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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Motes of Recent Exposition.

THREE complete series, with five volumes in each, have now been published under the general title of 'The Scholar as Preacher.' The fourth series begins with a volume by Dr. C. F. Burney, and now the second volume in this series has just been issued. It is *The Adventure into the Unknown*, by the Venerable R. H. CHARLES, D.Litt., D.D. The title is taken from the first sermon. The volume contains twenty sermons, all of which were preached in Westminster Abbey.

It is difficult when all are so good to choose one Sermon for special notice. We were tempted to deal with the last one, where Dr. Charles discusses Neutrality and its impossibility in the moral and spiritual worlds. But instead we choose his treatment of humility and meekness in the third sermon.

The subject of this sermon is the two beatitudes which are found in the 3rd and 5th verses of the 5th chapter of St. Matthew. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.' Dr. Charles begins by a consideration of the number of the beatitudes. He argues that it would be more natural to expect seven than eight, seven being a sacred number, and sacred numbers playing an important part in St. Matthew. And he gives a number of analogies. 'Thus in chapter xxiii. there are seven woes pronounced

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against the religious leaders of Judaism—a fact that might suggest that there were seven beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. St. Matthew also groups together seven parables in chapter xiii. and seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer, whereas in St. Luke ix. 2-4 there are only five petitions. Again, in chapter i., St. Matthew deliberately omits several names in the genealogy of Christ in order to compress it into three groups each of fourteen names, i.e. six groups of seven.'

Having led us from these analogies to expect seven and not eight beatitudes, Dr. Charles turns our attention to the MSS. and to the fact that there is a conflicting order in verses 4 and 5, which may well point to some interpolation. 'Whereas,' he says, 'most MSS. and Versions uphold the present order of verses 4 and 5, one great uncial and the two oldest Versions reverse the order and put verse 5 before verse 4.'

Wellhausen and Professor Bacon of Yale hold that verse 5, 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth,' is the interpolation. They believe that this verse was first written as a gloss in the margin and then subsequently incorporated in the text by most authorities after verse 4, and by a powerful minority after verse 3.

Dr. Charles holds, on the other hand, that it

is verse 4, 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted,' which has been interpolated, and he gives two reasons.

'First of all,' he says, 'verse 4 comes in most awkwardly between 3 and 5, which are essentially related to each other, seeing that verse 5 presupposes verse 3. That is, the meekness that is commended in verse 5 presupposes the humility that is commended in verse 3. Hence we should expect verse 5 to follow immediately on verse 3. In confirmation of this close connexion between verses 5 and 3, we might quote Matt. xi. 29, where the two ideas are brought together in the same sentence: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and humble in heart." Nowhere else in the other three Gospels does this combination of these two graces occur.' To the objection that the words are found in St. Luke, according to the Prayer Book version of the Magnificat-' He hath exalted the humble and meek,' he replies that this is a corrupt reading which established itself in the Prayer-Book in the sixteenth century. The true reading is simply 'the humble.' 'Thus,' he says, 'the combination "humble and meek" belongs only to the first Gospel. Hence to read verse 5 immediately after verse 3 would be thoroughly characteristic of St. Matthew, and if any verse is to be rejected it is not verse 5 but verse 4, since it severs two ideas which are essentially allied.'

But Dr. Charles has a second reason. 'Even,' he says, 'if we follow the less strongly attested text and read verse 4 after verse 5, this will not be sufficient. For verse 4, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted," is different in form from the rest of the beatitudes in Matthew. In Matthew each class that is blessed is carefully defined, so that it is at once recognized as worthy to be blessed—the poor in spirit, the meek, those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake. But there is no such clearness in the words, "Blessed

are they that mourn." The class of mourners here would, if this beatitude came from St. Matthew's hand, have been as carefully defined as are the other classes in the rest of the beatitudes. For these mourners do not include individuals or nations mourning over the wreck of their baffled knaveries, or the miscarriage of their treacherous deceits.'

