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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

Is the thought of our day passing from Christ to God? Canon J. M. WILSON thinks it is. Before the War men asked to see Jesus: now they ask to see God. He quotes the saying of a soldier in hospital: 'I'm a *Christian* all right, Padre; it's what the parsons say about *God* that stumps me.'

But Canon WILSON does not therefore leave Christ on one side. In the Cathedral at Worcester he has preached a series of ten sermons about God. But he knows that he cannot preach about God without preaching about Christ. For it is not some philosophical conception of God that he preaches, nor even some theological conception, it is the conception which Christ has given. And so, when he came to publish his sermons he gave them this title: *Christ's Thought of God* (Macmillan; 5s. net).

Now the special thought of God which Canon WILSON finds in Christ is an unexpected thought. And he finds it in an unexpected text.

The text is Lk 22<sup>69</sup>. In the Authorized Version it reads: 'Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.' But Canon WILSON will not have that version. The opening phrase cannot mean 'hereafter.' The Greek is absolutely clear and can only mean, as the Revisers have it, 'from henceforth.' Again the title 'Son

of man' is not, he says, a title here of Christ. It signifies mankind. And finally to sit on the right hand (or as the Revisers translate, 'be seated at the right hand') of the power of God means to be within reach of God's power so as to be able to use it. Now we do not need to ascend to heaven in order to be within reach of God's power, it is enough that God comes down to us.

Jesus made a new revelation of God that day. And it was like Him to make it to Caiaphas. What Caiaphas might take out of it at the moment we do not know. But it would stay with him beyond the moment, to make him think. What was the revelation?

It was the revelation of the fact that from that moment mankind would cease to look upon God as dwelling at a distance. From that moment, and henceforth through all time, God would be known to be present with men, both with them and in them. In the enjoyment of His presence in their hearts and lives men would be in harmony with the will of God and able to use His power as they endeavoured to make His will prevail in the world. To be seated at the right hand of God is to be in harmony with Him in all His purposes. In the language of St. Paul it is to have Christ dwelling in the heart by faith. In the language of St. John it is for men so to love God that He will

love them and will come unto them and make His abode with them. Henceforth, said Jesus, as Canon WILSON interprets Him, men like Caiaphas will with their own astonished eyes see mankind living in the love of God and so using the power of God that they will be able to say, 'We can do all things.' It is that word of warning to Caiaphas which was afterwards a word of encouragement to the disciples—'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

If it is Evolution that has brought us into the present difficulty about the Supernatural, it is Evolution that will take us out again. That there is a way out no one need doubt. Not even Canon Sanday, with his incomparable singleness of heart and seductiveness of language, can persuade us that all the miracles of the New Testament are capable of being 'explained.' It is not the consequence of their explanation that we fear. God will look after consequences. Our objection to the explanatory method is that it does not explain.

Evolution will show us the way out. The present Bishop of Bloemfontein, Dr. Arthur CHANDLER, is one of the keenest and sanest thinkers of our day. He has already written three or four books. In every one of them he is in touch with modern thought, in every one he provokes further thought in his readers. To his latest book he gives the title of *Scala Mundi* (Methuen; 4s. 6d. net). In that book Dr. CHANDLER shows how Evolution is able to rescue us from the present difficulty about the Supernatural.

The difficulty is due to Science. Scientific observers say that the Universe is under the sway of laws which are inviolable. Their value lies in their inviolability. If we cannot depend upon them they are useless. To say that they are subject to 'interference' is to say that they are not laws. If a law of nature like gravitation can be suspended at the incalculable will of some superior

Power, it is no longer a law of nature. That is the scientific position.

It is a scientific difficulty. And it is immediately due to Evolution. For Evolution eliminates 'interference.' To all outsiders it says, Hands off. The power to evolve is there, and it will work its own salvation. The whole evolution theory is understood to rest upon the absolute sway of natural law. If the Christian believer feels that Christianity stands or falls with the Supernatural, the believer in Evolution is confident that the acceptance of miracle will be the end of Evolution.

The BISHOP OF BLOEMFONTEIN is a believer in Evolution. If he differs from any other evolutionist it is only in the whole-heartedness of his belief. It is his whole-hearted belief in it that makes him insist upon Evolution being carried all the way. Is Evolution true in the sphere of inorganic matter? It is true also in the sphere of organic life. It is true in the sphere of human personality. It is true in the sphere of life (supposing there is such life) that is both human and divine.

