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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Modern Churchmen have got their opportunity at last. Year after year they have met in conference, made speeches, and departed. This year they met at Girton College in Cambridge. By some unexplained providence the reporters of the daily newspapers looked in upon them. They discovered heresy, or invented it. The cry was taken up throughout the country. And now the speeches, exactly as delivered at the Conference, are published in the September number of *The Modern Churchman* (Oxford: Blackwell; 3s. 6d. net). If the Modernists have a message the world is ready to receive it.

We have called them 'Modern Churchmen' and 'Modernists.' They use both names for themselves. But both are objectionable. 'Modernist' is objectionable because it is ugly. Sir David Blair will shudder over it, as he does over 'scientist.' 'Modern Churchmen' is objectionable because it claims for a few what belongs to the many.

For if we are Churchmen at all we are Modern Churchmen. Our Gospel, it is true, is ancient. Make it as ancient as you please and we shall not be offended. But we carry it to modern men, in modern language, and with such modern interpretation as they can comprehend and profit by. If that is all that 'Modern Churchmen' means we are all Modern Churchmen.

But that is not what 'Modern Churchmen' means. As the men who met at Girton College, Cambridge, use it, it means something that is very different from that. But let us proceed in order. There are approaches to the meaning. The first speaker at the Conference made these approaches.

The first approach is by Dr. DREWS. Dr. DREWS does not believe that Jesus ever existed. It takes some courage to say so. But Dr. DREWS has it. And others have it with him. Even in our own country there are admirers of his, and followers. One of his followers is the Right Honourable J. M. Robertson, M.P. But the Conference of Modern Churchmen repudiated Dr. DREWS.

The next approach is by Dr. LAKE. Again and again was Dr. LAKE's name mentioned at the Conference. And his ideas were referred to more often than his name was mentioned. His colleague, Dr. FOAKES-JACKSON, was there to answer for him, and claimed that Dr. LAKE's writings were the occasion, not of the Conference itself, but of the subject discussed at the Conference. And the claim was admitted. For the subject discussed was the Centrality of Jesus. And it is the Centrality of Jesus that Dr. LAKE denies.

He does not deny that Jesus lived. But he denies that He was a person of any importance or had any considerable influence on the origin of Christianity. In the words of one of the speakers, Dr. LAKE holds that 'though Jesus existed, He did not really count.' 'Drs. Lake and Foakes-Jackson,' says the same speaker, 'appear to give us the picture of a very commonplace and uninspiring prophet,' who 'only taught much what other people had already taught, except for a few original remarks which were either untrue or quite unpractical. He allowed His followers to address Him as "Sir," and He spoke of someone else as the Son of Man.' The Conference repudiated Dr. LAKE.

The third approach is by Dr. GLOVER. Only two or three times was Dr. GLOVER'S name mentioned, and always with respect. Who would or could name him otherwise? Not only with respect, however, but with sympathy and agreement. For the speaker who named him was Mr. Nowell SMITH, Headmaster of Sherborne School, the most advanced of all the speakers at the Conference.

After some very personal and somewhat startling statements, Mr. SMITH proceeded to tell the Conference what Jesus did. He went about doing good; He taught and comforted and inspired 'in words and ways of which the Gospels preserve for us a wonderful, though no doubt fragmentary and sometimes perplexing, record; He impressed people in general with an exceptional sense of power, a sense generally, no doubt, accompanied by admiration and love, but in certain quarters, for obvious reasons, by fear and hatred; He gathered round Himself a little band of friends of a special intimacy, some of whom He called His "messengers," and who subsequently became the nucleus of the Christian community; finally, He suffered under Pontius Pilate.'

Mr. SMITH stopped there. Then, after a pause: 'Here you may say, "Why not go on, 'and rose again the third day from the dead'?" Yes, and

if I did, I should add, "and is alive for evermore and is spiritually present with us always, or, at least, when we are ready to receive Him." But I stop at the Crucifixion, not as denying the Resurrection or Eternal Life or the ever-living personality of Jesus (God forbid! I believe; God help my unbelief!), but because these matters which Popes and Councils have attempted to define, and for definitions of which men have fought and burned one another and split up into sects and parties innumerable, seem to me to involve so many terms and conceptions which I cannot grasp clearly enough to construct an intelligible, articulate, verbally communicable creed.'