If, then, we accept seven as the number of the beatitudes and hold that verse 4 is the intrusion, verses 3 and 5 come together. And this juxtaposition Dr. Charles finds very illuminating. We have here two classes, both of whom are blessed, 'the humble', for that is the meaning of 'the poor in spirit', and 'the meek'—'the humble', who already possess the Kingdom of Heaven, and 'the meek', who do not yet possess the earth, but who at some future time shall possess it.

Dr. Charles then goes on to discuss the nature of humility and the nature of meekness. 'Humility,' he says, 'does not consist in the mere absence of pretension, certainly not in a morbid self-deprecating spirit, it is no transient state of feeling into which a man may artificially work himself; rather it is a true and right estimate of ourselves, made in all soundness of mind, an estimate which Christian ethics does not require us to falsify or unjustly lower. St. Paul bids us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to have a right and sound judgment of ourselves.' And as the standard of Christianity is immeasurably high. being divine, every stage of fulfilment is at the best imperfect, and so from the contrast between what the Christian has done and what he ought to have done arises the Christian grace of humility. The Christian man cannot but think lowly of himself if he would think truly; for he knows that his real worth in the world is that which he stands for-not in men's sight, but in God's. If this is the nature of humility we can understand the promise given by Christ, that the humble in spirit are even now citizens of His Kingdom.

What, then, is the relationship of the second

beatitude, 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth,' to the first beatitude? Dr. Charles answers that meekness is in a sense a complement of humility, for Christian meekness is 'the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of humility.' But meekness is more than this, for Dr. Charles says 'it is humility itself coming into manifestation in the sphere of human life.'

And so we see that if this is the inner spring of meekness, it can have nothing in common with weak-kneed irresolution or with any meanness of spirit. The aim of the meek man, however faulty he may be in the fulfilment of it, 'is to do God's will and not to achieve his own individual rights or vindicate his own individual claims or dignities.' Meekness requires courage, singleness of aim, selfcontrol, self-sacrifice. And to the men who have these 'the promise of Christ naturally is: "The meek "-that is, the willing servants of God's will-"shall inherit the earth." It is not to the arrogant, the high-handed, the rapacious: it is not to the so-called super-men in this or other lands, that the earth and all that is therein shall ultimately belong, but to the humble and the meek: to those who, having sought first and above all the kingdom of God and His righteousness, find that to this eternal heritage there is added another they did not seek-even the heritage of this world and all that is best therein.'

The Bible is full of unfinished stories, both small and great. On the great scale we have the Book of Acts. The writer describes his 'former treatise' as the story of 'all that Jesus began both to do and to teach.' In the Acts that story is continued, but not finished. It is not finished yet. What Jesus began by Himself is continued in the Acts through Peter and Paul and others, who 'both did and taught' in His spirit. The story is continued through all the history of the Church through successive centuries from that day to this, and it will be continued in all the words and works of His

sincere representatives, the conspicuous and the inconspicuous alike, to the end of time. The Book of Acts is the greatest unfinished story of all.

But there are also short unfinished stories, some of them very short, but full of poignant meaning and challenging suggestiveness. There is the story of the Prodigal Wife of the Old Testament. Every one knows the tale of Hosea's unutterable love for his erring wife. Perhaps she had been one of the women attached to a shrine, as women may be in India to-day, and dedicated to the immoral worship so prevalent in those riotous days. In any case she was unfaithful as a wife to the man who loved her utterly, and who came to see in his own inextinguishable love for her an adumbration of the infinitely greater love of God for Israel.

He did all he could to win her back again. He bought her back for half the price of a slave and kept her under gentle restraint, in the hope that she might learn the meaning of her own grievous sin and of his mighty love. Did she respond? We do not know. 'It may be,' says Dr. T. W. CRAFER, in his recent Commentary on Hosea (reviewed in 'Literature'), 'that this tragedy of home had no happy ending. Or the husband's unending hope may at length have had its reward, and, accepting the two last children as his own, he took the prefix from their names and called them Ruhamah, "pitied," and Ammi, "my people." And yet, had this been the case, he would surely have tried to forget the sorrows of the past and keep them locked in his own breast. But, as he utters his message, we find him still in bitter anguish of soul.' Sad indeed it would be if such surpassing love remained unrequited to the end. It seems only too possible, But we do not know.

