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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE forty-first number of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* is devoted to a symposium on Eschatology in which such well-known scholars as L. Ginzberg, N. Schmidt, B. W. Bacon, F. C. Porter, and E. F. Scott take part. The essay by Professor SCOTT in particular is a notable contribution. It is on 'The Place of Apocalyptic Conceptions in the Mind of Jesus,' and shows how far the pendulum has swung back in twenty years.

For it is about twenty years since the Apocalyptic theory of the Gospels became prominent, and we have now come to what may be called the period of 'settling down.' There have been the usual violent swings to right and left, and, though it cannot be said that agreement has yet been reached, Professor SCOTT's fresh and searching examination of the subject will certainly help to that end.

He admits that Jesus was in sympathy with the Apocalyptic hopes of His time and used their expressions in their own sense. It is true that the first Christians probably exaggerated this element in His teaching. They were very ordinary men, and would interpret in a crude and literal sense much that He may have spoken figuratively. Still, there must have been something in the teaching itself that warranted their interpretation. But even if we admit this Apocalyptic element, it by

no means follows that Jesus had any consistent 'Apocalyptic scheme' in His mind. His main concern was practical and religious, and, whatever forms He used to express it, this was dominant in His purpose.

As a matter of fact, however, the Apocalyptic element in the teaching of Jesus is both small and subsidiary. It is small. The affinities of Jesus were much more with the prophets than with the Apocalypticists. And it is subsidiary, for its function everywhere is to enforce a message that was *not* Apocalyptic. The real message of Jesus is independent of Apocalyptic ideas and can easily be detached from them. His demand was for a new kind of life, a new relation to God, and, while He looked for the Kingdom, His interest was in those moral requirements which it involved.

Indeed it may be fairly argued that, although Jesus fell in with the Apocalyptic outlook, His thought was in inward contradiction to it. The two outstanding features of Apocalyptic thought are that the Kingdom lies in the future, and that it will come suddenly by the immediate act of God. For this strain of thought was the outcome of a profound pessimism. In the world now running to decay there were no regenerating forces which by their own action would gradually bring about the

better time. God must Himself interpose, by an immediate act of power.

Now these ideas were completely opposed to the convictions by which Jesus lived, and which underlie all His teaching. He believed that God rules the world, and that everything is ordered by Him, so that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. What He demands is the faith that God is reigning now, in spite of all the mystery in which His ways are enshrouded. This is the heart of the religion of Jesus. In like manner He is in conflict with the view that no forces are working for good in the present, and that if the Kingdom comes it must break in by a miraculous act. He sees the goodness of God in the rain and the sunshine and in human impulses that constantly lead to good. He makes His appeal, over and over again, to the goodness that is in men. In short, the whole aim of Jesus is to restore that faith which Apocalyptic had implicitly denied.

So what we find is a contradiction between the forms employed by Jesus and the inner drift and purpose of His message. Probably Jesus was not Himself aware of this contradiction. He took over the Apocalyptic ideas of His time without reflecting on their origin or the philosophy that lay behind them. Their use to Him was that they served to make real to Him His vision of a better world, in which the Will of God should absolutely prevail. They offered Him a definite goal towards which He could work. But all the time they were borrowed from a type of thought that was alien to Him.

That was its use to Him. Its use to *us* is that it gives us the key to His mode of expressing Himself, to the forms under which He thought and by which He was restricted. Jewish Apocalyptic has not provided us with the key to the teaching of Jesus. The task still remains of exploring the message itself.

One thing more. As a matter of history, Jesus

destroyed the Apocalyptic view of the world, just as He destroyed the Law, although in both cases He claimed to be fulfilling. He throws all His weight on moral and spiritual ideas, and these in time burst the Apocalyptic sheath. Before the first century was over the message of Jesus had shattered the Apocalyptic scheme. By means of Apocalyptic He had proclaimed a faith which in the end shook itself free of the forms in which it had been stated.

What is really wrong with our traditional theology and venerable Creeds? We hear on all hands that the Church must unload and quietly drop them. We are told that, since the War in particular, theology is in the melting-pot. We have a dim notion that the melting-pot is rather overworked, and is largely unnecessary. What is needed is somebody who will render Christian doctrine a service similar to that which Moffatt and others have recently rendered to the New Testament.

We are not prepared, at any rate, to scrap the traditional theology on which generations of believers have been nurtured until we have seen how theology looks expressed in modern language. A language perplexity, we believe, is to a large extent the real difficulty for theology to-day. It is not that it revolts either the moral or the common sense of the plain man. The chief trouble is that the plain man does not understand it. To a very real degree it is commonly expressed in what is to him a foreign tongue, may we not say a dead language?

