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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM SANDAY, resigning his Chair in Oxford, has delivered three lectures, as if he would gather the sense of all his teaching into one final message. These three lectures, together with a sermon, a great sermon on the Atonement, preached before the University, he has issued in one volume with the title of *Divine Overruling* (T. & T. Clark; 6s. net).

The three lectures (we reserve the Sermon) deal with the three things of fullest discussion at the present moment—the place of the Comparative Study of Religion, the fact (or fancy) of a Revelation, and the reality of Miracle. On each of the three Dr. SANDAY speaks the latest and most weighty word. For he knows them all most intimately, even all that others know, and he has made up his mind.

His greatest concern, and ours, is with Miracle. For it is the facility with which some can believe in miracle even now, and the difficulty which others find in believing in miracle at any time—these two—that are the most obvious and amazing signs of our day. Dr. SANDAY does not turn his face to the Spiritualist. He is concerned, and very seriously concerned, with the mind of the man of science. If he must recognize a call from God to speak the word that shall help, before he

is silent for ever, this is the subject on which he feels it must be spoken.

Perhaps no man ever realized more clearly how great a thing a miracle is. The modern tendency—we might say the tendency of the modernist—is to make light of it. Dr. SANDAY is a modernist. He calls himself so. But he makes much of a miracle. The entrance of a force from another world into this, and not a spiritual force affecting our spirit—for no one doubts that spirit with spirit can meet—but a force touching us materially, speaking to us, healing our minds, our bodies, lifting us perhaps out of the grave—that is to Dr. SANDAY a very great and notable thing. He may wonder that the Spiritualist can believe it so easily, but he says nothing. He does not wonder that the Scientist believes it with so great difficulty. To him he has something to say.

He says this: 'I have cut myself off by taking up so much of your time from the possibility of saying more about these subjects at present. It may be that, if I am granted the status and privileges of an Emeritus Professor, I may be able to say more some time in future. For to-day I will only set down the rather sweeping generalization by which I was inclined to explain to myself the instances of miracle which seemed to involve real violation of the order of nature. I do not

think that these instances are strictly historical. At the same time I *do* think that belief in them was encouraged by the fact that other miracles were strictly historical. A personality like that of our Lord, or in a lesser degree like those of St. Paul or St. Barnabas or St. Peter or St. John, worked miracles naturally and spontaneously. A conspicuous case would be that of those poor creatures who were thought to be possessed with demons. That calm, serene, penetrating yet sympathetic eye, fixed upon the troubled and agitated patient, brought healing with it. That is one example, and there were doubtless many more. But in the cases which we are compelled to reject, as at least not probable in the form in which they are recorded, I should be inclined to seek a solution under the general heading that the element of the abnormal came in, not so much in the facts as *in the telling.*'

There is some evidence that the great day of Spiritualism is on the decline.

Its great day. For Spiritualism is not of to-day only. It has often had its opportunity. But as there never was a greater loss of human life than in this great war, so never was there a more widespread desire to communicate with the dead. And that is what Spiritualism now popularly stands for—the possibility of communicating with the dead.

Its great day seems to be on the decline. This month there have been issued only two insignificant volumes, three or four magazine articles, and a sermon in *The Church Times*. And if it has begun to decline it may be expected, as on former occasions, to go down with some rapidity. Let us hasten therefore to point out what are the two fundamental fallacies that cling to it—not to hasten its departure, for that will come of neglect more than of exposure, but that we may recognize the importance of those principles which Spiritualism contradicts.

The first of the two fallacies into which the believer in Spiritualism falls is to conclude that the inexplicable is the supernatural.

How often does one read that this person or that was convinced of the truth of Spiritualism because, after all the explanation of the phenomena that could be thought of, something remained still unexplained. That something was accordingly believed to be supernatural. One educated man recently stated that he had gone through a vast deal of spiritualistic literature and had had some experience of mediums and their ways and still had remained unconvinced. Then one day he came upon a case which no explanation that he could think of would meet, and on that case he had surrendered.

It was a case of communication with the dead. We give it briefly. A husband and wife had agreed that the one who died first should if possible, and as soon as possible, communicate with the one who remained alive. In order that there might be no mistake as to identity or otherwise, they chose a sentence which the dead should make use of. It was an out-of-the-way sentence, and it was known to none but themselves.

The husband died first. No communication came. But in a short time the wife visited a medium. The medium declared that she had got into communication with the dead. Was it the husband? What evidence could he give of his identity? Some words of the sentence agreed upon were spoken. The wife was entirely satisfied. She believed that she was having speech, through the medium, with her dead husband.