'Admiration and love,' and 'suffered under Pontius Pilate'—it is Dr. GLOVER. And he also, when you ask him, Why not go on? answers that the rest belongs to theology; to Councils and Popes and creeds, and it is not for him to enter. But *can* he stop there? *Is* the rest theology? One of the speakers at this Conference of Modern Churchmen says very plainly that it is not. He says it is history.

'It is not good history,' says the Vice-Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, 'it is not good history to take the first three Gospels and ask what we can make of their story on the assumption that the Crucifixion is the end. One of the factors in the problem, to the most "objective" of historians, is that a unique movement took its rise from the career of the executed Nazareth workman, that for some reason the most astounding claims came to be made on His behalf by men who had known Him. How far these claims can be justified is a question for theology; that they were made is a fact for the historian. It is one of the things that he knows about Jesus, and no account of His career can be satisfactory which does not explain why these results followed from it.' The Conference of Modern Churchmen rejected Dr. GLOVER

And so we come to the Modern Churchmen and Dr. RASHDALL. We say 'and Dr. RASHDALL,'

for Dr. Hastings RASHDALL, Dean of Carlisle, is, without challenge, the theologian and leader of the movement. What does Dr. RASHDALL stand for?

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When the newspaper reporters heard his speech, they reported that he denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. But, when he read their report, he wrote to the newspapers and said that he did not deny His divinity. He said that the very purpose of his speech was to assert the divinity of Jesus. And the reporters, when they read his letter, wondered.

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But Dr. RASHDALL was right. He did not deny the divinity of Jesus. What he did, and what all the speakers at the Conference did, was to assert the divinity of man. All men, they affirmed, are in a measure divine; Jesus also was divine. Jesus, they hasten to say, was divine in fuller measure than other men. But it is still a matter of degree. Sometimes they use the word 'supreme.' Twice they use the word 'unique.' But the next sentence tells you that the meaning is the same. Jesus was unique because His divinity was so much more than the divinity of any other man.

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In their report of Dr. RASHDALL'S address at the Cambridge Conference the newspaper reporters made a mistake. They said that he denied Christ's divinity. They ought to have said that he denied His deity. If they had said that he denied Christ's deity the Dean of Carlisle would have found no occasion to write to the newspapers; he would have felt no call.

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For it must not be supposed that in saying we are all divine as Jesus was divine the Modern Churchmen meant to say that we are all gods. They make a distinction between God and man. Much as they have to say about the kinship between the human and the divine, they never say that it obliterates all distinction. Jesus was the best and greatest man that ever lived, but He

was still a man. Divinity is one thing, deity is another. There lies the difference between them and other Churchmen. There is the reason they have for appropriating to themselves the name of 'Modern Churchmen.'

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Why do they deny the deity of Christ? They do not deny that His early followers regarded Him as God. Some of them assert that He did not claim deity Himself. Some of them assert that the earliest disciples of all did not attribute deity to Him. Both assertions are precarious and inconclusive. Certain it is that sooner or later the words of Thomas in the Fourth Gospel were the words which every one of His followers was ready to make his own—'My Lord and my God.'

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Certain it is also that that is the belief of the Christian Church as a whole to-day. As we write there comes into our hands the September number of the *Record* of the United Free Church of Scotland. That Church has given much attention to learning throughout its history. It has within it a fair proportion of scholars to-day. The *Record* is its official organ. Now the September number contains a 'Brief Statement of the Church's Faith in Terms of Present-day Thought.' The Statement, we are told, was submitted to the General Assembly, and 'the Assembly not only commended the Statement to the interest and study of all members of the Church, but resolved that it should be circulated widely.' What does that Statement contain?

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It contains a paragraph on the Holy Spirit which deserves to be recorded here. But we must be content to quote the three short paragraphs 'Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ,' for that is our immediate subject. These are the paragraphs:

'We believe that God so loved the world that He gave His Son to be the Saviour of mankind. We believe that this very Son of God, for us men and for our salvation, became man in Jesus Christ,

who, having lived on earth the perfect human life, devoted wholly to the will of God and the service of man, died for our sins, rose again from the dead, and is now exalted Lord over all.