He who can explain doctrines in the familiar speech of modern everyday life is worthy of high honour and merits our warmest gratitude. Dr. NEVILLE S. TALBOT, the Bishop of Pretoria, can do it. He has done it in one of the most stimulating books we have read for some time, *The Returning Tide of Faith* (Nisbet; 5s. net).

It is a remarkably cheap book. It is not a large

work. It is not an exhaustive theological treatise. But if in no case it exhausts the topic handled, it never approaches exhausting the reader. It is a tonic, a genuine re-creation of the mind, to peruse it. It shows what is the real meaning of, and what the necessity for, each of the great Christian doctrines, and all in such limpid simplicity of language that the plainest of plain men may grasp and with keen interest follow the argument.

Simple as it is in style, it is never superficial. The Bishop knows and grapples with the kind of question that troubles the mind or the heart of the ordinary individual who reflects on his experience in this unintelligible world. What about the truth of the Bible? What about the heart-breaking seeming silence of God? What about Christ? What about the Virgin Birth? What about Hell? And so on. On every subject we have here a frank statement of difficulties, and real guidance towards their solution.

Specially good is the chapter on the Trinity. The Bishop sympathizes with those who feel resentment at the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed. But he proceeds to show that the doctrine of the Trinity 'is the interpretation of that which was not made by man but was wrought out by God.' 'No speculation of man produced this almost incredible truth. It had not entered into the mind of man so to think of God. The truth took hold of men's minds through what God did in Christ. The assertion of threefoldness in the nature of God was not a quasi-mathematical fancy. It sprang from the succession of distinct moments or comings in the Divine action. There was the sending of the Son by the Father. There was the sending of the Holy Spirit. All was the action of God. It was not God, then a man (Jesus), and then an influence (the Spirit). But it was God acting in His Son, and God acting in the Spirit.'

'Historical event, then, lies at the heart of the truth of the Trinity. No man wove it, in spider-like fashion, out of his inner consciousness.'

'The upshot is a doctrine which makes the nature of God, as personal, far more intelligent than any doctrine which conceives of Him as merely one or single or solitary. For personality, as we know it on the human plane, is never merely individual, still less solitary. It never exists, it is never expressed, except in relationship with others. Further, it is revealed in action. It is most revealed in outgoing sacrificial action. . . . So God was revealed in all-fulfilling action in the giving of Himself in love which suffers all things for the sake of the beloved. He did not send someone else, He came, He gave Himself. That very essence of the Good News is utterly irreconcilable with any merely Unitarian conception of God.'

Professor RUFUS JONES, the author of 'The World Within,' has written an excellent little work on personal religion. He calls it *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life* (New York: Macmillan; 6s. net). Dr. JONES is Professor of Philosophy in Haverford College, and one of the most interesting chapters in this book is a congenial one on 'Psychology and the Spiritual Life.' But the most suggestive part of the book is the Introduction, in which the writer deals with the nature of religion and describes it as *energy*. This, of course, is only one aspect of it, but he points out that it is an aspect of which the great experts have made much.

'Power' is a word that is often on the lips of Jesus, and always in reference to an intrinsic and interior moral and spiritual energy of life. The Kingdom of God comes with power, not because of any extrinsic authority or aid, but because it is a life-transforming energy, like the expanding yeast in flour or the forces of life in the soil.

So in the newborn Church the fellowship was 'endued with power' at Pentecost. Something new and dynamic entered the feeble band and left them no longer feeble. The Divine inward Presence revealed itself as a new energy. The important thing in their experience was not the ecstatic

utterance, but the heightened moral quality, the irresistible boldness, the fortification of their spirit. It is this energy which marks the event as an epoch.

St. Paul, again, writes as if he were an expert in dynamics. 'Dynamos' is one of his favourite words. He seems to have found out how to draw upon energies in the universe which nobody else suspected were there. He calls the incoming power by many names: 'The Spirit,' 'holy Spirit,' 'Christ,' 'the Spirit of Christ,' 'Christ in you,' 'God that worketh in us.' Whatever his word may be, his assertion is that God, as Christ revealed Him, is an active energy working with us and in us for a complete new creation in us.

Further, St. Paul does not confine his idea of this new power to the mighty spiritual forces that come down from above. Much more often our attention is directed to energies that are potential within ourselves—even the most ordinary of us. The Grace of God sums up the great descending energies, but this is met and enabled to operate by the inner energy, by which man responds to God's upward pull, and which Paul calls *faith*.

