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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

It was about time that some one should help us with our stocktaking on the subject of the credibility of the Gospel records. Some speak of the 'Jesus myth,' and others regard the 'Jesus cult' as an unfortunate aberration of the early Church influenced by the 'mystery' religions. To some Jesus is an apocalyptist, to others a pacifist; while there are those who tell us that what we get in the Gospels is not the story of Jesus but the reflexion of the mind of the Apostolic Church. Where exactly do we stand? Bishop HEADLAM has tried to tell us in a volume with the title *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, which is noticed on another page.

The Bishop of Gloucester has not the faintest desire to 'make our flesh creep.' He thinks too many have engaged in this amiable pastime. He has no new and startling theories to propound. The impressive thing about this volume is just that an author who long ago made good his place in the front rank of New Testament scholars, writing with full knowledge of the criticism of this generation, including the 'freak' criticism of the last year or two, can yet adopt a position on the whole so conservative. We say 'on the whole,' for Bishop HEADLAM, cautious as he is in his general outlook, adopts the critical position with regard, *e.g.*, to the composition of the Synoptic Gospels, and is no more convinced than the rest of us that

the Fourth Gospel is a literal account of the ministry of Jesus.

But though the Bishop does not object to be numbered among the higher critics, he will not go all the way with them, nor indeed very far. He will not concede that Matthew, *e.g.*, has 'faked' his material. (The word is his own.) We point out that the first Gospel has a tendency to omit descriptions of Jesus' personal feelings and emotions, and disparaging references to the Twelve; and we ask: 'Does this not mean that a growing and false feeling of reverence is at work on the records?' Dr. HEADLAM has two answers. Those omissions are only examples of the undoubted fact that Matthew shortens Mark's narrative, and a *précis* has never the vitality of the original. Further, Matthew inserts as well as omits. He deals very faithfully with St. Peter. 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' 'Thou art a stumbling-block.' If Matthew wishes to exaggerate the miraculous, why does he abbreviate practically every miracle that he records?

On this subject of miracle again, Bishop HEADLAM, while willing to advance so far with the liberals, shows the same cautious reluctance to be led into advanced positions that may prove untenable. The Temptation story is not a literal account of actual events. Has not Origen himself pointed out

that the narrative describes in picturesque figurative language the temptations to which Jesus would be exposed? But the story of the feeding of the five thousand is not so easily disposed of. We must not assume on *a priori* grounds that the event did not happen as described. We should rather recognize that something happened 'so wonderful as to stir up the people in a remarkable way.' Dr. HEADLAM hesitates to accept rationalizing explanations even of the walking on the sea and the stilling of the storm. The reverent attitude is a certain 'suspense of judgment.'

He is not particularly grateful to the psychologists who point out the analogy between many of Jesus' miracles and healing by suggestion. The analogies are great: the differences are greater. 'There was a power and authority about our Lord's actions which was unparalleled then as it is unparalleled now.' After all, psychology is an infant science. The physical sciences change their view of what is possible with a rapidity that should give pause to the dogmatist; and the historical evidence for most of the miracles (not for all) is of great weight.

On the whole subject we could wish that Dr. HEADLAM had taken us more into his confidence. Discussion of such questions as the Virgin Birth (he repeatedly refers to the Virgin with a capital V), of the son of the widow of Nain, of Jairus' daughter, and of Lazarus, to say nothing of the Resurrection of Christ, is possibly excluded as not coming under the scope of this volume; and yet its omission leaves a certain blank in a book which professes to deal with the credibility of the Gospel narratives.

The author's expression of his judgment on disputed points is always a model of the humility and courtesy of the Christian scholar. 'I am not prepared to say exactly what happened at the Transfiguration.' 'I do not myself feel certain of the historical character of all the early stories about our Lord.' 'May we identify Bartholomew, as has often been done, with that Nathanael, "the

Israelite in whom was no guile"?' There is only one unworthy sentence in the book, the sneer at the 'singularly meagre morality of the modern temperance devotee' (p. 223). We can hardly think that whisky, or even champagne, is essential to a full Christian morality.