Now let us ignore the circumstance that only two or three somewhat disjointed words were received. Let us suppose that the whole sentence had been uttered by the medium, exactly as it was agreed upon by the husband and wife. Is the only explanation a supernatural one?

Consider in the first place what that means. It means the introduction into the natural world of a supernatural force, with incalculable results. It means that henceforth we should not be able to assume that natural events had natural causes. It means that we could not calculate upon anything happening as we expect it to happen, that is to say in conformity with those natural laws which hitherto we have found to be observed everywhere throughout the world.

A writer in the current number of *The Quarterly Review* deals with the matter. 'It would indeed,' he says, 'be a revolutionary overturning of all the axioms of common life. The foundations of applied science—of engineering and medicine—would be sapped. If unknown spiritual forces add their quota to known material forces, then the best designed bridges may fall, the strongest foundations may shift, water may flow uphill. An element of indetermination and doubt is everywhere introduced, for all the works of man are based on the material forces which he can control; and, if they are subject also to unknown spiritual forces, nothing any longer can be controlled; chaos lies at the root of all things.'

He is speaking of some of the other phenomena of Spiritualism, such as the moving of chairs or the turning of tables. But the same uncertainty in life arises if there is indiscriminate communication with the dead. The uncertainty is even more disturbing. We should not be sure that our very thoughts were our own. In short, if we are compelled to believe that 'discarnate spirits' hold communication with us, using the words of our speech and otherwise taking part in our everyday affairs, this universe of God's creating, so surely believed by us to be an orderly universe, would become a scene of the most bewildering confusion.

Have we realized that? Have we realized that to some people it has actually already become so? The writer in the *Quarterly* quotes two medical authorities. The first is Dr. Charles Mercier,

who writes: 'I know from my own medical experience, that the pursuit of the occult, and especially of that form of it that used to go by the name of spiritualism, but is now called telepathy, . . . leads to a morbid frame of mind, and tends to render those who are at all predisposed to insanity an easy prey to the disease. . . . An experienced physician cannot shut his eyes to the pernicious effects it [spiritualism] sometimes produces.' The other is Dr. G. M. Robertson, Superintendent of the Royal Asylum of Morningside, Edinburgh, who writes: 'I desire to warn those who may possibly inherit a latent tendency to nervous disorders to have nothing to do with practical inquiries of a spiritualistic nature. . . . Inquiries into spiritualism sometimes lead to insanity in the predisposed.' And more recently (as reported in *The Scotsman* of Feb. 24, 1920) Dr. Robertson has said: 'I have received many inquiries to say more on the subject. I have little to add, save to reaffirm the statements then made. . . . It is strange that these phenomena, if supernatural, should occur most frequently when there is disorganisation and dissociation of the mental functions.'

It belongs to mercy, then, as well as to reason, that we do not at once adopt a supernatural explanation of any event which puzzles us, even after we have exhausted all the explanations that we can think of. It is a matter for science to investigate. It may be that the science is not yet existent that can account for it. Let it come into existence. It may be that certain of the phenomena which are called spiritualistic are due to something in man's personality which Psychology has not yet been able to cover. Let Psychology be stretched to cover it. And if it is not a fact at all, but either a hallucination or a humbug, let science find that out also.

When the War broke out the writer of these Notes was in Paris. In the hotel where he was staying there was a handsome German, with open countenance and engaging brown eyes, of the name of Kahn. He had at one time become a

citizen of the United States and carried his certificate of citizenship with him. One day Kahn asked the writer to go with him to a private room in the hotel, take some writing-paper, write on it any sentence he chose, and fold the paper. The sentence was written, the paper folded several times and held in the writer's hand. Kahn came forward (he had taken a seat some distance away) and told the writer what he had written. This was done again and again, and not once was a mistake made.

There was some hesitation over a proper name. For example: As the writer passed through London he went to see a cricket match at Lord's. One of the players had been run out. It was a very close thing. He wrote on the paper: 'Was Hobbs really out or did the umpire make a mistake?' There was a moment's hesitation in pronouncing the name Hobbs, but that was all. Kahn went through the same performance with other members of the writer's family. In every case he sat a long way off; when asked to do so he went out of the room; in no case was the paper provided by him; in no case did he take the folded paper into his own hand; in every case he stated correctly what had been written on it.

This performance was, and still is, as inexplicable to the writer as any case of 'communication' he has ever heard of. Was it therefore supernatural? The suggestion is absurd. Kahn himself would have laughed at the absurdity. It *may* have been due to 'thought-reading.' That was his own explanation. He had the power, he said, of emptying his mind, making it a blank page on which were then impressed the thoughts we were thinking. It may have been so. The writer believes that it was simply a clever trick.