Then there is the unfinished story of the Prodigal Son of the Old Testament. Who is he? Unquestionably Jonah. He, too, had had experience of a love mighty to save, and he was sent by the Good Father of us all to proclaim that love to an enemy alien people. He went, but he went with

hate in his heart, a hatred heightened by the ready repentance of those to whom he proclaimed his message. What a fearful picture that of the sullen prophet, sitting comfortably in the shade of his booth 'till he might see what would become of the city.'

He kept his lonely watch in faith and hope: for perhaps the righteous God would destroy the once wicked city after all. Then come the two immortal verses which close the book, in which God, speaking to him as a man might to his friend, and appealing tenderly to the glimmer of affection for the gourd in Jonah's wicked and angry heart, sought to wake in him the feeling that Nineveh, too, lay within the Divine love and care. Were there not thousands of little folk in Nineveh who did not know their right hand from their left, and much cattle?

Was this tender appeal made in vain? We do not know. There is no record of any response. The book ends on this magnificent note, and with this soul-stirring vision of the all-comprehensive love of God. But was Jonah's soul stirred? Apparently not. At any rate the last we see of him is with a scowl upon his face, the last we hear from him is that he 'does well to be angry' at the love of God.

And then there is the Elder Brother of the New Testament in the story familiar as The Prodigal Son, but more happily entitled The Loving Father. He, too, was angry at his father's love, angry at the music and the dancing and the feasting with which the father welcomed home his penitent son. His father came out and entreated him, but he would not go in. Had he not slaved all his life, and all for nothing? In his father's house it seemed that piety was to be ignored and profligacy rewarded.

This story, like the last, closes on infinitely gracious words from the lips of the father. He loved both his sons. 'Son, thou art ever with me.' Does the elder son care nothing for that? for uninterrupted fellowship with his loving father?

Does he care nothing that his young brother has come back from the dead? for it was death to be living as he had lived in the far country. Gently, but firmly, the father defends himself for the joy with which he had welcomed back his wandering son. 'It was meet to make merry and be glad.' Was the elder brother won by this gracious appeal? We do not know. The last time we see him, he is standing outside, angry, and refusing to go in. The last words we hear from him are words of coarse indignation against the son whom he refuses to acknowledge as brother, and words of reproach against the father for his absurd love of so unworthy a son. Who is the Prodigal Son now?

These three unfinished stories have this in common, that they deal with the rejection of an exquisite love. Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, Jonah the son of Amittai, the Elder Brother—they are all alike in having been brought face to face with a Love which longed to win them and make them its own for ever; and, so far as we know, they refused to be won. That is the tragedy of tragedies—to be brought face to face with some one who is 'most wonderfully kind,' and to refuse to respond. Why should human lives deliberately elect the outer darkness? Why should such stories not end with the penitent and rapturous acceptance of so wonderful a love? The silence of the Bible shows that it knows well how hard the human heart can be.

The Church Quarterly Review for April contains an interesting article on 'The Present Value of the Earliest Christian Apologetic,' by the Rev. W. Maurice PRVKE. It is only at the very end of the article that the 'value' of this early defence of Christian belief is touched on. The substance of the article deals with the nature and justification of the apologetic.

The second Christian century is generally distinguished as the Age of Apologists. But in point of fact the missionary preaching of the primitive Christian community was characterized by a pronounced apologetic tendency, and for a good reason. The cardinal point of dispute between Jew and Christian from the first was the Messiahship of Jesus. The idea of a Christus Crucifixus was to the Jew a glaring paradox. Yet the disciples accepted it. They had believed in the Messiahship of Jesus in His lifetime, probably before the last visit to Jerusalem. This is an important point, as will be seen in a moment.

