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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

AMONG the desiderata of our day is a good book on the local colour of the Bible. We do not realize how much of the Bible is hidden to us because we are Western. We realize only how much is perplexing. In the twenty-first volume of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES there is an article by Dr. Denney on the word 'hate' as used by our Lord: 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple' (Lk 14<sup>26</sup>). The difficult word may never have been better explained by a Western mind to Western minds. But to the Eastern mind it needs no explanation. And what the book we speak of must do for us is to put us into the Oriental's way of looking at things, and his way of speaking about them.

In Professor Walter Lock's Oxford Lecture, of which some account has already been given, it is pointed out how keenly Dr. William Sanday felt this need. So keenly did he feel it that he went to Palestine and travelled through the land for the express purpose of obtaining that Orientalism without which he found that he could not satisfactorily understand the life of our Lord. But its need is greatest where it is least felt. We are often told that we must read and interpret the Bible as we would read and understand any other book. But 'any other book' will not do. It must be an

Oriental book. And it must be a book written in the spirit of the Bible.

It must be an Oriental book. Dr. Lock quotes from F. W. Myers's *Catholic Thoughts*: 'We have to judge the Bible, and especially the Old Testament, with an Asiatic measure generally, with an antique one always. Modern Occidentalism is a wholly unjust line, if the only one; and to apply the rules of Logic to the language of Piety or Poetry or remorselessly to analyse the warm rich life of Eastern imagery and passion is but a sign of a hopeless and fruitless exposition.'

And it must be a book written in the spirit of the Bible: Says Thomas à Kempis: 'Every sacred scripture must be read in the spirit in which it is written.' Says Dr. Lock: 'That is true of every scripture.' 'It is true,' he says, 'of Bradshaw's Railway Guide as of the Bible. To get good from that, we must know exactly its purpose and its method. If we go expecting to find a description of the scenery between Oxford and London, or to find all the ways by which we can travel from Oxford to London, we shall be disappointed: if we do not know how to distinguish the main line from the branch lines, we shall arrive at unexpected places at unexpected times. So it is with the Bible.'

And what is the spirit in which the Bible was written? Again Dr. LOCK quotes Myers: 'Let there be the freest and fullest application of all Eastern lights to the interpretation of Scriptural modes of thought and feeling, and let men bring to the exposition and representation of Scriptural narrative all the knowledge they can acquire of nomad, and desert, and Palestinian life; but if they do this, and profess to do it, then also must we require of them to bring with them too the eastern and the southern soul—the noble impulses, the deep reverence, the burning love and hate—the faith and freedom and simplicity — which characterize the whole being there of Patriarch and Prophet, of Warrior, Rhapsodist, and Ruler. Merely to bring antiquarian and philological learning, however oriental, to the study of the Scriptures, while the heart remains modern and northern, this is not the way to understand them really, either in their literal or their spiritual sense. To enter into the mere minds and natural feelings of the writers, there is need that the frigidity of the scholar be exchanged for the genial nature of the dweller in the open sunshine of heaven: and, for all that is more than this, no due comprehension of such writings as those of either Testament can ever be arrived at without something more than a mere knowledge of the external records of man's life however varied, without a certain experimental spirituality—a practical personal interest in the great problems of universal human nature, and a large sympathy with the deepest realities of many souls.'

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There are three forms of death, and Jesus died all three. There is the death of the body; He died that. There is the death of the soul; He died that. There is the death of the spirit; and He died that.

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Physical death, the death of the body: of that there is no doubt or dispute. If He lived, He died. The old suggestion that He had but swooned on the Cross and recovered in the tomb—

even that desperate suggestion did not deny that He died afterwards. The death of the body is a fact. The only mistake is when we make it all the fact.

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For social death, the death of the human soul, is more than physical death, and He died that also. Is His social death denied? No; it is simply ignored. It is not reckoned part of the death which He died. Yet was it a more bitter death than the death of the body, and more truly death for Jesus.

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The only death that is disputed is the death of the spirit. For it is supposed to rest on a single passage of Scripture, and men are unwilling to rest so awful a fact on so narrow a foundation. The passage of Scripture is this: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' It does not rest on that passage alone. But even if it did, what meaning can be found in that passage but that He was for the moment reckoned with the transgressors, or as St. Paul has it, 'made a curse for us'? But it is not the spiritual death we deal with now, it is the social death.

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Mr. F. Herbert STEAD, M.A., Warden of Browning Hall, has written a book on *The Proletarian Gospel of Galilee* (Labour Publishing Company Ltd.; 2s.). Mr. Stead is the author of the article on 'Settlements' in THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS. For no one had a better right to the offer of it, and no one could have written a better article. He has unrivalled experience and he has unrivalled literary skill. Now, the last chapter of the book is on 'The Loaf and the Cup,' and the first sentence of that chapter is: 'Jesus was the most intensely *social* person known to history.'

