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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

‘THE real atheist or total unbeliever is a man born God-blind or God-deaf. He is no more able to accept the supernatural than the music-deaf man is able to comprehend the meaning of a symphony of Beethoven or the colour-blind man to criticize a canvas of Raphael or Rubens. He stands before a page of Isaiah or Daniel, exactly in the same difficulty as my friend was in when he stood in the porch of his residence, and is equally insensible of his loss, save that the latter has learned that there is some defect in his vision which he cannot entirely comprehend, whilst the former is quite satisfied that the accumulated testimony of countless millions of Christians in all ages is the result of a delusion produced by credulous expounders of a fraudulent Bible; firm in his one religious belief that he alone with his few spiritually blind brethren is the only true interpreter of the Divine Will as revealed to His chosen people in the sacred oracles of God.’

That is a serious statement. Can a more serious statement be made? Who makes it? It is made by a very distinguished man of science. A new edition of *Sir Isaac Newton's Daniel and the Apocalypse* has been published (John Murray; 15s. net), edited by Sir William WHITLA, M.P., M.D., D.Sc., LL.D. And the editor prefixes a long introduction, in which he discusses ‘the nature and the cause of unbelief.’ In that introduction

Sir William WHITLA makes the assertion that some men are born God-blind.

He refers to a friend of his who is colour-blind. He does not give his name, but calls him ‘a highly intellectual Christian gentleman whom I have very intimately known for many years.’ ‘One bright autumn day we were standing in the porch of his house on a pavement of richly coloured encaustic tiles, when it occurred to me to try a very simple experiment by way of a test. There was a glorious blue tile at his feet, and plucking a single leaf of the small-leaved Virginia creeper of the brightest vermilion red, I placed it in the centre of the blue tile and asked him what he had to say about their colours. He laughed heartily and exclaimed, “Doctor, you have made a mistake this time; you thought to catch me, but this is a leaf and therefore I know it must be green.” “But what about the colour of the tile?” “It is the same,” he said, “as the leaf, only one is a little darker or lighter than the other; now when I look closely at them I think they are of the same colour which my wife called grey when she was showing me some ribbons lately.”’

As this man is colour-blind, so, says Sir William WHITLA, another man is God-blind. And without any fault of his own. He was born so. The knowledge of God is a gift of

God. It is given to one man, from another it is withheld.

There are degrees of God-blindness. Some men, says Sir William WHITLA, are totally God-blind. These are they 'who go the entire length of denying the existence of a personal God and Saviour.' 'There are others (like the colour-blind individual, who is able to recognize some primary colours, or like the partially music-deaf man who can imperfectly learn a few tunes) who have some belief in an all-wise Deity, but who are incapable of believing in the inspiration of the Bible. Others there are again whose faith may be equal to accepting the reality of God and inspiration or prophecy, but are wholly incapable of conceiving of the possibility of miracle, and so on through the entire gamut of infidelity from atheism to deism, agnosticism, rationalism, materialism, free-thought, and the minor or more diluted and fanciful varieties of Unbelief as the fashionable clerical type masking under the name of Modernism.'

Is the God-blind man responsible for his blindness? He is not. There is nothing about which Sir William WHITLA is more emphatic than that. 'The God-blind man is probably an honest man, and I am convinced he is generally acting according to his light and with the aim which he thinks is the spread of what he calls "truth."' He is born God-blind, and it demands a Calvinism higher (more *hyper*) than even Sir William WHITLA's to believe that we are responsible for our birth.

Can God-blindness be cured? Again Sir William WHITLA is emphatic. It cannot be cured. 'Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind' (Jn 9³²). Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born God-blind.