'We believe that Jesus Christ is the Revealer of the Father, and that the mind of God towards the world must in all things be interpreted by the mind of Christ. We believe that when in our experience we are brought face to face with Jesus Christ we are in the presence of the eternal and holy God.

'Therefore, with the Church of all ages, we worship Him together with the Father.'

Now in the second of these three paragraphs there is not a word that Dr. RASHDALL could not assent to. But in the first paragraph and in the third there is not a word with which he would agree. The last short paragraph he would reject as surely as the Jews rejected Jesus' claim to forgive sins. He would call it simply blasphemy.

Why does Dr. RASHDALL deny the deity of our Lord? He does not deny it easily. It costs him not a little. As strongly as any man he feels the pull of the Christian centuries. As keenly as any he realizes the poverty of the arguments which have to be used in order to hunt this belief out of the New Testament.

He is confronted with the amazing assertion of the Apostle Paul in his address on the Areopagus. 'Inasmuch as he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' Dr. RASHDALL knows how early in the history of Christianity that speech was delivered. Yet the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is there; and not as a disputed fact, but as the basis of an argument. And what is the argument? That this Jesus who rose again is to *judge the world in righteousness*.

Dr. RASHDALL, we say, feels the force of that

amazing claim. How does he meet it? He meets it by pointing to the word *man*—'that man whom he hath ordained.' As if he did not know that that word is used to identify the Judge with Jesus. 'That man,' as in St. Peter's Pentecost address, is the man who lived and moved among them. That man, says St. Peter, has sent the Holy Spirit. That man, says St. Paul, is to be the Judge of the whole world. And the Dean of Carlisle tells us that the use of the word 'man' is proof that He was man and no more.

Why, then, does Dr. RASHDALL deny the deity of Jesus Christ? The editor of *The Modern Churchman* gives us the answer.

The editor of *The Modern Churchman* is the Rev. H. D. A. MAJOR, B.D., Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford. Besides contributing one of the addresses at the Conference, Mr. MAJOR has written an Introduction to the whole series of addresses as they appear in his magazine. In that Introduction he tells us that there are two things for which the Modernists stand. The one thing is the denial of the deity of Christ. The other is the denial of the miraculous.

Mr. MAJOR does not use the word denial. He is anxious to persuade us that the Modernists stand for positive truth not negative, for construction not destruction. He expresses the two positions in this way: 'Their first conviction is that there is not a vast gulf between the Divine Nature and the Human Nature.' And 'their second conviction is that God reveals Himself to man not through the abnormal, but through the normal.' We accept his positive statement. The meaning is the same.

But he places the two convictions in the wrong order. The denial of the miraculous should have come first. It is because the deity of Jesus would be a miracle that Dr. RASHDALL and his fellow-Modernists deny it.

May we touch this matter of the miraculous? It is the great religious difficulty of our day. Beyond everything else it keeps men who are scientifically trained from embracing Christianity. Beyond everything else it causes hesitation and heart-searching to the instructed preacher of the Gospel. Who will blame any man for seeking a way round it if he cannot see his way through it? The most that we have perhaps a right to ask him is that before he denies the miraculous entirely he should consider what the denial involves.

For it involves the tremendous assertion that the early Christians were mistaken in believing that Jesus rose again from the dead, although it is acknowledged by everybody that on that belief they built the Church of Christ. It involves the further tremendous assertion that the Church as a whole, with quite insignificant and ineffective exceptions, has found its strength for righteousness of life and the service of God in that belief.

Now we are not going to say that if you accept the resurrection of Jesus from the dead you may let the rest of the New Testament miracles go. But we do say that it is vain to explain this miracle and the other as due to misunderstanding, misreporting, or the use of the myth-making faculty in man. When you have explained them all, the resurrection remains, and the miracle of miracles is the resurrection.