One more question from Dr. HEADLAM. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of the Kingdom of God? Are the apocalyptists right, who tell us Jesus believed that God was about to make a catastrophic irruption into the whole earthly scheme of things, and that Jesus would shortly return as the Messiah from heaven, destroying the evil and establishing His Kingdom? Or are those right who say that for Jesus the Kingdom of Heaven is within us? Or are we to trust the ecclesiasts who believe that by the Kingdom Jesus meant the Church? One difficulty in deciding is that the supporters of each theory can point to proof texts, and Dr. HEADLAM is too good a scholar to adopt the common solution of fixing on one theory and then excising all texts that seem inconsistent with it.

We have always thought of the parables about the Kingdom as given spontaneously by Jesus; but is it not more likely that they were spoken in reply to questions? And if so, does that not suggest that Jesus' first hearers were as much puzzled by the phrase 'the Kingdom of God' as more modern disciples? We have too readily supposed that the explanation of the parabolic method which Mark ascribes to Jesus—'that seeing they may see and not perceive'—is a late and foolish theory of the Church. When scholars tell us that the parables are self-explanatory we have to point in reply to the bewildering history of their interpretation. If experts to-day can differ so widely in the meaning they find in the 'Kingdom' parables, how unintelligible they must have seemed to those who first heard them! They were waiting to hear when Jesus was going to lead them against the Romans, and what they heard was a story about a farmer sowing his seed!

What, then, did Jesus mean by 'the Kingdom' in these parables? The Kingdom is not a new revelation to come from heaven in the future, but a process going on now; it is 'a new state of things.' It is not exactly the Christian Church: that is too narrow an interpretation; and yet the Church is a visible representation of the Kingdom, of the new power at work in the world. More than this: the Kingdom will be the final consummation of all things. Nor are these three different and contradictory interpretations of the 'Kingdom' idea; they are but three aspects of the one great thought in the mind of Jesus.

One of the events of the past month has been the publication of what may be regarded as a Manifesto of the Low Church party in the Church of England. It is in the form of a large volume with the title *Anglican Essays: A Collective Review of the Principles and Special Opportunities of the Anglican Communion as Catholic and Reformed* (Macmillan; 12s. 6d. net). The writers include Dr. C. F. D'ARCY, Archbishop of Armagh, Archdeacon W. L. PAIGE COX, the Rev. Charles E. RAVEN, and Archbishop H. Lowther CLARKE. None of these names is, perhaps, specially well known, but the essays (which are mainly on the facts and issues suggested by the historical Reformation) are written with full knowledge and by competent hands.

The position occupied by all the writers is a central one, between the extreme Anglo-Catholics on the one side and the extreme Evangelicals on the other. They desire to give full play to the scientific criticism of the sacred texts and to make the search for truth the task of a perfectly liberated intellect. But they are loyal to the 'essentials of the Faith,' and contend that in these the modern world can find the guidance it needs amid its perplexities. The strength and the great opportunity of the Church of England, it is contended, lie in its central position. In an age of shrieking partisans and revolutionaries, an institution which holds the

middle path has something of inestimable worth to give to mankind.

That is the general contention of these essays, and it is put with remarkable force and persuasiveness by Dr. D'ARCY in the opening chapter on 'Christian Liberty.' The great need of the world to-day, he says, is an ordered liberty. A disorganized world is threatened with dissolution because liberty has become licence. The Christian Church, which brought to the world the true principles of freedom, very soon became a prey to the temptation associated with power and exercised a domination over the human intellect which is at variance with the whole spirit and aim of Jesus in the Gospels.

It was out of the conflicts provoked by this spiritual tyranny that there sprang 'that splendid progress of the mind of man which gave to the world a fresh civilization, a magnificent development of science, and a new ideal of political liberty.' The essence of the Reformation lay in this, that God and the soul of man were face to face, no human authority having a right to intervene.

But this raises the whole question of authority. Liberty may easily become unregulated and fall away to something of less than no value. Where is the seat of authority in Religion? Without such an authority you could not well get such a consensus of belief as would bring individuals together in that fellowship which was obviously one of the intended fruits of Christianity.

'The example of science points out the way to the solution of our problem. In this realm the most complete liberty of thought brought about a general agreement, an order never before attained. Liberty, in fact, re-established authority: but it is an authority which must always be ready to submit to correction when fresh knowledge is gained. This harmony is the result of the dominance of a spiritual principle—Reason.'

In the realm of religion a solution has been

rendered difficult by the way in which Bible and Church have been contrasted as rival authorities. Both have been weakened in any such claim by the progress of events. Division has largely robbed the Church of its authority and critical methods have undermined the traditional authority of the Bible. But in one important matter Church and Bible agree, in their testimony to the primitive Christian tradition or Rule of Faith. This is the fact of greatest moment, and in this witness we have a common basis of assurance.