It has often been tried. It has never been successful. For 'if you approach a typical sceptic

by the ordinary methods of argument and reasoning and strive to convince him that everything in the world around him and in the heavens above him proclaims the reality and the existence of a personal God, he only laughs at you or pities your credulity and ignorance. He tells you, as he tells himself, that he sees all these things and that his own reasoning powers are quite as good as your own (indeed, he is almost certain to feel that his are better since he has probably accepted reason as his sole deity), and he will tell you that, having examined every theological argument, he has thoroughly convinced himself irrevocably by his reason that there is no proof of such a doctrine. Against the weapons of the Christian's reasoning and experience he is clad in triple mail.'

The problem which Sir William WHITLA has stated so unreservedly is dealt with also in a book which is noticed on another page—Bishop Arthur CHANDLER'S *First-Hand Religion* (Mowbray; 2s. 6d. net). 'First-Hand Religion' is Bishop CHANDLER'S name for what we know as mysticism. And the question he asks is whether mysticism 'is the exclusive prerogative of a special sort of temperament, in such a sense that people of a different temperament are precluded from experiencing it.'

Now we may be sure that if any man may be a mystic, any man may be a believer in God. For the mystic, in Bishop CHANDLER'S idea and in ours, is the religious man at his most religiousness. Does Bishop CHANDLER believe that any man may be a mystic?

He does. God, he says, is willing to reveal Himself to any man. If a man is not a mystic, in other words, if a man does not find God, it is not because God has made him so that he is incapable of finding God, it is because he does not 'put himself into the right disposition to receive His revelations.' 'It is not people who are specially chosen by Him, or people who have a particular

psychic-physical temperament, that are recipients of His revelation, but those who wait for it with open and teachable minds.'

Messrs. Chapman & Hall have sent out a new edition of Mr. Gilbert THOMAS's *Things Big and Little* (3s. 6d. net). Of the numerous volumes of essays on all sorts of subjects which are keeping the printers at work it is one of the least eccentric, and most spiritually strengthening. Among the essays there is 'A Word on Prayer.'

It is the old question whether prayer for material things is of any avail. But it is not pursued in the old way. To Mr. THOMAS the question is not will prayer for material things be answered, but should prayer for material things be offered.

He goes to Meredith—'by common consent among the greatest and best of men (though a recent biography has sought to modify the impression).' Meredith says bluntly, 'Prayer for material things is worse than useless; prayer for strength of soul alone avails.' But that is too dogmatic, says Mr. THOMAS. It is more than dogmatic, it is off the point. The question is not whether prayer for material things is useful or useless, it is whether it should be offered.

For prayer may be answered even when it should not have been offered. You remember that terrible sentence in one of the psalms (106^{14, 15}), 'They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. *And he gave them their request, and sent leanness into their soul.*' They who made that prayer had their answer. They received the very things they prayed for. But it would have been better for them if they had not received them.

Was the fault with God? The fault was clearly with them. The alternative for God was to let them perish in the wilderness. And that could

not be. Moses reminded God once that that could not be. The faithfulness of God would have been discredited. His very power would have been doubted. They had to get what they prayed for. But they should not have prayed for it.

Why should they not have prayed for it? Because it was a material thing? Not so. Certainly not so. Christ taught His disciples to pray for material things. 'Give us this day our daily bread.' There is no more objection to prayer for material things than there is to prayer for spiritual things. '*Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' The question is not whether this thing or that thing should be asked. The question is whether the thing asked is asked 'in my name.' And we know that 'in my name' means according to the will of God.

It is certainly according to the will of God to grant us material things. Every good gift cometh down from above. It is His sun that rises in the morning; it is His rain that descends in the evening. But if the thing is selfish, then whether it is material or spiritual it is not in accordance with the will of God and should not be requested. The only advantage that the spiritual thing has over the material is that it is less likely to be selfish. And yet, how often is prayer offered for increase in spirituality with the half-conscious thought that the increased spirituality will bring increased honour.

The Hartley Lecture for 1922 was delivered by the Rev. Henry J. PICKETT, its subject *The Hebrew Prophet and the Modern Preacher*. Under that title it is now published and makes a volume of nearly three hundred pages (Holborn Publishing House; 5s. net).