The Modern Churchmen know it. At their Conference they scarcely looked at the other miracles in the Gospels. They returned again and again to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. What did they do with it?

Well, the striking thing is that they did not deny it. Perhaps Mr. Nowell SMITH came near to denying it. The rest did not even come near. For they hold that Jesus did rise again from the dead. Some of them hold that after He rose again from the dead He appeared to one and another of His disciples and even to a multitude

all at once. And if you do not read carefully you go away and say that after all the Modern Churchmen believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Perhaps one of the speakers does believe in it—the Rev. E. W. BARNES, Sc.D., Canon of Westminster. Dr. BARNES says: ‘Did Jesus show Himself as the risen Lord after His death and burial? We cannot understand the history of the early Church unless this fact be admitted.’ Then in a footnote he explains his belief in this way:

‘The unifying element in personality is love, in the complete Christian sense of the word. At death the normal man is only in process of being made, and as an unfinished spirit must remain in time until his purification is ended. But if a finished perfected spirit were released from human limitations by death he would thereupon at once enjoy the fulness of eternal life. Since that life is outside time it is conceivable that such an one could reveal his presence as Jesus disclosed Himself after His resurrection. Herein we seem to reach the underlying thought of St. Paul when he associated sin with death: the restraints of death are restraints due to sin.’

That may not be the explanation of the resurrection which St. Paul or St. Peter would have given. It has a distinctly ‘modern’ flavour about it. But in any case Canon BARNES is not a Modernist. Why he was present at the Conference of Modern Churchmen, we do not know. For he told the Conference that he was not one of them. ‘I am an Evangelical,’ he said; ‘I am not a Modernist.’

How does the Modernist explain the resurrection? He explains it by saying that it was the spirit of Jesus, not His body, that rose again from the dead.

It takes some courage to be a Modern Churchman.

One thing more. The Modern Churchmen are greatly opposed to creeds and creed-making. Yet they cannot do without a creed. The editor of the Cambridge addresses puts the Modern Churchmen's creed into words. He calls it an affirmation, but it plainly is a creed.

Mr. MAJOR asks 'our traditionalist fellow-Churchmen' to accept this affirmation, "'God was in Christ," with the practical recognition in daily life that "Jesus is Lord," as constituting the irreducible minimum for modernist membership in the Church and in the teaching and ministerial offices.'

'God was in Christ' and 'Jesus is Lord'—that is the creed. Will 'our traditionalist fellow-Churchmen' accept it? They will. We cannot think of a traditionalist or any other Churchman who will not accept it, *if Mr. Major will finish the sentence in the first part of his creed and give the full force to his words in the second part.*

The first part is 'God was in Christ.' That may mean nothing; it may mean everything. Browning tells us that the acknowledgment of God in Christ solves all questions in the earth and out of it. Or, better still, he makes St. John tell us so. Does Mr. MAJOR agree with St. John? If he does, why does he break off the sentence in the middle? 'God was in Christ *reconciling the world unto himself*'—that is the sentence. If Mr. MAJOR means that, his fellow-Churchmen will agree with him.

And the other half of his creed—'Jesus is Lord.' Again his fellow-Churchmen will agree, if Mr. MAJOR will give the word 'Lord' its full New Testament meaning.

Turn to the latest book on the subject—the latest, and the most thorough—Professor WARFIELD'S 'Study of the Designations of our Lord in the New Testament, with especial reference to His Deity.' The title of the book is *The Lord of Glory.*

Professor WARFIELD takes up the books of the New Testament one by one. He begins with the Second Gospel. It is the least likely of the Gospels to contain the full theological significance of the title 'Lord.' Yet, 'the use of "the Bridegroom" (in Mk 2<sup>19, 20</sup>) as a designation of our Lord assimilates His relation to the people of God to that which in the Old Testament is exclusively, even jealously, occupied by Jehovah Himself, and raises the question whether Jesus is not thereby, in some sense, at any rate, identified with Jehovah. This question once clearly raised, other phenomena obtrude themselves at once upon our attention. We are impelled, for example, to ask afresh what sense our Lord put upon the words of Psalm cx., "The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.'" . . . Who is this "Lord" who is to sit at the right hand of the "Lord" who is Jehovah, and to whom David himself therefore does reverence? It is hard to believe that our Lord intended—or was understood by Mark to intend—by such a designation of the Messiah, who He Himself was, to attribute to Him less than a superhuman—or shall we not even say a divine?—dignity by virtue of which He should be recognized as rightfully occupying the throne of God. To sit at the right hand of God is to participate in the divine dominion, which, as it is a greater than human dignity, would seem to require a greater than human nature. To be in this sense David's Lord falls little, if anything, short of being David's God.'