Certainly Kahn was a scoundrel. He attempted to 'borrow' money of most of the guests in the hotel and generally succeeded. He even 'borrowed' a sovereign off a Jewish doctor, much to the doctor's disgust when he discovered that

he had been 'done in.' Kahn travelled with us to London. Three months afterwards he was convicted of an attempt to obtain money by fraud, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

That, then, is the first mistake. It is the mistake of supposing that the inexplicable is the supernatural. The other mistake is more serious. It is the mistake of supposing that the supernatural is the spiritual.

What is it that induces the follower of Christ to look favourably on the claims of Spiritualism? It is the belief that it is an ally in the struggle against materialism. That struggle is not so fierce now as it was in the end of last century. But it is with us always, and an earnest believer may be pardoned if he welcomes the help of any possible ally. Is Spiritualism then, like Christianity, the enemy of materialism?

By its name it ought to be. But its name is no more appropriate than is the name of Christian Science. For what is true spiritualism? It is the doctrine of the spiritual. And the spiritual is not communication with the dead. It is communion with God.

Let us be clear about this. Spiritual religion is communion with God. Wherever there is communion or fellowship with God there is spiritual religion; where there is no such communion there is no spiritual religion. If a man is in communion with God he is a spiritually-minded man; if he is out of communion he is unspiritual and in the true sense irreligious.

Christ came to restore men to communion with God. That was the purpose of His coming into the world, and its only purpose. The means which He used were His incarnation, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection. And we believe that every man who casts himself in faith upon Christ is restored to that communion. He is, as we say, 'accepted in the beloved.' He is a

spiritually-minded man, the outward signs of his spirituality being prayer and the doing of God's will.

Now the question is this: Does Spiritualism bring us into fellowship with God? Does it even profess to do so? It does not. Its claim is that it brings us into communication with the dead. But communication and communion are not one and the same. It is not found that the dead with whom Spiritualism claims to bring us into communication are themselves in communion with God. Their utterances, as reported by mediums or received by friends, are such as to make it evident, even painfully evident, that they are not by any means in communion with God. In some cases—it is with great reluctance that one refers to it, but in some cases it is manifest, if the communication is genuine, that they have lost the fellowship with God which they once enjoyed.

One of the books on Spiritualism recently published is a very small volume with the title *The Modern Craze of Spiritualism* (Morgan & Scott; 6d. net). Its author is Dr. F. B. MEYER. 'To me,' says Dr. MEYER in that book, 'the most startling instance was of a very holy woman I knew intimately, and whose one thought was of Jesus and His atoning Sacrifice; but who, when she was supposed to be speaking from the other world, never mentioned the name of Jesus, but complained of some trifling physical ailment which seemed to be troubling her. The absolute incompatibility of such a remark from one who must have been for years in the companionship of the All Holy is sufficient proof to me, at least, that the voice which spoke could not be hers. Think of the Apostle Paul, whose one passion was to know the love of Christ, coming back to complain of an ache in head, body, or foot!'

Yes, it is worth thinking about. Is the desire for communication with the dead after all a purely selfish desire? Is the father or mother of

the lad who has given his life a willing sacrifice indifferent to his condition in the other world, and satisfied simply to have communication with him? If that is so, we have been misplacing our pity. Our sympathy is henceforth with the dead, not the living. There is a case of communication with the dead in the Old Testament. The spiritualist is fond of it. We recommend for his study one sentence in it: 'And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me?' If our communication with the dead can only tell us that they have deteriorated in intellect and morality, it were a thousand times better that we left them alone.

So, whatever Spiritualism does, it does not bring us into fellowship with God. Why, then, is it called Spiritualism? It is so called through the mistaken idea that the supernatural is the spiritual. Spiritualism claims to bring us into communication with the other world. That is a supernatural claim. It is at once assumed that a supernatural claim is a spiritual claim—Spiritualism is a spiritual religion and the enemy of materialism.

The mistake seems to be made by those who are not spiritualists almost as readily as by those who are. It is never made in the New Testament. It is not made even in the Old Testament except by those who did not know what spiritual religion is; and it is indignantly repudiated by the great prophets. It is denied by our Lord. Again and again He was grieved because the people were so ready to run after the signs and wonders and disregard the gospel of the grace of God.

Not only is the supernatural not the spiritual, it may be the enemy of the spiritual. It is so in the case of Spiritualism, and that in all its manifestations, including the communications with the dead. For if these communications are real, they mean that faith is superseded by sight.