Dr. CHANDLER gives Evolution full scope and exercise in the sphere of inorganic matter. But he asks of the evolutionist what right he has to confine it to inorganic matter. He demands not less but more in the sway of law than the physical evolutionist. And he has a right to demand it. He demands the application of law, that is, of regular reliable order, to every department of life and being. You insist upon the rigid rule within the inorganic kingdom? he says to the evolutionist. Carry it further. The inorganic world is not the only world. The way to higher worlds is open and continuous. Forward and fear not.

The physical evolutionist says that law has absolute authority within the physical sphere. But the physical sphere is not a closed system—except to the materialist, and there are few materialists now. Pass into the next sphere. It is the sphere

of animal life and behaviour. It is equally subject to law. Its laws are not the same as in the mechanical sphere. They are modified by the advent of that new fact called Life. But they are laws. More difficult to discover, when discovered they are as reliable as mechanical laws.

Pass on again. What right has any evolutionist to close the reign of law at the animal stage? The next sphere is the human. Again there is unflinching obedience to law, when it is discovered. It is not mechanical law, and it is not animal law alone; it includes both; but the introduction of conscience gives it more complexity as well as more importance.

Pass on once more. What right has any evolutionist to close the evolutionary system with the advent of man? Though we have nearly reached the limit of our conceptions, we are still able to conceive one higher sphere. It is the sphere of the human and divine. If God becomes man and dwells among us, there is a new system in this world. And the new system will be amenable to law not less surely than any of the old systems.

If then, says the BISHOP OF BLOEMFONTEIN, 'in the case of Jesus Christ we recognize a new and higher grade of existence, we shall naturally expect His actions to express that higher life, and to differ from our own in their motives and scope and power. The last point, the power of these actions, is the one we want to deal with now.'

'It brings us face to face with the "miracles" of Christ. And in this connexion the first point to get clear about is, that we do not regard these miracles as "exceptions to the laws of nature"—a perfectly idiotic and preposterous idea which Christians are sometimes supposed to entertain. It is simply impossible to believe in a thing as an exception to something else; if we believe in it, we believe in it as an outcome of some power adequate to produce it. And we simply apply to the actions of Christ a principle of universal

application, namely, that within the universe of truth there are different levels of being, that at each higher level a fresh power emerges and operates, and that in each case the new actions are of a sort which would be abnormal or miraculous on the levels below.'

'Thus it is natural for a cabbage, which has organic life, to grow and expand in a manner which would be miraculous in the case of a stone or a star, which latter are subject simply to chemical and physical laws. It is, again, natural for a man, who possesses personal conscious life, to form a system of knowledge and a scheme of life, which would be miraculous in lower organisms, vegetable or animal, subject to the laws of physiology. And so, lastly, it is natural for Christ, who has the nature of God Incarnate, to exercise powers which would be miraculous for men limited in their actions by the laws of psychology.'

'And in every case, the phenomena which would be miraculous on the lower level, become natural on the higher, just because on that level there exists a power adequate to their production. When a new power has emerged, it is absurd to cavil at the new ways in which it manifests itself; absurd to deny that a dog can grow and move, because a flint can do neither; absurd to deny that a man can talk, and choose between right and wrong, because a dog can do neither; absurd to deny that Christ could multiply loaves or walk on the sea, because we can do neither. Each higher power, as it comes forth, manifests itself in ways which are natural and normal for it, however abnormal or miraculous they would be in spheres below.'

'It would seem, then, that the term "miraculous" is a relative term, applied from below to describe an output of power which cannot be expected there, because there is no cause capable of producing it on that particular level. A perambulating cabbage, or a calculating pig, would be freakish, abnormal, miraculous, whilst at

the same time perambulation is natural for a pig and calculation for a man. Thus Christ's mighty works are miracles from our point of view, whilst being at the same time natural and normal exhibitions, "signs," as St. John calls them, of a power present in Him and not in us.'

'And in all these actions there is no unwarrantable incursion of an alien power, upsetting and confounding an orderly system of natural law: that is the old fallacy of the closed system. Rather such action is an indication and an outcome of a fact of supreme importance, namely, that the universe is spiritual from end to end; that it awakes to its true nature in God; and that, equally in its ordinary modes of action and in those which we call miraculous, it is the spiritual will of God which is its creative and sustaining and ruling power. Since the whole development leads up to God, and finds its meaning and explanation there, we must read God's will backwards into all the lower spheres, with the result that the whole universe will be spiritual in ultimate character, dominated and permeated by that which is its one true life.'

'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus.' 'To the saints which are at Ephesus'—who would they be? Where would the post-runner find them? If Paul had sent a letter to London, Edinburgh, Dublin with this address? 'To the saints which are in Edinburgh,' who would claim it?