The purpose is to magnify the office of the Christian preacher. The method is to show that

the Christian preacher is a prophet. What else he is or ought to be, Mr. PICKETT does not say. This is what he is meant above all else to be.

Now in order to be a prophet just one thing is necessary—personal touch with God. You may call this personal touch by your own name. Mr. PICKETT calls it experience. The preacher must have immediate experience of God. If he has not that, he has nothing, and is not properly a preacher.

For you must preach about God. And you cannot preach another man's experience of God. Only your own experience is preaching. That is what we mean by saying that personality is the telling fact in the pulpit. Personality does not mean eccentricity. It does not mean even individuality. It means such realization of God in one's own life as makes one (to use the ancient epithet) a man of God.

How does this realization of God arrive? Does it come from without or from within? The question is important. For to a wrong answer is due that cleavage in our attitude to Christ which is the most flagrant fact of our present-day Christianity. The Modernist says that it comes from within. What I experience—that, he says, is true. And since I have no experience of Jesus Christ as God, Jesus Christ is not God.

But the first experience of God is not from within. It is from without. So it was with the early disciples. First came Christ in His humanity. He made claims. He claimed to be the Son of God. The disciples accepted the claim. They believed on Him. Then followed the experience within. In the words of Bishop CHANDLER: 'Our Lord's character and life, works and teaching, made an impression on His disciples, a complex impression which, in so far as it caused them to follow Him, was a belief in Him, whether as prophet or Messiah. This belief was not

a mere intellectual assent; it was an act by which they accepted Him as their Master and committed themselves to His service; and this moral and emotional side came gradually to express itself devotionally in prayer and spiritual experience of His power and presence in their lives; but a belief of some sort came first, and made the prayer and spiritual experience possible.'

Mr. PICKETT is of the same mind. You might have feared for him that he would fall into the pit which the Modernists have dug. He is better instructed. 'God,' he says, 'must be known, loved, obeyed. Much will have led to the definite "sense of God," which underlies vocation. What indeed is experience, but the growing force of many rills making up the main current or channel of personality? It is what the New Testament knows as conversion, and the following of Christ. The prophets knew God, not as a doctrine, but as a fact. As they followed their work, as they looked out over the conditions of their time, or as they suffered in their persons and homes, God stood for them as the reality behind, above, and over all. He and His made up for them the supreme concern of life.'

Then came the experience within, and the conviction which only experience within can bring. And out of conviction the constraint. 'Each of them passed through an experience, felt later by the "One greater than a prophet," so that they could have fittingly used His own great speech, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." And it is always questionable whether, until this "necessity is laid upon us," and the sense of "woe unto me" is felt, we ought to accept any other standard as constituting the call of God.'

Those are the steps. For it is the Modernist, ever crying out against a cataclysmic religion, who works by cataclysms. The rest recognize progress in the knowledge of Christ. First the fact of a Saviour, next the acceptance of His saving

power, then the experience of His work within, making for peace and joy, finally the full assurance of faith and the 'woe is me if I preach not the gospel.'

A book which drives one to disturbed thinking comes quietly from the Cambridge University Press, and bears the inoffensive title of *Essays on the Depopulation of Melanesia* (6s. net). The Essays are edited by Dr. W. H. R. RIVERS. Sir Everard im THURN writes a Preface. The essayists are three missionaries (Mr. W. J. DURRAD, Mr. A. I. HOPKINS, and Mr. W. C. O'FERRALL), two Resident Magistrates (Mr. C. M. WOODFORD and the late Sir William MACGREGOR); and a scientific anthropologist (Dr. Felix SPEISER). Dr. RIVERS himself writes the last essay, and carries the disturbance to its height.

What is it all about? It is about the depopulation of Melanesia. It is all about that. The title of the book is descriptive of its contents.

Well, why should Melanesia not be depopulated? What harm will it do if the native tribes of Melanesia diminish in numbers or even vanish off the earth? Will the commerce of the world suffer? These writers are not thinking of commerce. But the Melanesians belong to the coloured races. These writers are not thinking of colour. One and all, they are greatly concerned about the depopulation of Melanesia, and, one and all, it is because they are interested in the Melanesians.