Now we know that it is by faith and not by sight that we enter into fellowship with God. 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son

which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him.' And how has He declared Him? Not by making God accessible to touch or sight or hearing; not even by offering Himself as the outward image of God, although it is true that in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; but by making Himself a riddle to the senses and foolishness to the understanding, by throwing Himself and the Father utterly open to our venture of faith and hope and love and new obedience.

In a book, entitled *God and the Struggle for Existence* (Student Christian Movement; 4s. 6d. net), which has been written conjointly by the Most Reverend Charles F. D'ARCY, Archbishop of Dublin, Miss Lily DOUGALL, and Canon B. Hillman STREETER, the question is raised, definitely and inescapably, whether it is the duty of an evangelical Christian to work for the betterment of the world or to let it go.

Who says, Let it go? Most evangelical Christians used to say, Let it go; and many evangelical Christians say so still. 'Christianity, they hold'—the words are Miss Lily DOUGALL'S—'Christianity is a system of religion designed solely to educate the human spirit to correspondence with a spiritual world quite different from this earth, and failure to desire and correspond with this present material life is the best preparation for the Christian heaven. They tell us that many of the greatest Christian saints have exemplified their entire incapacity to correspond to the things of earth, and that their Divine Master was in this respect their prototype, that the most characteristic of His sayings exhort His followers to the renunciation of all earthly ambitions and cares, and demand that they should follow him in disregarding the things of earth in order to attain an immortal heaven.'

Now it is no answer to that attitude to say that the Christian has nothing to do with an immortal heaven. The secularist says so, but the secularist has been put out of countenance since the War

began. We need an immortal heaven, and we have it. We need it, not to balance the loss of this world with the gain of that, but in order to continue that fellowship with God into which we have been brought by the self-sacrificing love of our Redeemer. And we have it. All our belief in Christ is bound up with our belief in His heavenly life. All the love we have for Him is bound up with the promise 'that where I am there ye may be also.'

The answer to the Christian who says that his business in this world is to prepare for another is not found in a denial of the existence of another world. It is found in a recognition of two facts which now at last are sufficiently certain to alter the whole situation. The one fact is the evolution of the human race. The other is the social conscience.

The doctrine of evolution declares the progressive advance of humanity in this world. And it demands the deliberate exercise of the will in securing that advance. This cannot be denied by the Christian. It can be denied only by the secularist, who keeps God out of evolution as out of everything else.

Miss DOUGALL quotes Mr. A. D. Darbishire's *Introduction to Biology*: 'Far and away the most interesting question which can confront the student of life (is) whether evolution is a process of which a simple mechanistic explanation has been discovered, or whether it is not a mysterious process which we are scarcely able to understand at all yet, but which may, perhaps, be due to deliberate striving on the part of the animals and plants which have taken part and are taking part in it. And many will lean to the latter interpretation, because they find it inconceivable that we should know as much about so vast and complex and close a thing as evolution as we should do if the mechanistic explanation of it by natural selection were true.'

If, then, that stage of progress which has been reached in evolution is due to *deliberate striving* on the part of plants and animals in the long ago, how

can it be that all striving for the race should now come to an end? Is the individual to give himself to the salvation of his own soul? If the protozoa and their successors in the long, long history of evolution had been as independently occupied, where would have been the evolution and where would we be?

Certainly the individual has to strike out a path for himself. That belongs to the very conception of evolution. But the new path struck out by the individual has always been for the good of the race. The individual has usually suffered for his adventure. Whatever may be the explanation of the early stages, later evolutionary stages, says Miss DOUGALL, 'have always come about through conscious adventure, when the adventurer is called upon to give up the familiar "world," *i.e.* to set forth upon some unknown path—and that always at the risk of loss.'

'At every stage of man's evolution his progress has depended upon men who would walk by insight or faith in an idea rather than by what was obvious in their environment. Such men were persecuted, but, bringing salvation to their race, they might well rejoice. They might well say of their fellows, all following one another and approving one another, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." In an evolutionary sense these things have been true in every crisis, small or great, of our racial history.'

With this sense of the evolutionary demand there has come also a sense of the social claim. The Christian has discovered that Jesus came not only to recover the individual sinner but also to set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Christ taught, says Miss DOUGALL, 'that a time would come when man should live in a blessed condition of perfect correspondence with his environment—that is, not only with God the Creator of all, but with men and with all the conditions of life. This state of things He expressed in the phrase "the kingdom of heaven," "the kingdom of God."'

The discovery of the Kingdom of God on earth is the discovery of the social conscience. No one can ever go behind that discovery and deny that it is his duty to work for the betterment of this world.