Not we. Certainly not. We do not lay claim to so much goodness as that. We will let no one challenge our moral life. But we do not quite set up to be saints. Wordsworth's ideal woman—

A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food—

is enough for us. To the saints? No saints in Edinburgh, try Aberdeen.

But we are making a mistake. That is not what

'saint' means. It has no reference to goodness, much or little. We refuse the letter addressed to the saints because we are not good enough. But Paul did not call the company in Ephesus who received the letter 'saints' because they were good. In point of fact they were not good, not so good, it is to be hoped, as we are. And yet he had no hesitation in calling them saints.

There are three words which we have to understand. 'Saints' is one of them. The other two are 'sinners' and 'righteous.' When Jesus began His ministry He found the people divided into 'the sinners' (οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ) and 'the righteous' (οἱ δίκαιοι). The sinners knew that they were wrong. The righteous believed that they were right. Jesus showed the righteous that they also were wrong. He accepted what they did for what it was worth, but it was not worth much. They were trying to do right without being right. In various ways He showed them that that was all a mistake.

One way was by parables. He told the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The publican was wrong and knew it: 'God be merciful to me the sinner.' The pharisee was wrong also, but did not know it: 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.' And after the prayer, after the repentance, 'the *sinner* went down to his house justified rather than the other.'

He told the Parable of the Prodigal Son. That parable shows us the two classes clearly. The younger son is one of 'the sinners,' the elder is one of 'the righteous.' The sinner does wrong and comes to know it. His righteous brother is wrong and does not see it. But we see it. We see with quite astonishing clearness that though he has served his father 'these many years' and 'never has transgressed a commandment,' yet he is all wrong.

He is not at one with his father, and never has been. He has been a servant, not a son. It all

comes out when the younger son returns. The father welcomes him, the brother resents the welcome. He has no joy at his brother's return, as he had probably no sorrow at his departure: 'He has made his bed, let him lie on't.' The father loves the prodigal, has loved him all along and looked for his return. The elder son has no love for either brother or father. To do right he must be right, and to be right he must be right with his father.

The father is God. The sinners and the righteous are both out of harmony with God. They do not see things as God sees them, and therefore they do not do things as God would do them. But there is a difference. It is quite startling to find Christ setting the sinners before the righteous, as He does. But the reason is that the spirit of the sinners was often right though their deeds were wrong, while the deeds of the righteous were often right though their spirit was wrong. And it is worse to be wrong in spirit than in deed.

Jesus made this clear in the Parable of the Two Sons. The father came to one of the sons and said, Go, work in my vineyard. He said, I go, sir; but went not. He came to the other. He refused to go, but went. The one was outwardly obedient but inwardly rebellious. The other was outwardly rebellious but inwardly obedient. It was the inwardly obedient son that did the will of his father.

Now when Jesus dealt with these two classes, He dealt with them both alike. To both He said that they must begin again. In the case of the sinners that was comparatively easy, for all that they had to do was to repent of their sinfulness. In the case of the righteous it was very difficult. For them also, however, there was nothing else for it; they must begin again. They must get right with God first. Then they would be able to do right.

How were they to get right with God? Jesus

explained very simply, Paul very elaborately. Jesus said, Follow me. He was at one with God. 'I and the Father are one.' 'I do always that which pleases him.' To be at one with Jesus was to be at one with God. He called this oneness Love. 'If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him.' To be right with God was to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

So said Paul also. But he had a most elaborate story to tell of the way by which a man is brought to love the Lord. It is the story of the at-onement. As soon as we use the word we spell it with a capital letter and are occupied with the doctrine of the Atonement. And why not? This *is* the way of becoming right with God. Jesus *has* to die on the Cross. We have to die with Him. Jesus has to rise again from the dead. We have to rise in Him. It is elaborate, but it is all true and verifiable in experience. Paul has not gone one step astray from the Master. His 'I am crucified with Christ' is just the theology of 'Come, take up your cross, and follow me.'

What are we to call them when they follow? We need a new name. 'The sinners' (*οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ*) will not do. 'The righteous' (*οἱ δίκαιοι*) will not do. We will call them 'the saints'; that is, the holy ones (*οἱ ἅγιοι*). It is a good name, for the point of it is that they are one with God, who is the Holy One.

Yes, the saints are those who are right with God. They are not those who have done right. They may not yet have done one truly right thing. In any case, it is not because they have done right that they are called saints. It is because they *are* right.