The Cross was a blow to the disciples in spite of the Master's repeated hints, which, perhaps, were couched in less definite terms than the Gospels would lead us to suppose. What was it, then, that changed the despair of Good Friday into the triumphant conviction of Pentecost? 'The Resurrection appearances,' is the usual answer. But these provide only a partial answer. Their faith was grounded equally on their experience of the earthly life. This, however, is not the present point. The point is that neither of these reasons could convince the sceptical Jew or the ignorant Gentile. What would convince them?

Now the strongest objection of the Jew to the Christian position was its lack of support in the nation's Scriptures. And with remarkable intuition the early believers saw that this was the crux of the whole matter. It was vitally necessary to discover in Scripture, predictions of a Suffering Messiah fulfilled in Jesus. The Cross was to them part of the Divine plan and must have been foreshadowed in the prophets. This, therefore, was the line taken by the earliest apologists for Christianity. The Old Testament became the battleground of Jews and Christians, with the result that all primitive Christian theology is Jewish in method. The elaboration of the proof from prophecy formed in fact the real theological work of Christians in early days.

A detailed study of the speeches in the Book of Acts gives us a vivid insight into the methods of the early Christian apologist. Peter, Stephen, Philip, Paul, James, and Apollos all ground their argument on the predictions of the Old Testament. The appeal of one and all is the proof from Scripture, which foretold a Suffering Messiah and no less clearly His resurrection, ascension, and return to glory. Acts not only furnishes us with the passages referred to, but repeatedly affirms that this was the method employed by all the missionaries.

This apologetic was not only convincing to Jews. It carried equal weight with Gentiles, proselytes, and pagans. The appeal of the Apostles to their own experience of Jesus was limited in its power. But this argument was overwhelming to those who believed in sacred and inspired Scriptures. No Jew could refuse a hearing to statements which, however improbable in themselves, were backed by such an august authority.

What value has this apologetic for us? We can no longer use the Scriptures as the early Christians did. A truer conception of the meaning of inspiration, more accurate knowledge of the authorship, composition, and character of psalms and prophets, a fuller recognition of the human element in the Divine library, a juster appreciation of the relation of a prophet's utterances to the circumstances of his own age, have destroyed for ever the cogency of the argument from prophecy as employed formerly.

'Let us then admit unreservedly that no single passage of the Old Testament, whether from prophet or psalmist, can rightly be produced as a prediction, conscious or unconscious, of the sufferings, death, resurrection, exaltation, or return to judgement of the Messiah.' Still, this early apologetic has one element of supreme value for us. Its value lies in its failure. The very artificiality of the Apostles' exegesis proves that their conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus was based on other and surer grounds than their Scripture proof. It rested on the firm foundation of His own transcendent personality. It was this that created the joyous faith of the early disciples.

For them facts created predictions and not

predictions facts. And this outstanding reality of the early Christian history is a confirmation of the narrative in the Gospels. It also lends strong support to the general statement of the Gospels, that the belief in the Messiahship of Jesus is to be traced to Jesus' belief in Himself. For the disciples could not have maintained their faith if they had not known it had the support of the Master.

The Rev. Walter Lock, D.D., preached 'before' the University of Oxford in February. It was a remarkable sermon on a remarkable text. The text was: 'But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus' (Eph 4²⁰⁻²¹).

Here we have laid down two subjects of study; two and not one only, though one is the presupposition and test of the other. And they are not alternatives; they must both be taken together. The one is the learning of the Christ, the other that of truth as it is in Jesus: the message of the Christ as based upon the historic life of Jesus.

This conjunction of the two may seem to be opposed to the conviction of Paul, who (we are told) cared little for the historic life. To him the Risen Christ was all in all. But this is a mistake. It arises from a misinterpretation of a well-known saying: 'Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more.' Here what Paul speaks of is not 'Jesus,' not even 'the Christ' but 'a Christ,' and the reference is probably to those Christians who had looked for a Christ who not only would be of Jewish descent, but would make the Jews the ruling power in His kingdom. It might include Peter, and all the Apostles before Pentecost.