The Rev. Edward Carus SELWYN, D.D., succeeded Dr. Thring as Headmaster of Uppingham School. Now Uppingham School was Dr. Thring, and Dr. Thring was Uppingham School. And there is not a more difficult position in life than that of successor to a popular Headmaster. But Dr. SELWYN became as well-beloved as Dr. Thring, and lifted the school to a greater height of prosperity. After twenty years he resigned and gave himself to the writing of books.

His books have not been so successful as his Headmastership. There are two reasons. First he is original, startlingly original, and next he has no gift of expression. If his ideas had been in the hands of the late Dr. James Moulton, or if they had been in the hands of Dr. Rendel Harris, the world would have heard of them. It might have been edified or it might have been scandalized, but it would have known what Dr. SELWYN had to say.

Dr. SELWYN died suddenly on the evening of Friday, November 8th, 1918. Just before he died he had passed for press the proofs of another book. It has been edited with an Introductory Memoir by his eldest son. The title is *First Christian Ideas* (Murray; 9s. net).

Dr. SELWYN's great discovery (if it is a discovery) is this. The opponents of Christianity for the first century and a half were Jews; and in order to meet their attack, and if possible convince them that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christians made up books of quotations from the Old Testament, chiefly from the prophets. The quotations were read, perhaps in the synagogues (for there was much freedom in the worship of the synagogue), and were commented upon. These quotations

with the comments on them became the foundation of the Gospels.

Dr. SELWYN takes a passage here and there from one or other of the Gospels and shows how closely it depends upon some passage in the Old Testament. He takes, for example, the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus.

The first thing is the Star. Balaam, the typical Magus of Mesopotamia, had foretold that the advent of the 'Man' of Israel should be marked by the appearance of a star: 'There shall rise a Star out of Jacob, and there shall be raised a Man out of Israel, and Edom [Idumea] shall be his inheritance' (Nu 24¹¹). Isaiah prophesied that 'kings shall journey at thy light and Gentiles at thy brightness' (60³). In the same chapter Isaiah describes the journey of the kings. His words (in Dr. SELWYN's translation) are: 'All from *Saba* shall come bringing *gold, and frankincense* shall they bring: and they shall preach the gospel of the salvation of the Lord' (60⁶).

These prophecies, then (and there are others like them), were brought together and commented on, and formed the basis of the narrative in St. Matthew's Gospel of the journey of the Magi or Wise Men from the East to Bethlehem. Even the details of the story are found in the Prophets. Isaiah mentions the gifts which the Wise Men presented. At least he mentions two of the gifts—gold and frankincense. Where did St. Matthew find the myrrh? He found it also in Isaiah. Not in the Hebrew text, but in that Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament which we call the Septuagint, and which was in far more frequent use in Palestine when the Gospels were written than the original Hebrew.

It is true there is no such word as myrrh even in the Septuagint, as we now have it. But one great manuscript of the Septuagint (A) preserves a marginal reading in which Dr. SELWYN is acute enough to discover the origin of the word. After

'gold and frankincense,' the margin adds 'and precious stone.' Now in Aramaic 'myrrh' is *môrà* and 'precious stone' is *moq'râ*. The two words would be easily confused. Dr. SELWYN has no doubt that in St. Matthew's Gospel 'myrrh' is a mistake for 'precious stone'—a much more appropriate gift from a king.

All this raises a serious question. It is the question of fact. Does Dr. SELWYN mean to say that the story of the visit of the Magi has no foundation in fact? Is it merely an imaginary narrative, made up out of these quotations from the Old Testament, and with no other object than to confute the Jews? He recognizes the question and answers it.

He answers it, not when he is dealing with the visit of the Magi, but when he is describing the phenomena of Pentecost. For he goes over the narrative in the second chapter of Acts as minutely as the narrative in the second chapter of Matthew, and shows its dependence, phrase by phrase and word by word, on the Old Testament. Then he says:

'But what inference ought to be drawn from the fact? Was the account of Pentecost woven out of Is. 29 by a powerful constructive imagination? Or has Luke merely adorned his narrative from it? In short, are the events historical? In the Gospels we saw the resolution in Jesus to fulfil the events predicted, and could infer that he fulfilled them. Here it is again possible. The command in Isaiah was, "Be ye in ecstasy." The apostles resolved to obey it as a word of the Lord: they fulfilled it. There was, let us suppose, a great and widespread state of ecstasy that day. After this the other coincidences followed—the wind, the sound, the figures of the apostles illuminated (let us say) with the sun's light, as they spoke with tongues, incoherently, to be accused of drunkenness by the obstinate Jews. There is nothing incredible in any of these six records, and the events may have happened in that particular order.'