Faith, in Paul's sense, is not *believing* something. It is a moral attitude of will to the character of God as revealed in Christ. We know this sense of faith in many other fields; in finance, *e.g.*, and in society. In personal life also, *morale* is only another name for faith. Elicit faith and you can do anything. McDougall cites the case of a boy who was chased by a wild animal and leapt a fence which he could never afterwards negotiate, often as he tried. Psychologists quote many examples of this kind.

In the sphere of religion faith is just as powerful. It made a saint out of Magdalene, a spiritual hero out of Augustine, a creative leader out of the unstable monk, Luther. These possibilities are in us, but we are most of us the victims of limiting inhibitions. We hold intellectual theories which

check the outflow of the energy of faith. We have a wise system of thought which accounts for everything and which leaves no place for faith. And yet there has seldom been a time when spiritual energies were more needed than to-day. Our troubles consist largely in failure to lay hold of those forces that lie near at hand. The ancient realities still abide, and the invisible forces of the spirit are as real as ever. That is the thesis of Dr. JONES' book, and he illustrates it by an incident.

'When the Hellgate bridge was being built over the East River in New York the engineers came upon an old derelict ship, lying embedded in the river mud, just where one of the central piers of the bridge was to go down through to its bedrock foundation. No tugboat could be found that was able to start the derelict from its ancient bed in the ooze. . . . Finally, with a sudden inspiration one of the workers hit upon this scheme. He took a large flat-boat, which had been used to bring stone down the river, and he chained it to the old sunken ship when the tide was low. Then he waited for the great tidal energies to do their work. Slowly the rising tide, with all the forces of the ocean behind it, came up under the flat-boat, raising it inch by inch. And as it came up, lifted by irresistible power, the derelict came up with it, until it was entirely out of the mud that had held it . . . There are greater forces than those tidal energies waiting for us to use for our tasks.' They operate when we lay hold on them.

There is an apologetic behind 'apologetic.' This is the work of philosophy, which prepares the mind to receive spiritual truths. It spreads an atmosphere and an attitude that give the truths of religion a sympathetic hearing. In the last part of the nineteenth century, *e.g.*, when the influence of Darwin and Huxley had dominated a generation and men's minds were apt to be shut against spiritual conceptions, a great service was done to religion by the Neo-Hegelian school of thinkers, of whom

T. H. Green, Wallace, and Caird are the best known. These were right-hand allies of the Christian faith, and we owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

Our own generation, however, has turned away from this philosophy. By many thinkers to-day it is regarded as a form of pantheism, and the movements represented by Pragmatism, Personal Idealism, Natural Realism, and Creative Evolution witness to this revulsion. We are in a different mental climate, and there is a call for a fresh survey of the great problems if that idealism to which religion always looks for support is to make its voice heard to-day. What form is it taking in contemporary thought?

This is the question raised by Miss HILDA D. OAKELEY in her recent work, *History and Progress* (Allen & Unwin; 10s. 6d. net). The book is a collection of essays and lectures on diverse philosophical topics. It is a work of extraordinary ability and interest. The writer deals with the big things with a quiet mastery that shows her quality, and the fact that she keeps so close to reality is perhaps accounted for by her varied experience as both warden of a settlement and teacher of philosophy.

One of the essays deals with the subject 'Time and Eternal Life,' and the conception of the relation of time to eternity found in current idealism. She selects two thinkers, Bosanquet and von Hügel, as representing two aspects of idealist philosophy, the logical and the mystical. What have they to say about this profound problem, the place of time and time-experience in the perfection we call Eternal Life?

Bosanquet rejects both Bergson's conception of a 'creative progress ad infinitum' and also the doctrine of a temporal earthly experience passing at some point into the eternity of the heavenly state. For him time is unreal. It is appearance only, 'but appearance inseparable from the membership of finiteness in infinity, and therefore from the

self-revelation of a reality which, as a whole, is timeless.'

Personality fares in the same way. Human personalities are of little account except in the result of their striving. It is the work, not the person, that counts. Miss OAKELEY's exposition of Bosanquet makes his system appear like a modern version of Nirvana. The individual is lost in the All. History is a succession of appearances. No doubt the ethic deduced from this has a splendid air about it. It is that man should live for the spiritual goal of high endeavour and be content to be nothing so that the timeless Whole be perfect. What is the soul, after all, but 'a link, or focus, through which the striving of the universe unites the multitude of things and persons in the Absolute Whole'?