Think also how careful Paul is to quote definite commands of the Lord, as about divorce or the maintenance of those who preach the Gospel—'not I, but the Lord'; think what is implied of knowledge of the earthly life in the appeal to 'the meek-

ness and large-heartedness' of the Christ as the example which he wished to imitate; or, if we may give more free play to our imagination, picture to yourself what fifteen days spent on a stay in Jerusalem, whose one object was to visit Peter, would imply; or talks with John Mark of what had happened at his mother's house in Jerusalem; or the stories Luke had collected and would impart to Paul. It is evident Paul must have known intimately the facts about Jesus.

This, then, is the first subject of study: the historic life of Jesus of Nazareth. In spite of difficulties of various kinds we know its essential features. It is recalled to us, by way both of likeness and contrast, by Gandhi's work in India. By way of likeness, in the movements from village to village, the preaching of brotherhood and sacrifice, the retirements for prayer, the eager crowds, the devoted followers. By way of contrast, in the resistance of Jesus to the terrible temptation, to which Gandhi succumbed, to turn all this to political and national ends.

We know this life then, a life of belief in God as the Father, of belief in man as the Father's child, of devotion to a great mission. And the truths we see embodied in that life must always be the guide and test of learning the Christ. For the learning of the Christ is the learning of the extension of the work of Jesus of Nazareth in His Church, of the Head in the Body, of the Inspirer in those who caught His Spirit.

We can see three stages in the learning of this lesson. The first was to pass from personal and racial divisions and hatreds to a life which should reflect the kindness of God our Saviour and His love towards man. Paul had himself undergone this change. The second was an enlarged understanding of the scope of the Gospel. First the Samaritans, then the Ethiopian eunuch, then the Roman centurion—these are examples of the way the Church learned that all who were drawn to Jesus were to be welcomed.

The third was an even more difficult lesson, the right attitude to truth itself. What was to be said of the religions around the early disciples? This, at any rate—that God had not left Himself anywhere without a witness, that the task of the Church was to announce what others worshipped in ignorance. They found Roman citizens looking to their emperor as God and Saviour, and they pointed them to the God and Saviour of all men. They saw many finding brotherhood and the hope of immortality in some mystery religion, and they pointed to the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and to the assurance of eternal life in the Risen Christ. They saw the nobler souls drawn to the Stoic teaching of dignity and self-mastery, and they pressed on them the deeper ethic of the Christian faith, hope and love.

All this was a part of the truth as it is in Jesus. But that word 'truth' has probably a deeper meaning. It suggests our word 'reality.' And this also we find in Jesus. What is Reality? A thing is real when it goes right home to the centre of our personality and proves itself true for us. Some incident of real love or sorrow lightens up words for us and shows them to us as God's words. That is what men felt about the words and actions of Jesus. They felt what a missionary in Central Africa says in a recent letter that he felt about the mountains there—that 'the Infinitely High seems the Infinitely Nigh.'

We see the sense of this developing in the Gospels. In St. Mark's Gospel the stress is laid on the Infinitely Nigh, God coming near to us in these deeds of love. St. Matthew and St. Luke both add a new thought to this. St. Matthew traces the truth which has become so nigh back along the line of Jewish history till it reaches infinitely far into the past. St. Luke's eye is turned mainly to the future, in which the Infinitely High will reach out to all mankind and satisfy its needs. An even greater step is taken by St. John. He has the thoughts of the other three, all of them, about the Christ. But there is a deeper realization of the Infinitely High. In the doctrine of the Logos, in the reach of the

picture of the Sonship, we see again that the supreme Reality has become embodied in the earthly life. This is part of the 'truth as it is in Jesus.'

The subject of the Fall of man has been well to the front in recent theological thought, and there is increasing evidence that it has begun to emerge from the long eclipse into which it was cast by the doctrine of evolution. The theory of an unbroken upward progress is felt to be inadequate to cover all the facts, and the optimism based on that theory has, especially since the war, been rudely shaken. A sense has grown upon us of a profound wrongness in things, and the time seems opportune for a re-statement of the Christian doctrine of the Fall.