When we push the question home, How are we to have guidance as to the meaning and application of the fundamental facts in this Christian Rule of Faith to the growing needs of mankind and the new problems of every age? we are led on to the point at which the answer to our whole problem is found. There is an authority which is superior to both Church and Bible and to which both bear witness, Christ Himself. He is the Divine Logos, the dominating Word, or Reason, of the whole creative process. And as Reason brings order and agreement in the free world of science, so the Divine Reason brings order and liberty into harmony in the free realm of souls. It is only control by a spiritual principle that can ever harmonize liberty and order. In the religious realm the solution is found in personality, and in one Personality that is the root of humanity.

The proof of this is found in the teaching of Jesus Himself, where emphasis on the value and freedom of the individual soul is combined with the order of obedience to the Divine will. If this be so the great need of the world to-day is the unification of the Christian forces, which will allow the influence of Christ to be brought to bear on the life of man. No more hopeful movement in this direction can be found than the 'Lambeth Appeal.' There are in it the essential conditions of an ordered spiritual commonwealth and at the same time scope for a wide diversity of types of Christian ethos. If this 'great adventure of the Spirit' is in any degree successful, the Anglican Church will

have reason to recognize the Providence which, through long centuries, has kept it in the middle path.

In the January number of the *Church Quarterly Review*, Dr. T. H. ROBINSON has an important article on 'Modern Criticism and the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament.' It will arouse interest and probably keen discussion.

Up to the end of last century scholarship in general was fairly well agreed as to a view of the Prophets. Two distinct classes of persons, it was held, were known as prophets in ancient Israel. There was little common to the two except, for some obscure reason, the name.

On the one hand there were those comparable to a mixture of Dervish and medicine-man. They fell into frenzies and did extravagant things. They were consulted on trivial matters such as the finding of lost articles, and in some cases seem to have enjoyed no more than a dubious measure of esteem. On the other hand there were men, like Isaiah, who in the political sphere were far-sighted statesmen, and in the sphere of religion were spiritual geniuses.

The latter type knew little if anything of ecstasies. They engaged in no dances or self-cutting or other practices which were the identification-mark of the Dervish type. They were essentially forth-tellers or preachers. They spoke or wrote 'sermons' and they published books. There was little tendency to dispute that on the whole the prophetic books, except Isaiah, were issued as books by the authors whose names they bear.

A change of view, however, is now coming in. It is not yet known in America; it has but few representatives in Britain. But, if we are to believe Dr. ROBINSON, it is going to be the prevalent view at no distant date. The new view abolishes the clear-cut distinction between the two types of prophet. It believes that ecstasy was more or less

the normal way in which the great prophets, too, received their messages. It casts scorn upon the notion that the so-called schools of the prophets were in any way like the cloistered academies of study which some have pictured them. And in truth, the Old Testament itself knows nothing of such schools. It knows only the 'sons of the prophets.'

The consequences for our view of the Prophetical literature are far-reaching and important. If the prophet depended on ecstasy for his message, the messages must have been brief. Long-continued passages are scarcely to be thought of. The old idea that some verses are interpolations destroying the connexion in long passages is baseless, for there is no connexion to destroy.

How, then, are we to conceive of the growth of the books? In much the same way as we regard the growth of the Psalter. The brief oracles as they were received or uttered were written down, each on its own page. Collections of oracles were then made under the name of a distinguished prophet. They might probably be his own, but many a scrap of unknown authorship would be added. No chronological order would be regarded unless the oracles were definitely dated. Oracles which related to the same or kindred subjects would naturally be placed together.

Hence we need not be surprised if the arrangement appears to be sometimes haphazard, or if the same oracle should appear in different books or be repeated in the same book. It follows, if this view of the growth of the books be correct, that a great number of oracles are probably by unknown and unnamed prophets. We know not whether the prophet himself, or some other, wrote them down.

Dr. ROBINSON would have us regard this point as one of small importance. 'Profoundly valuable as are the personalities of an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, an Ezekiel, a Hosea, or an Amos, no true critic

would ever dare to limit the activity of the Spirit of God in the revelation of His will and character. Beside the message itself the messenger is insignificant. The newer study has served to bring home to us the sense of a wider scope and a broader field for the play of divine inspiration.'

