was not God in any sense in which it is folly to talk of men as gods, there is no such doctrine as a doctrine of His Divinity.

The other doctrine that is essential to a Christ that can save is the doctrine of His Atonement. And here also Mr. RAVEN falls short. We are again disappointed, but this time perhaps it is not so unexpected.

There are two things which the Atonement of Christ has to accomplish. It has to make us sorry for our sins, and it has to satisfy the righteousness of God. Mr. RAVEN writes admirably of the effect of the cross of Christ in making a man truly sorry for his sins, and ready to return to God. For one thing, he speaks out fearlessly about sin itself. 'Unpopular as is such a beginning nowadays, sin, the fact of sin, is the only sound starting-point for religion. It is in their rejection of the Fall of man, or of the condition of mankind which this unpleasant doctrine purports to account for, that the typically modern theories, theological and political, make the blunder that is their undoing.'

'And sin,' he goes on, 'as every one knows who has ever felt its power, is no superficial blemish. No mere palliative, no surface treatment is any use. It needs the knife; and we must cut deep. Indeed the only language at all appropriate to the magnitude of the change required is that of Scripture. We want a new birth: our flesh "must come again like the flesh of a little child" if we are to be clean: we must "die unto sin" if we are to "live unto righteousness." What we require is something that will literally lift us out of ourselves. For the old theologians were right when they said that the primal sin was pride, selfishness; and only by escaping self can we escape sin. Is there any power that can set us free? How is a man to be delivered from the burden of this death?'

And he is just as admirable in what he proceeds

to say about love—the vision of the love of Christ on the cross in its effect upon us, making us repent of our sinfulness and bringing us into such a response of love that we say, ‘I will arise and go to my Father.’ It is all admirable; but it is not enough.

We may doubt if the vision of the love of any man, even the love of the man Christ Jesus, is enough to kindle the response of love in the heart of every other man. When Paul’s heart is kindled by it he sees something more in the cross of Christ than the love of one individual man for other men. He always sees what we might call a representativeness in the death of Christ. Thus he says, ‘The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died.’ That representativeness of the cross of Christ is impossible in any real sense upon Mr. RAVEN’S doctrine of His Divinity. For it implies a relationship to the universe of God which no mere man can sustain. That relationship belongs to the doctrine of Christ’s Divinity. Rejecting the Divinity, Mr. RAVEN has no place for it in the Atonement.

The universe is hung upon a law of righteous-

ness. All its motions are orderly. It reflects the orderly mind of God. When a man by his sinfulness breaks through that orderly movement it is not enough that he should be sorry for it. It is enough for him, but it is not enough for the universe. In the physical sphere, if a man by his carelessness smashes the tooth of a wheel, it is not enough that he should say he is sorry for it. The interruption to the even flow of the machinery must be removed. So is it in the moral sphere. Even more so, because the adjustments of the moral order are more delicate than those of the physical order. Our own conscience demands reparation as well as repentance. The conscience of the whole universe demands it. And since it is notorious that a man cannot make reparation for the evil he has done in the universe of God’s moral order, it falls upon Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God, to make that reparation as an essential part of His Atonement.

Is this too difficult for the ordinary intelligence? We do not think so. We have never found it so. The ordinary intelligence is never really at rest in repentance for sin until it recognizes that Christ has made reparation for the wrong that sin has brought into the world.

The Psalter and the Present Distress.

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TO-DAY we are being swept along by forces which we can neither persuade nor control, and there are moods in which we almost permit ourselves to be convinced of what some one has rather cynically called the futility of all human discussion. Yet the man who has nothing to say to the sorrows and the horror, the tragedy and the welter, of the world to-day, has nothing to say at all: for what are they but the general sorrows and tragedies of men ‘writ large’? The mystery we face and the burden we carry to-day is, though doubtless on a stupendous scale, the mystery and the burden

which men have borne from the beginning. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; but so is man, so also is human life. We are not ‘the first that ever burst’ into this tempestuous sea. The men who wrote the Psalms and the men who all down the ages have sung them were tossed upon it too; and it is just here that the Psalter can render us its inestimable service. It was out of the depths of a sorrow as keen as ours that the Psalmists cried to God, and the deep of our experience answers to the deep of theirs. They knew what was in man, and that is why they