An able attempt at such re-statement has been made by Mr. C. W. Formby, M.A., in *The Unveiling of the Fall* (Williams & Norgate; ros. 6d. net). This book is written with considerable force, and, though somewhat marred by the over-confidence of the writer, it is a thought-provoking work which will repay the reader.

Accepting without reserve the scientific theory of organic evolution, the writer claims that its testimony throws a flood of new light upon the doctrine of the Fall.

This doctrine of the Fall, however, is a very different matter from the generally accepted evolutionary theory of the Fall, according to which 'the Fall represents the moral and spiritual breakdown of the will which happened to our original two human progenitors when their unfolding powers of moral sense were first called upon for a definite choice between right and wrong.' This theory is subjected to a detailed and acute criticism. It fails to explain 'the fallenness of man's original animalism and degradation,' it reflects on 'the justice and moral responsibility of God for the critical severity of the alleged test of immature man,' it offers no

rational explanation of the pre-human stage of evolution, especially in its pain and suffering. Here are criticisms which must be reckoned with.

When the writer comes to constructive work he is less convincing. He holds the theory of a preorganic Fall, that is, a Fall in a spiritual realm which carried as its dire consequence the entrance of the life principle into the bonds of the flesh and the whole groaning and travailing together of creation until now.

Support for this theory is sought from the history of organic evolution, and also from certain statements of St. Paul as to the cosmical significance of Christ. In this high region the argument is naturally difficult to follow, and the writer seems to waver in his conceptions of the pre-mundane Adam. He rejects Origen's doctrine (following Plato) of a

'pre-mundane fall of single souls who carry into a penal corporcal life the effect of their pre-natal sin.' Yet he speaks of 'the unfallen being or beings whose vital units we now know in their highest expression as mankind.' Later he conceives of them as having had a corporate unity which was shattered by their Fall, and is destined to be restored in Christ.

The writer confidently believes that this presentation of the Fall will most powerfully convince the world of sin. It does indeed represent sin as a terrific cosmic force, but it is not easy to see how it can create a sense of personal guilt. We may conceivably have incurred responsibility for an Adam from whom we are descended by ordinary generation, but this pre-mundane Adam is not our kith and kin. As for the origin of evil, the insoluble mystery is still there, no matter how far back it be thrown.

the Servant of the Lord.

By Stanley A. Cook, Litt.D., Cambridge.

I HAVE not seen the works of Mowinckel and Gunkel to which Professor McFadyen draws attention in The Expository Times (p. 294), but as my own view of the Servant approximates theirs, it may contribute to the much-needed reconsideration of the problem if I outline some of the points which have influenced me.¹

Admittedly Is 40-66 belongs to a period of anticipation and reconstruction, of expectation and new birth: the period which after far-reaching disturbances led to the inauguration of Post-Exilic Judaism. Between this period and that of the rise of Christianity there is a real psychological relationship; and the present age, whose issue is so obscure to us, is akin to both. Similar experiences and similar ages supplement and interpret each other, and there is much in the Bible which the intense years in which we now live should enable us to understand, perhaps more clearly than our

¹ In one form or another they were set before the Society for Old Testament Study (July 21, 1921) and the Cambridge Theological Society (Oct. 27, 1921).

forefathers could. Of this the problem of the Servant is the most striking example.

Admittedly Deutero-Isaiah represents the highwater mark of Israel's spiritual religion. It was only passed some centuries later, when Judaism, instead of undergoing another rebirth or reconstruction, was unable to take a further step; and, instead of a new stage in the history and religion of a people, we have a new stage in man's religion and history. Whether our own period will witness a new stage in an old development, or the beginning of some entirely new development, future generations will be able to determine; but, in any event, we ourselves are well able to realize that to bring about any new decisive change in social-religious conditions more is needed than the possession of inspiring literature. In the lives of peoples, churches, and individuals, it is some tremendous spiritual experience that inaugurates a new stage, and sets in motion a fresh development; and when we seek to explain Israel's regeneration after the Exile, we are impelled to look for a spiritual revival,