Von Hügel's contribution is more helpful. Indeed, his conception of Eternity is a noble and spiritual one. Eternal Life gets its substance from concrete experience. He finds it everywhere, in scientific achievement, in the emotional experiences of life, as well as in religious experience. Eternal Life is made real in temporal events, or its reality is apprehended thus. Yet spiritual perfection seems even in von Hügel to exclude the aspect of succession. Man's progress is by conscious succession of experiences, and he has an ideal of eternity, but 'to complete Eternity he will never attain.'

Miss OAKELEY has some penetrating criticisms to make of contemporary idealism. 'The relentless logic which compels the whole (*i.e.* the best) to appear as the final stage of a logical process, rejecting all that does not fit in with its form of universality in difference—time, separate personality, the irreconcilable contrasts of good and evil, teleology and mechanism, does not say much to our deepest experience. . . . We must, therefore, confess, with a deep disappointment, that the latest and in some respects the most ethically impressive and attractive of the utterances of Absolute Idealism does not seem to solve the problem of religious

philosophy.' This is her verdict on Bosanquet, and she adds some definite reasons. The conception of timelessness is a negative and, indeed, an impossible one. The concrete time notion cannot be got rid of. It is the life-blood of reality. If the riddle of existence is to be solved it must be, not by abstraction from all human reality (e.g. the consciousness of growth in spiritual experience),

but by seizing hold of that reality of which our experience may indeed be the symbol, but a true symbol, not mere illusion.

A truer conception of this reality is found in a philosophy like von Hügel's, where the Eternal is revealed in time and its reality apprehended in the durational experience of the religious life.

## A New View of the Servant of the Lord.

BY PROFESSOR JOHN E. MCFADYEN, D.D., UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

It may interest the readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, who in the present distress find it difficult to get or to keep in touch with foreign criticism, to learn of the latest solution of the difficult 'Servant of Jahweh' problem, proposed by Sigmund Mowinckel, a Norwegian scholar, and enthusiastically adopted by no less an authority than Professor Hermann Gunkel, who has sketched it in a very interesting brochure entitled *Ein Vorläufer Jesu* (Verlag Seldwyla, Bern). The passages round which the discussion turns are the famous songs in Is 42<sup>1-7</sup> 49<sup>1-7</sup> 50<sup>4-11</sup> 52<sup>13-53</sup><sup>12</sup>, dealing with the enigmatic figure of the Servant of Jahweh.

No ambiguity, of course, attaches to the interpretation of the Servant in the body of the prophecy proper (Is 40-55): there, beyond any cavil, he is the nation (41<sup>8</sup> 44<sup>1</sup> 45<sup>4</sup> 48<sup>20</sup> etc.). But the subject of the Servant songs is a different matter, and their interpretation divides the critical camp, some—perhaps the majority—believing that here, as in the rest of the prophecy, the Servant is the nation (Jacob, or Israel, as he is alternatively called), others vehemently maintaining that, in justice to all the facts, and in particular to the very highly individualized traits of the description, the Servant can here at any rate only be fairly or naturally regarded as an individual. There are excellent scholars on both sides, so that the question cannot be decided either by the numbers or the ability of the disputants, and a new attempt at a solution should be welcome to everybody. I do not propose here to discuss the question on its merits, but simply to present the new view which, briefly stated, is that the Servant is none other than the prophet himself.

The exiles have been languishing in Babylon for half a century, and Deutero-Isaiah comforts them with the assurance that the day of their redemption draweth nigh. This is no vague promise: for in the great Cyrus, who has swept over Western Asia with his conquering hosts, and whose every step is attended with victory (41<sup>2</sup>), the prophet sees the sure and certain historical agent of that redemption. In this experience the wonders of the ancient Exodus are to be revived, and even surpassed; the whole creation is to join with Israel in the song of jubilation (44<sup>23</sup> 45<sup>6</sup>); and the poet-prophet looks forward to the time when all the nations, astonished at Jahweh's doing and ashamed of their own foolish idolatries, will be won to the worship of Israel's glorious God. Now in this magnificent programme let us consider the rôle assigned in the Songs to the Servant.

He has been chosen by Jahweh as His instrument to do *prophetic* work: like Jeremiah, he has been called from his mother's womb (49<sup>4</sup>). The spirit of Jahweh is upon him (42<sup>1</sup>), and his mouth is the instrument by which his work is done, the sword by which his battle for Jahweh is fought (49<sup>2</sup>). He has a disciple's tongue, his ear is open and sensitive to the daily revelation from his God which each new morning brings (50<sup>4</sup>), and the words of comfort and assurance which he utters to others are the words which he has himself heard from his divine Master, listening, as he does evermore, like a true disciple. Like Paul, he delivers just what he has received. All this, it is argued, does not carry us beyond the range of an individual prophet, who in the name of God can speak an effective and even creative word.