The depopulation is due to Europeans. There may have been a tribe here or a tribe there which was decreasing in number before Europeans came. But the writers agree that the decrease as a whole is due to the effect which the arrival of Europeans has had on the natives. And it is not that the Europeans who have gone to Melanesia have deliberately set themselves to reduce the number of the natives, as has been the case (God forgive us all) in some lands. Alcohol and disease have been introduced, and have called for their victims,

here as everywhere. But the depopulation in its extent and alarm is due to the missionaries and the magistrates.

The missionaries have substituted Christianity for the native religions. The magistrates have prohibited head-hunting. These are the causes of the depopulation which, with one consent, the writers in this book deplore.

Should Christianity not have been introduced into Melanesia? None of the writers says so. Perhaps Sir Everard im THURN would have an open mind. Perhaps Dr. SPEISER, the scientific anthropologist, if pressed, would say it should not. All the rest would affirm that there is no country on the face of the earth which would suffer by the introduction of Christianity.

It is the manner in which Christianity may be introduced into a country; it is the manner in which it has been introduced into Melanesia, that is the trouble. Dr. RIVERS is most explicit.

The chief cause of the depopulation of Melanesia, says Dr. RIVERS, is the lack of interest in life. We shall see what that means in a moment, when we come to head-hunting. For the present the point is that the chief interest of the natives has been a religious interest. And the question is, Will Christianity furnish that interest?

Dr. RIVERS sees no reason why it should not. 'Experience,' he says, 'has amply shown that Christianity is capable of giving the people an interest in life which can take the place of that due to their indigenous religion.' In any case, now that Christianity has come, it has come to stay. Christianity is to be the religion of the Melanesians. For 'even if it were thought desirable to maintain the native religion in a modified form, it is highly improbable that there will be found people of our own culture sufficiently self-sacrificing to guide the progress of the people in the way which comes so naturally to the mission-

aries of the Christian religion.' The essential matter is that the indigenous religion must not be displaced in such a way as to destroy the interest of the natives in religion.

Two things are necessary—a united policy and sympathy. Hitherto, says Dr. RIVERS, 'one missionary has seen nothing but the work of the devil in some native institution and has willed its complete destruction; another, perhaps even of the same Mission, has seen in it a means of preparing the ground for the truth, and has, to some extent at least, encouraged its activities.'

This has puzzled the native and has led to dissimulation. 'If a new gospel is to be taken with success to such a people as the Melanesians, it is essential that the indigenous point of view shall be understood and that the misunderstanding to which the new views are inevitably subject shall be appreciated. Even if it were decided utterly to destroy the old religion there is no way in which these difficulties can be met so successfully as by a study of the old religion and of the mental attitude upon which the old religious practices rested, for this attitude must inevitably influence the reception of the new religion. If, on the other hand, it be decided to preserve such elements of the old religion as are not in conflict with the new, this study is even more essential. How can it be possible to decide whether a native practice shall be preserved unless the nature of the practice is thoroughly understood and its relations with other aspects of the native culture realised? Whatever the policy adopted towards the indigenous religion, it is of the utmost importance that this religion shall be understood and that, even if no concerted effort to study native religions is made, attempts in this direction made by individual missionaries shall be encouraged.'

But the chief cause of the depopulation of Melanesia is the prohibition of head-hunting. And the urgent question for missionary and for magistrate is what is to be done about that.