How Paul insists upon it! He insists upon it so determinedly that we have had to coin a word to distinguish the fact of being right from the fact of doing right. The one we have called Justification, the other Sanctification. And no one can read the Pauline Epistles—no scholar does read them

now—without perceiving that when Paul says a man is justified he does not mean that he is doing right, he means that he *is* right.

Now it is possible for a man to be called a saint though he is not a saint. How are we to know that a man is right with God? By his deeds. If he is right, he will do right. Justification is not sanctification; but if justification is not followed by sanctification, it is not justification. What is the difference then between the righteous and the saints? How can we tell that the righteous are not saints, and the saints not simply righteous? By the kind of deeds they do.

Christina Rossetti will tell us:

I saw a Saint.—How canst thou tell that he  
Thou sawest was a Saint?—

I saw one like to Christ so luminously

By patient deeds of love, his mortal taint  
Seemed made his groundwork for humility.

And when he marked me downcast utterly

Where foul I sat and faint,

Then more than ever Christ-like kindled he;

And welcomed me as I had been a saint,  
Tenderly stooping low to comfort me.

Christ bade him, 'Do thou likewise.' Where-  
fore he

Waxed zealous to acquaint

His soul with sin and sorrow, if so be

He might retrieve some latent saint:—

'Lo, I, with the child God hath given to me!'

Two things are characteristic of the saint, two classes of deeds—likeness to Christ (who went about doing good), and the discovery of other saints. The 'righteous' are never luminously like Christ, and they have no skill in the discovery of saints. Christina Rossetti might have been expounding the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The elder brother was most unlike the father, and he had no eyes for the saintship—the latent saintship—of his younger brother.

Still it must be admitted that it is not always easy, and perhaps it is not always possible for men, to distinguish the saints from the righteous. It may be that the tares will remain among the wheat undetected even by the servants of the Husbandman. It may be that this one and that will enter into the marriage feast without the wedding-garment. But the detection is at the last inevitable. 'Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment?' And he was speechless. His good deeds had been the doing of his duty. Until this moment he expected the credit due to them. But now he is speechless. 'Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.'

Is it possible for a man who has once been set right with God to go wrong again? The question has an old world flavour about it. We do not ask these questions now. There is a doctrine called the Perseverance of the Saints. It has been tossed to and fro among the theologians; it has got tattered and torn. We are not greatly concerned now about the Perseverance of the Saints.

But the question has a practical interest. There is a real human value in it. As theology, as the Perseverance of the Saints, it may be worn out and worthless. But as the most unmistakable test of the life we are living, its worth can scarcely be overestimated.

For there is a practical test by which a man may know if after he has been set right with God he may go wrong again. It is the test of forgiveness. The way by which a man is made one with God is by being forgiven. The way by which he may lose his fellowship is by refusing to forgive.

We have it best in one of the parables. It is the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. He owed

his master a debt, a monstrous debt. Dr. SWETE estimates it at two million and four hundred thousand pounds. When he begged for time (which plainly would have been of little use to him) he was forgiven. He asked for forbearance; he obtained forgiveness. That is God's way with sinners. The debt is immeasurable. As long as the sinner is sinning God is long-suffering; the moment he repents God forgives him. That is the Gospel.

The servant was set right with his master. What did he do then? He went out and met a fellow-servant, who owed him the miserable sum of three pound nineteen and twopence. He refused to forgive him; he refused to give him time to pay; he seized him by the throat and thrust him into prison. And when the master of these servants heard of it he cancelled the forgiveness, and not only sent the unforgiving servant to prison, which was hopeless enough, but delivered him to the tormentors—the 'hard labour' of our day—so that, as our Lord expressed it on another occasion, the last state of that man was worse than the first.

But does the parable apply to the sinner? Dr. SWETE has no doubt of it. We are referring to his newly issued book on *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Macmillan; 7s. 6d. net). 'Must we not say'—these are Dr. SWETE's words—'that the act of the King who cancels his own pardon belongs only to the imagery of the parable, and not to the innermost truth of things? But our Lord's own words which follow the parable seem intended to guard against this view: "So also" as this King did, "so also shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."''

So then, a man may fall from grace—has fallen from grace—if he refuses to forgive some other man. Could a simpler test be thought of? Could a severer? How many of us can forgive? In the April issue of *The Harvard Theological Review*

there is an article by Professor G. H. PALMER on the Lord's Prayer. Professor PALMER has difficulty with one of the petitions of the Prayer. It is the petition about forgiveness. He sees that there also God's forgiveness is conditional on our forgiveness. And it is so hard to forgive. 'For forgiveness goes against our natural instincts and its very possibility may be doubted.'