Professor WARFIELD reviews the use of the term 'Lord' as applied to Jesus in St. Matthew and St. Luke. On the Synoptics generally he concludes:

'It is clear that the term "Lord" is sometimes applied to Jesus in the Synoptics in a height of connotation which imports His deity.'

In the Fourth Gospel Dr. WARFIELD comes upon 'the great passage (20<sup>28</sup>) where Thomas' doubt breaks down at the sight of his risen Master and he cries to Him, "My Lord, and my God."

That this exclamation was addressed to Christ,' he says, 'is expressly stated: "Thomas *answered* and said *to Him*." The strong emotion with which it was spoken is obvious. It is not so clear, however, what precise connotation is to be ascribed to the term "my Lord" in it. There may be a climax in the progress from "my Lord" to "my God." But it seems impossible to doubt that in this collocation "Lord" can fall little short of "God" in significance; else the conjunction of the two would be incongruous. Possibly both terms should be taken as asserting deity, the former with the emphasis upon the subjection, and the latter with the emphasis on the awe, due to deity. In any event in combination the two terms express as strongly as could be expressed the deity of Jesus; and the conjoint ascription is expressly accepted and commended by Jesus. It must rank, therefore, as an item of self-testimony on our Lord's part to His Godhead.'

In the Acts Jesus 'is addressed by the supreme honorific "Lord," except in vii. 59, where he is addressed more fully as "Lord Jesus." It is clear that this formula is employed in all cases with the profoundest reverence, and is meant to be the vehicle of the highest possible ascription.' Again: 'It is quite clear that "the Lord" is a favourite designation of Jesus in this book, and was such also in the community whose usage it reflects. And it is equally clear that in the use of this term what is primarily expressed is the profoundest reverence on the part of the community, and the highest conceivable exaltation and authority on the part of Jesus Himself. It belongs to the situation that it is often extremely difficult to determine whether by "Lord" Jesus or God is meant. That is to say, so clearly is Jesus "God" to this writer and those whose speech he reports, that the common term "Lord" vibrates between the two and leaves the reader often uncertain which is intended.'

The use of 'Lord' for Jesus is much more marked in Paul. 'The simple "Jesus" occurs in

all the Pauline Epistles only some seventeen times, while the simple "Lord" occurs some 144 or 146 times, to which may be added 95 to 97 more instances of the use of "Lord" in conjunction with the proper name. And this constant application of the term "Lord" to Jesus must not be imagined to be merely a formal mark of respect. It is the definite ascription to Him of universal absolute dominion not only over men, but over the whole universe of created beings (Ph 2<sup>11</sup>; Ro 10<sup>12</sup>).

'That Paul usually has the exalted Christ in mind when speaking of Him as Lord is only a portion of the broader fact that, writing when he wrote, and as he wrote, he necessarily had the exalted Christ in mind in the generality of his speech of Him. He was not engaged in writing an historical retrospect of the life of the man Jesus on earth, but in proclaiming Jesus as the all-sufficient Saviour of men. That he recognized that this Jesus had entered upon the actual exercise of His universal dominion only on His resurrection and ascension, and in this sense had received it as a reward for His work on earth (Ph 2<sup>9</sup>; Ro 14<sup>9</sup>) merely means that, no less than to our Lord Himself, the earthly manifestation of Jesus was to Paul an estate of humiliation upon which the glory followed. But the glory which thus followed the humiliation was to Paul, too, a glory which belonged of right to Jesus, to whom His lowly life on earth, not His subsequent exaltation, was a strange experience. It was one who was rich, he tells us, who in Jesus became poor that we might through His poverty become rich (2 Co 8<sup>9</sup>); it was one who was in the form of God who abjured clinging to His essential equality with God, and made Himself of no reputation, by taking the form of a servant, and stooping even to the death of the cross (Ph 2<sup>6</sup> *seq.*). When Paul speaks of Jesus, therefore, as "Lord" it is not especially of His exaltation that he is thinking, but rather "the whole majesty of Christ lies in this predicate" for him, and the recognition that Jesus is "Lord" expresses for him accordingly the essence of Christianity (Ro 10<sup>9</sup>; 2 Co 4<sup>5</sup>; 1 Co 12<sup>3</sup>; Ph 2<sup>11</sup>).