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We do not recognize that fact. And because we do not recognize it we do not take account of His social death. Social death is separation from one's own kind. It is solitariness. To have friends and to lose them—that is social death.

The sting of it is in proportion to the joy we have in fellowship. What was it to Jesus that one of them should betray Him? What was it that they all forsook Him and fled? It depends on what they were to Him.

Listen to Mr. Herbert STEAD: 'He loved His fellow men and women. He longed to be with them. He was utterly unlike the religious solitary, the hermit, or the recluse. He sought solitude, it is true, but only that He might enjoy the Unseen Fellowship, and might return again to human intercourse with quickened outflow of sympathy. The people He chose to have about Him were no men of genius or distinction. They were commonplace members of the common people. Yet how amazingly fond of them He was! "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Indoors or out of doors, in deep joy or in the very tragedy of grief, He craved for their company. His greatest followers have found Him to be the very soul of social cohesion.'

Let us never again forget that of the cup which His Father gave Him to drink one bitter ingredient was the desertion of His own which were in the world. Let us never forget that He died three deaths in one, and that one of the three was the death of His human loving social soul.

There are many things in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. A fertile mind like Dr. John A. HUTTON's is apt, in rich soil like this, to run about like a dog among rabbits (it is his own simile), catching none, there are so many. But he seizes one at last, and (dismissing the simile) finds himself 'in danger of thinking that it and nothing else is the one designed intention of the whole story.' What is it? He calls it the helplessness of the prodigal's father.

Dr. HUTTON's most recent volume *The Persistent Word of God* (James Clarke; 5s. net) is an

exposition of two passages of Scripture, the Book of Jonah and the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Both passages are made impressive to modern men and merchants, for that is Dr. HUTTON's peculiar gift as well as his special purpose. But for the student of theology the most arresting thought is this, that Jesus intended His hearers to see how helpless the father of the prodigal was, in order to make them understand how helpless God is.

Now there is nothing that we ought to be surer of than that God is all-powerful. The ancient Israelites discovered that for us, and we are not to be driven from our assurance of it by the ephemeral sensationalism of men like Mr. H. G. Wells. Therefore we feel that Dr. HUTTON's word, the 'helplessness' of God, is not well chosen. If a father has the power to prevent his son from making a fool of himself, and does not do it, because he knows that he would be preventing him from becoming a man, that is not helplessness. God has the power. If He has not, what is the sense of praying 'Lead us not into temptation'? That He does not always use His power is because He knows that it is better for us that He should not always use it.

But undoubtedly the problem of sin is here. To quote Dr. HUTTON: 'God has given man his freedom. However we may question the depth and reality of that freedom, we cannot doubt that God has given to each of us the power to choose so far our way. He has given us the power to go far enough away to break our own hearts, and to break some other heart that loves us. It is likewise the awful idea in our Christian faith that God has given to us the power to go far enough away to break His heart.'

And no doubt the Pharisees had to be taught that lesson. For they made far too much of the power of God, which they had discovered, and far too little of His love. If a man sinned, he sinned against the Almighty. It was rebellion, like the

rebellion of the angels, and there was no recovery. 'This people who knoweth not the law are cursed'—that was the short and sharp sentence, and there was no appeal. Dr. HUTTON is not altogether wrong. The 'one designed intention' of the story is not that God is helpless, but that He holds His hand. For to be a man is to be left free to sin even if that means the breaking of some other heart, even if it means the breaking of the heart of God.

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In the *Journal of Theological Studies* for Oct.-Dec. 1921 there is a review of Driver and Gray's *The Book of Job* in the 'International Critical Commentary' (T. & T. Clark; 8vo, pp. lxxviii, 376, 360; 35s. net). It is an unusually long review for the *J.T.S.*, but the book is of unusual importance. The writer is Professor W. Emery BARNES. So we have the interest of seeing a great Cambridge scholar estimating the work of two of the greatest Oxford scholars of our time.

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There are many difficulties in the study of the Book of Job, but the chief difficulty is textual. The reader who is unburdened with a knowledge of Hebrew does not discover it. He reads the book as Carlyle read it and rejoices in its massive grandeur, its magnificent music, its unflinching appeal to the universal human heart. 'A noble book; all men's book! Grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation.' Carlyle was not disturbed by the text, and did not disturb it. But these Oxford and Cambridge scholars cannot leave it alone.

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The three chapters, 26-28, are 'especially rich in difficulties.' They are ascribed to Job himself as speaker, but many of the sayings in them are very unsuitable in the mouth of the patriarch. Gray seems to let 26<sup>5-14</sup> go to Bildad, as some have suggested, and he himself sends 27<sup>7-10, 12-20</sup> to Sophar, while he regards chapter 28 as an

independent poem. Professor Emery BARNES has a way of his own.