Professor SWETE does not doubt its possibility. And yet he sees, as clearly as Professor PALMER, that forgiveness is not a light thing. It is not enough to say we forgive. It is sheer futility to say we may forgive but cannot forget. Forgiveness must be from the heart: 'So also shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother *from your hearts.*'

And yet, hard as it is, and harder as that condition makes it, we have only to consider a moment to see that it must be so. God is a forgiving God—Can you utter a surer word about Him? If a man is unforgiving, how can he be in harmony with God? Look at the Parable of the Prodigal Son. What was wrong with the elder son was that he was out of sympathy with his father. How did he show that he was out of sympathy? By refusing to forgive his brother.

But after all——. Now there is nothing more dangerous than to add a 'but after all' to the demands of Christ. Yet Dr. SWETE does it. But after all, he says, 'there are circumstances in which it is not only permissible, but a duty to prosecute and to punish. Only, in such cases the prosecutor or person who punishes must make it a matter of conscience to ascertain that he is not actuated by a vindictive or an unforgiving spirit. It is the animus of the servant in the parable which is forbidden, not the simple recovery of a debt. In the same way, the parable does not require in private life the resumption of intimate relations with a person who has shewn himself unworthy of them. There may be full *ex animo* forgiveness of a wrong, and no personal sense



whatever of soreness or ill-will towards the offender, and yet common sense and the desire to avoid future occasion of friction may dictate a policy of aloofness for the time to come. As long as the Kingdom of Heaven is among men on earth, such limitations to human fellowship are inevitable, and the effort to ignore them is utopian; but it is always possible for the true subjects of the

Kingdom to forgive from their hearts even those with whom they cannot freely associate. God does not ask impossibility from His servants; the Christian rule is well given by St. Paul: "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men"; and again, with special reference to fellow-members of the Church: "Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."

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## Job, Ecclesiastes, and a New Babylonian Literary Fragment.

BY G. BUCHANAN GRAY, D.LITT., D.D., PROFESSOR OF HEBREW AND OLD TESTAMENT  
EXEGESIS IN MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD.

A BABYLONIAN text of considerable interest for students of the Old Testament has recently been published.<sup>1</sup> Ebeling, the editor of the text, draws attention to the parallelism, in respect both of form and contents, which it presents with the work of the Hebrew pessimist, the author of Ecclesiastes; but, although he describes the new text as a specimen of a class of literature hitherto undiscovered in Babylonia, viz. that of the philosophical dialogue, he does not comment on the parallelism in form which, in so far as the description is correct, it presents with the Book of Job. Slight as is its resemblance to Job, it is yet sufficient to deserve attention; and, after giving a translation of a part of the new text, I will return to consider its significance in connexion with Job.

The text is contained on two tablets in the Berlin Museum, and a small fragment in London. The two Berlin tablets overlap, so that for parts of the text there are two witnesses. On the other hand, the beginning of the dialogue is so far undiscovered, and in other parts the tablets are broken, and the text defective. As my purpose is merely to draw attention to the parallelism with Hebrew literary forms, and as that purpose will be sufficiently served by a translation of part of the Babylonian work, I give here a translation only of the last half (according to Ebeling's arrangement), which, except

in one or two lines, is free from mutilation, whereas the first half is much more mutilated and uncertain. For the present purpose, too, it is unnecessary to dwell in detail on the uncertainties or ambiguities in the translation which are dealt with in at least a preliminary way by Ebeling. The translation here given is mainly from Ebeling's German version, modified here and there by reference to the original text. In due time, no doubt, we may look for an English translation of the whole by a competent Assyriologist; and that, perhaps, not only of the fragments so far recovered, but of others which may still be lurking in London, and merely, as Ebeling suggests, awaiting fresh search to be discovered.

The dialogue consists of a series of sections, each section closely adhering to the same scheme. The sections that occur on both the Berlin tablets are not arranged in the same order in both; nor in the different texts is the line division always identical. But the sections are separated from one another by horizontal lines. I number the sections according to the enumeration of Ebeling's translation.

The interlocutors are a slave and his master; what each says is, generally speaking, perfectly obvious from the vocatives; but in VII. we may infer from the consistent scheme in other sections that the last two lines are spoken not by the master in continuation of l. 5, but by the slave; and in XII. the scheme suggests as the most probable dis-

<sup>1</sup> *Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1918<sup>2</sup>; *Quellen zur Kenntnis der babylonische Religion*, bearbeitet von Erich Ebeling (Leipzig, 1919), pp. 50-70.