The proclamation of the Gospel is summed up for him therefore in this formula (2 Co 4<sup>b</sup>); the confession of Jesus as Lord is salvation (Ro 10<sup>9</sup>), and it is the mark of a Christian that he serves the Lord Christ (Col 3<sup>24</sup>); for no one can say that Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit (1 Co 12<sup>3</sup>).

If Mr. MAJOR will fill his 'Jesus is Lord' with the full meaning which he finds in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, and finish his sentence, his fellow-Churchmen will gladly accept his creed. 'God was in Christ and Jesus is Lord'—it is a short creed, but it is sufficient.

## 'They went both of them together.'<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REVEREND ARTHUR J. GOSSIP, M.A., ABERDEEN.

NOBODY with the least touch of imagination, or any power at all to think himself into another's place, can read the story of Isaac's sacrifice without feeling something hard and cold gripping him tight about the heart. The situation is so merciless and so pathetic, and there is such a terrible restraint about the telling of it, like the deadly quiet of a stricken mourner who says nothing at all, because there are no words that could express it; makes neither moan nor crying, because she is beyond the help of kindly tears; sits dry-eyed, coldly ominously still;—a certain dreadful inevitableness about it all—that lengthy journey with the thing, thank God, yet far away, and God is very pitiful, who knows that He may not repent?—that first glimpse of the distant hills, at sight of which the father's heart must have stood still; and these two, all in all to one another, moving on alone; that sudden question of a half-awakened fear, with the lad's eyes full upon his face; the long climb with drawn, grey faces in that awful silence. As we read, the heart cries out with pain, struggles to help them somehow, as one moans and shudders in his sleep, so vivid and heart-breaking is it all, although the hearts that suffered have been still for some four thousand years.

Think what it meant to Isaac! For the lad knew, so I take it, what the end was going to be. In those days human sacrifice was common and habitual enough. Scholars, indeed, insist that the

full meaning of this story is that it was there on Mount Moriah that the truth first came home to any man that this thing must end, was really a monstrosity and an offence to God. However that may be, it was commonly practised in those days; and, with that grim background to his thoughts, his was no idle question shot at random out of simple curiosity; nor would it need a very subtle mind to hear in Abraham's guarded answer more than his heart could speak! And life is sweet; and he was young, when life is at its sweetest, was still dreaming his dreams, still looking out with flushed cheeks on that wonderful future which hid and held so much that his heart coveted. A little while and he too would set sail, and win the land where dreams come true. And, sudden as an arrow burying itself in his breast, came the cold, awful truth! And yet the lad went on. There are no hot reproaches, no wild outcry; but in tense and utter silence he climbed on and on, with what thoughts jostling one another in his mind, till Abraham stopped and said, 'Here is the place'—and—it had come.

And yet, surely, it is to Abraham that one's heart runs out first. Was ever man so agonized and tortured? The light of his whole life, and he must dash it out, and henceforth grope in a gross darkness! The boy, his boy, who filled his heart with hope and happiness! And he must make it empty, silent, and bleak! If Isaac knew that he knew, what must he be thinking? And if he did not know, how horrible to trap the lad like this, so innocent and unsuspecting! And all his hopes were centred upon him! Had not God said 'In Isaac' he would certainly be blessed—

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gossip wishes it to be stated that the opening paragraph was suggested to his mind by a reference in one of Marcus Dod's letters to a sermon preached by Professor H. S. Coffin.