For that practice, says Dr. RIVERS, 'formed the centre of a social and religious institution which took an all-pervading part in the lives of the people. The heads sought in the head-hunting expeditions were needed in order to propitiate the ancestral ghosts on such occasions as building a new house for a chief or making a new canoe, while they were also offered in sacrifice at the funeral of a chief. Moreover, head-hunting was not only necessary for the due performance of the religious rites of the people, but it stood in the closest relation to pursuits of an economic kind. The actual head-hunting expedition only lasted a few weeks, and the actual fighting often only a few hours, but this was only the culminating point of a process lasting over years. It was the rule that new canoes should be made for an expedition to obtain heads, and the manufacture of these meant work of an interesting kind, lasting certainly for many months, probably for years. The process of canoe-building was accompanied throughout by rites and feasts which not only excited the liveliest interest but also acted as stimuli to various activities of horticulture and pig-breeding. As the date fixed for the expedition approached, other rites and feasts were held, and these were still more frequent and on a larger scale after the return of a successful expedition. In stopping the practice of head-hunting the rulers from an alien culture were abolishing an institution which had its roots in the religion of the people and spread its branches throughout nearly every aspect of their culture, and by this action they deprived the people of the greater part of their interest in life.'

Does Dr. RIVERS advocate the restoration of head-hunting? Not exactly. Not just human head-hunting. What he advocates is the gradual modification of the custom of hunting for human heads. He thinks that that should have been done. He thinks it might be done yet.

His words are these: 'At first sight it might seem a hopeless task, and so it would be if one

attended only to the outward practice obvious to the European observer and ignored the meaning which the institution of head-hunting bears to those who practise it. If we turn to this inner meaning, the case becomes less difficult. The essential motive for the head-hunting of Melanesia is the belief that on various important occasions, and especially on occasions connected with the chiefs, a human head is necessary as an offering to the ancestral ghosts. There is little doubt that the custom is a relic of an earlier practice of human sacrifice, and the head-hunting of the Solomons was but little removed from this, for till recently it was the custom to bring home from expeditions captives who were killed when some important ceremony created the need for a head. In other parts of the world there is reason to believe that, where human beings were formerly sacrificed, the place of the human victim has been taken by an animal, and even that the place of a human head has been taken by that of an animal. I have no doubt that it would have been possible to effect such a substitution in the Solomons, that officials with the necessary knowledge of native custom and belief, and with some degree of sympathy with them, could have brought about such a substitution and thus avoided the loss of life and money which has accompanied the suppression of head-hunting in the Solomons. At the

same time they would have kept up the interest of the people in their native institutions until such time as the march of events produced new interests, including new religious interests, connected with the culture which was being brought to bear upon their lives.'

One interest would still have to be provided—the interest of canoe-making. 'The substitution of a porcine for a human head, while satisfying many of the ceremonial needs, would leave no motive for the manufacture of new canoes and the maintenance of this industry. Here it would be necessary to provide some new motive for the making of canoes.' Dr. RIVERS suggests the substitution of canoe races. No doubt in such a substitution the native canoe would be displaced by a boat of European build. But as with religion so also with boat-building. The picturesque canoe would disappear, 'but much as this would be regretted by the anthropologist or the artist, the new boat would be probably fully as efficacious in maintaining interest and zest in life and would thus contribute to the purpose which the writers of this volume have before them. Only, it is essential that the change should grow naturally out of native institutions and should not be forced upon the people without their consent and without any attempt to rouse their interest.'

The Nature of Redemption.

BY THE REVEREND A. E. GARVIE, D.D., PRINCIPAL OF NEW COLLEGE, LONDON.

I.

THE work of Christ can be described in a number of terms—Redemption, Reconciliation, Propitiation—each of which presents some phase of it; but Redemption seems to be the most comprehensive of all, and in expounding it the others will in proper course receive attention.

1. According to Paul's teaching, redemption is deliverance from the guilt of sin, or *the wrath of*

God on sin, the power of sin, or *the flesh*, the law as a restraint on, and yet a provocation to, sin, and *death* as the penalty of sin. As such it secures for man forgiveness, holiness, freedom, and blessedness, or, to use more theological terminology, justification, sanctification, emancipation, and glorification. Dealing with these aspects of redemption in the reverse order for a reason which will at once be seen, we may note (1) that the hope of resurrection rooted in the believer's