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He restores 27<sup>7</sup> to Job. For it seems to him to be very like Job to say—

Let mine enemy be as the wicked,  
And let him that riseth up against me be as  
the unrighteous.

Then Sophar would begin at 27<sup>8</sup>. As for 26<sup>5-14</sup> and 28, perhaps the best solution is that 'the Author seeks relief from the tragedy of Job's story by taking the rôle of Chorus Speaker and delivering a monologue on a general theme.'

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But Professor BARNES is not indifferent to the general problem of the book. Nowhere as in Job do we see 'how obstinate was the controversy called forth by the problem of the Suffering of the Righteous and the Prosperity of the Wicked.' Elsewhere, as in Ps 37 and Ps 73, the doubts which are raised are quickly set to rest. Not so in Job. 'If in form we have an academic debate, in substance we have the human cry from four separate individuals. Eliphaz and Bildad and Sophar are as earnest for their own view as Job for his; if they may not believe that sin and suffering go together, and that righteousness and prosperity are inseparable, their faith in God is taken away. Eliphaz dares to ask, "Who ever perished, being innocent?" Bildad tells Job, "If thou wert pure and innocent, surely now [God] would awake for thee." According to Sophar, "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless but for a moment."'

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'The three friends are condemned in the Epilogue, but the leaven of their doctrine remained. In our Lord's time some believed that the Galilæans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices were sinners above all the Galilæans (Luke xiii. 2), and even disciples asked him, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (John ix. 2). In our own day popular religion still allows men to cry,

"It's a judgment," when some striking calamity happens. But the doctrine is thoroughly opposed to the higher religion whether of Judaism or of Christianity; and it is a boon to have it fully and nakedly set forth in the speeches of Job's friends to its own confutation.'

It has been said that the Book of Esther was retained in the Christian Bible because of a single sentence in it. Certainly that sentence almost alone is made the text of modern sermons. It is the fourteenth verse of the fourth chapter. 'For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'

The Book of Job is richer in great texts. But in the Book of Job one text surpasses in modern interest all the rest. It is the passage 19<sup>23-27</sup>. Professor Emery BARNES thinks Driver was more conservative than Gray. He himself is more conservative than either.

The emphatic words of these verses, he says, 'are surely an answer to a passionate outburst of Bildad, in which this "friend" accuses Job of practical Atheism. In xviii. 4 the Shubite asked, in answering Job's complaints, "Does thy case prove that the earth is forsaken, *i.e.* by its God?" Further, in xviii. 21 he proceeded to pass a definite judgement on the patriarch by the assertion, "This (Job's dwelling) is the place of one who has not acknowledged God."

'To this severest condemnation Job makes reply:

25. Yea, I know that my God liveth,  
And (though He tarry) that he shall stand  
up (for me) upon the earth (dust).

'Job protests that far from not acknowledging God, he acknowledges Him as the First and the Last, and indeed as Living Redeemer.

26. And after they have stript off my skin—  
thus,  
From my flesh I behold God.

Here, as in x. 10, 11, the patriarch becomes deeply conscious of God from the sight of the Creator's wonderful work on the human body: as Browning—

This man's-flesh he hath admirably made,  
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste.

27. Whom I behold for myself,  
And mine own eyes see, and not a  
stranger's,  
Though (When) my reins are consumed  
within me.

'Not even deep-seated painful disease can hinder Job's vision of God. The patriarch is no Atheist; his confession is in essence the same as that of the Psalmist (Ps. lxxiii. 26), "My flesh and my heart are consumed, but God is the rock of my heart, and my portion for ever."'

The Hibbert Lectures for 1921 were delivered by Professor James MOFFATT of Glasgow. They are published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton under the title of *The Approach to the New Testament* (8s. 6d. net).

Professor MOFFATT had one definite object before him in delivering the lectures. He determined to prove that men were justified in applying the historic method of study to the writings of the New Testament. He spent a good deal of his time in declaring what the historical method is. Then he gave himself to show what it had accomplished.

What the historical method has accomplished in the New Testament is both positive and negative. Positively it has proved that the New Testament is a record of historical fact. Dr. MOFFATT quotes Rousseau. The quotation is from

the fourth book of *Émile*: 'Shall we say that the gospel story is a work of imagination? Friend, that is not how one invents; the facts about Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as those about Jesus Christ. At best you are only putting the difficulty away from you, without getting rid of it. It would be more incredible that four men should have agreed to manufacture this book than that there was a single man who supplied the subject-matter for it. No Jewish authors could have hit upon its tone or its morality; the gospel has notes of reality which are so great, so striking, so absolutely inimitable, that their inventor would be a more astonishing person than their hero.'