Books continue to pour from the press on the subject of spiritualism. One of the most interesting and enlightening of these recent volumes has the misleading title, *Do the Dead Live?* (Murray; 5s. net). The writer is a French journalist, M. Paul HÉUZÉ, and a very lively person he is. His style is conversational and informal, and no reader could possibly be uninterested for a single moment, the book is so full of incident and personalities distinguished or bizarre. The sub-title of the book describes its contents far better than the title: 'An Inquiry into the Present State of Psychological Research.'

M. HÉUZÉ made his plans carefully and was very successful in the execution. He chose certain prominent persons as his authorities and interviewed them in turn to secure reliable information on various points. M. Delanne, an ardent spiritist, was asked to explain the doctrine and faith of spiritism. Dr. Geley expounded the experiments of the 'Metapsychists' in regard to 'materialization,' purely scientific experiments. Professor Richet and M. Camille Flammarion were asked for pros and cons on the subject. Mme. Curie was interviewed as a pure scientist. M. Maeterlinck and Father Mainage are among the others who contribute valuable chapters.

The two points the book deals with are: first, the question as to the reality of the phenomena, and, secondly, the interpretation of the phenomena that are admitted as real. On the first question there is a great deal to be said, and M. HÉUZÉ says it. The reality of many of the phenomena is doubtful. For one thing most of the well-known

mediums, says M. HÉUZÉ, have been caught cheating. He mentions instances and quotes M. Flammarion, who writes in one of his well-known books: 'I can say that during forty years practically all the famous mediums have visited me in the Avenue de l'Observatoire, and that I discovered most of them cheating.'

Besides this, stories are told which, on investigation, prove to have no foundation, yet they are repeated and multiplied by famous people as authentic. M. HÉUZÉ cites the story about Lord Dufferin in Paris, and the apparition who warned him not to go on a lift at a certain hotel where he was attending a diplomatic reception. The whole story is given in striking and impressive detail, but when M. HÉUZÉ investigated the incident, he discovered that there was no foundation for it whatever. Mr. John Murray, the publisher, confirms this in a note.

But taking the phenomena that are real and genuine, what is the explanation of them? There are serious objections to the spiritist explanation, the difficulty, *e.g.*, about the clothes in which spirits appear. Where do they get these? But apart from such points, M. HÉUZÉ quotes three explanations given by various of his authorities. One is that some of the phenomena are explained as efforts of the sub-conscious, *e.g.* Père Mainage says that 'always and everywhere the tenor of the said messages is an exact reflection of the thoughts of the persons who are inquiring: the Spiritists accurately register the echo of their own thoughts.' Confirmation of this may be found by any one who

will read Stainton Moses' 'Spirit Teachings,' and compare it with the recent 'Guidance from Beyond' of Kate Wingfield. Not only is the style of the spirits in the former book the style of Mr. Moses himself, but their rationalism is the rationalism of Mr. Moses; whereas the 'Guidance from Beyond,' through Miss Wingfield, is orthodox Trinitarian doctrine.

Another explanation given is that many of these phenomena are manifestations of the psychic forces of the *living*. They are sometimes due to mind-reading and sometimes to clairvoyance. We have many very striking instances of people seeing places at a distance and incidents which were occurring miles away from where they were, and there are authentic examples of men who are able to read the mind like an open book. If such psychic powers exist in certain select cases, we may well suspend judgment in cases where at present an explanation is not available. So much that was mysterious is explicable on natural grounds that we may be content to wait.

One striking observation may be quoted from M. Flammarion. These phenomena at least prove that 'apart from our body there is a psychic element endowed with special faculties . . . capable of operating outside our organism, we know not how. Time and space do not count with it. . . . Our cerebral cells bathe in the unknown: we are bound up with all that exists, I mean all natural forces, by an inextricable network of waves and vibrations, and thought itself is an agent which operates through space.'

Eternal Life and Deification.

BY THE REVEREND J. S. STEWART, B.D., EDINBURGH.

THE keynote of the Johannine literature is struck right at the beginning of the Gospel: 'In him was *life*; and the life was the light of men' (Jn 1⁴). That note is constantly recurring. Do the readers seek an explanation of the presence of the Son of

God among men? The answer is here: 'I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more abundantly' (Jn 10¹⁰). Do they inquire how the Son can communicate to them such a gift as that? 'Jesus saith . . . I am the