That was said by Rousseau a hundred and fifty years ago. It is proved true to-day. 'An expert,' says Professor MOFFATT, 'would have put it more cautiously; he would not have spoken about the four evangelists as if they were four independent witnesses, for example, and nowadays he would be less dogmatic upon the trustworthiness of the historical tradition about Socrates. But all this does not affect the essential point of the passage. Rousseau, with one of the flashes of insight which have made *Émile*, in Lord Morley's phrase, "one of the seminal books" of the world, has summed up by anticipation in these words the position on which sound criticism of the Gospels is steadily converging.'

But the work of the historical method is negative as well as positive. If it has established the general trustworthiness of the narrative in the Gospels, it has thrown doubt on the reliability of many of its details. Professor MOFFATT is as emphatic in asserting the negative result as in affirming the positive. He puts it first as a problem.

'The problem,' he says, 'is this: Are any sections of the gospel story due to the naïve desire of presenting Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies? How far, if at all, are

some of the incidents or sayings merely a pious tale, which rests upon some Old Testament text? Did the exigencies of controversy with the Jews lead early Christians to create as well as to recollect stories of their Master which bore out their claims on His behalf? For example, the Galilean origin of Jesus was a difficulty. So was the fact of His suffering and death. Did the inevitable debate over such topics mould the historical tradition—as we read it, for example, in Matthew's gospel?'

Well, what does he say? He says: 'Historical research answers this question unhesitatingly in the affirmative.'

The answer will be disturbing to not a few of Dr. MOFFATT'S readers. But let us remember two things. The first is, that the essential matter for us, the matter that really matters, is that we can rely on the portrait of Jesus as it is presented in the Gospels. It is historical. And if it is historical all the rest follows.

The other thing is that negative results were inevitable. The moment that we allow historical criticism to play upon the New Testament we admit the possibility that some of the contents of the New Testament will be found of doubtful value. There is only one escape from that conclusion. It is the assertion that every word of every book of the New Testament is guaranteed by God. The Roman Church has made that assertion. But no other Church can make it.

The question is, just as it was bound to be, not are there uncertainties in the New Testament, but what are they?

Now it cannot be said that Professor MOFFATT, with the freest will in the world, has made very much of them. Of misstatement or mistake of any kind whatever he does not offer a single example. All his examples turn on the difference between one Gospel and another. Mark and

Matthew make Jesus say: '*The Son of Man goes the road that the scripture has described for him* (καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ). Luke alters this into: '*The Son of Man moves to his end indeed, as it has been decreed* (κατὰ τὸ ὄρισμένον).' Both cannot be correct. There is a mistake, Dr. MOFFATT would call it a misstatement, either in Matthew and Mark, or else in Luke.

Dr. MOFFATT would call it a misstatement. That is to say, he believes that Luke deliberately changed the expression. 'Luke,' he says, 'either felt a difficulty about particular passages in the Old Testament which would bear out the words "as the scriptures have described," or else he felt that his readers would find a periphrasis more intelligible.'

But these are not the only alternatives. We do not know enough about the origin of the Gospels to be able to say that any of the evangelists made a deliberate change in his sources. The differences are there, but we do not know how they came there. We know absolutely nothing about it. If it is possible to suggest that an evangelist had a particular 'tendency' and gave expression to it, the possibility is just as open that the inevitable result of oral or transcriptional tradition had done it all before it came into the evangelist's hands.

But in any case, these are the uncertainties in the Gospels, and these are the only uncertainties. And they are open to the consideration of every one of us. Beyond the differences between one Gospel and another there is not a statement that has been proved to be untrue; there is not even an impression that has been shown to be unreliable.

The twelfth volume of the ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS, completing the work, has

now been published (T. & T. Clark; 35s. net). It contains two hundred and forty-one articles, written by one hundred and sixty-seven authors.

That means two things. It means that rarely does an author write on more subjects than one. And it means that when the one competent authority was found he was given space. Two hundred and forty-one articles is an average of between seven and eight columns to an article; and a column of the Encyclopædia is as good as a very large page of an ordinary book.

It would have been easy to have multiplied articles if it had been desirable to offer definitions of words, such as may be found in an ordinary English dictionary. But the only reason for the existence of such a work as this is the necessity of providing those who are not experts with sufficient knowledge of each topic to enable them to understand it; and when called upon to speak about it to do so with some confidence.

The range of the Encyclopædia is the range of the demand now made upon the pulpit. It would not be difficult for a preacher to find a subject which seems to be beyond his interests. But the preacher's own interests are never the measure of his responsibility. He has to speak with authority. First of all with the authority of the King, whose servant he is—'I also am a man under authority, and I say'—but also with the authority of fulness and accuracy of knowledge. He will not escape if he ignores the things that are occupying the minds of his hearers, any more than if he blunders when he refers to them.

But it is not a knowledge of this or that topic in Religion and Ethics that is of most account. It is a knowledge of Religion and Ethics.