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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE supreme mind in history is the mind of Jesus. Confucius, the Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Paul, Augustine, Shakespeare—these are all great minds, minds which in profound and subtle ways have influenced innumerable other minds; but the mind which has already exercised, and—we as Christians believe—is destined still to exercise, an influence alike incomparable and incalculable is the mind of Jesus. He cleaves history in two—the time before and the time after He appeared. Every time we write B.C. or A.D. we are paying an unconscious tribute to His supreme and universal significance.

Wherein lies the supremacy of Jesus? It lies, in part, in a certain all-pervasive yet undefinable originality. Originality is as difficult to define as inspiration, but its presence is as easy to detect, or at any rate to feel. Jesus spoke with an authority which went home to the hearts of His hearers as the words of the average scribe never did or could. The common people felt it instinctively and instantly, and that was one of the reasons why they heard Him gladly. Here was One who brushed past all sophistries and erudite irrelevancies, and went straight to the central heart of the moral world. Wherein did His originality lie?

It was partly an originality of utterance. His way of speech was as unique as were the actual

things He said. 'Never man spake like this man.' That was the testimony of those who heard Him, and it was perhaps as much a testimony to His style as to the quality of His thoughts. Quite reverently we may say of Jesus that the style was the Man. Among all the criteria that have been used for detecting His genuine words, this might be applied as successfully as any.

Take such a word as this, 'No man can serve two masters.' What a penetrating criticism of life! and how completely and finally it disposes of all our specious attempts at compromise! But could the thing itself be better said? It is one of those words which no one who heard could ever forget—by it the principle of compromise in the moral life is shattered for ever. Or take the words, 'All live unto him' (*i.e.* God). Or 'Love your enemies.' Our familiarity with these and similar words blinds us to their amazing trenchancy. And the speech of Jesus abounds in such criticisms, commands, and statements of principle, expressed in pithy, terse, epigrammatic, and ever-memorable ways, yet in ways which no reverent soul would describe as brilliant. There is no straining after effect, no tantalizing scintillation, no wearisomely sparkling antitheses. It is the grave simplicity of a marvellously clear, profound, and original mind.

The originality of Jesus lies also partly in the

insight and range of His thought. To appreciate this to the full, we have to see His thought against the background of the thought of His contemporaries: the contrast enables us to feel how daring, how fresh, how original He was, and how much His mind rose above those other minds to which, in the Providence of God, He may have owed not a little. Dr. WALKER, in his *The Teaching of Jesus and the Jewish Teaching of His Age* (reviewed in 'Literature'), elaborates this contrast on the basis of a thorough and systematic study, and so contributes to our appreciation of the originality of Jesus.

With regard to His insight, contrast, for example, His conception of the Sabbath with that of His contemporaries. The philanthropic idea of the Sabbath, as Dr. WALKER reminds us, had gone into the background, and its observance had become just a love-token given to God—'an act done just because it met what they believed was His will, which on other grounds they knew to be just and generous.' 'In ordinary human relationship love-tokens have often nothing to justify them save that they *are* love-tokens—they are understood and appreciated as such: in terms of common usefulness they cannot always be evaluated, or perhaps even justified.' So the Sabbath was kept chiefly in this spirit and for this end. It was far otherwise with Jesus. 'He was, from the point of view of Jewish ortho-*praxy*, most startlingly original: to His mind there was no love-token to God enshrined in ceremonial exactitude in keeping Sabbath, which could take precedence of what was contained in the faithful continuance of the ministry of helpfulness to people in need throughout this most sacred day of the week.'

With regard to the range of His thought, we are reminded that the best Judaism of His day failed to be, in the finest sense, 'kind toward the unthankful and evil' or mean. Mercy and love are qualities the range of whose obligation was immensely extended by Jesus. He definitely removes all class or racial limitation from the familiar term 'neighbour.' And Dr. WALKER quotes with ap-

proval the striking and profoundly important admission of Dr. I. Abrahams, that 'we do not find in the Rabbinic literature a parallel to the striking paradox, *Love your enemies.*' Such a statement from such a quarter is enough to put Jesus in a place all by Himself. His originality is beyond challenge.

But after all, His originality is not so much a thing to be detected and expressed in detail; rather is it a quality inherent in His entire personality. It is not so much that what He said and what He did was original, but that *He* was original, in all the range and compass of His being. When He says, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; *even as I have loved you*, that ye also love one another,' we are *face to face* with His sublime originality in its most complete and personal expression. There was nothing entirely new in the command to love one another; the freshness of the commandment lies in the addition, 'as I have loved you.' The precept is enforced by His own transcendent example. Or, as Dr. WALKER puts it, 'He commended a love which no limitation, or misunderstanding, or shortcoming, or treachery could stifle—a missionary love bent ever in evoking love from others: their mutual love must be according to the standard which He has set.' Never was there love or originality like this.

In his Croall lecture (reviewed in 'Literature') Dr. KAY offers a very sympathetic sketch of Islam, which has to be taken the more seriously as it rests upon a knowledge of modern Moslem life as well as of its ancient literary documents. 'As British citizens, we are linked with seventy million Moslems in the fellowship of our commonwealth of nations; and their spiritual ideals would act as a wholesome tonic to our own.' What are those ideals? They are, among other things, Prayer, Almsgiving, and Fasting.

The hard-working man will pause for three

minutes to pray, as he is digging a drain on the hillside. Benevolence to men and kindness to animals are characteristic of the Moslem. 'The love of inordinate wealth has never been his failing: 'Moslem millionaires are almost unknown to history.' The Bolshevik call to destroy the capitalist will have little power over Moslem hearts, and 'God-fearing men everywhere may rejoice that Islam offers so strong a bulwark against general anarchy.'

More particularly has Professor KAY been impressed by Moslem sobriety. 'Any stranger who has tried to observe the hunger-stricken Ramazan, will never accuse Islam of pandering to the appetites of sense. The will-power of the Moslem was so developed in his contest with the pangs of hunger that his wholesome triumph over wine became an assured success,' so much so that the society of total abstainers founded by the Prophet is numbered by scores of millions and has lasted over a thousand years. 'By appealing in the name of Allah,' he adds, 'to the voluntary choice of his adherents, Mohammed succeeded where many zealous agencies have failed.' Is there a hint here which temperance reformers might adopt in the prosecution of the No Licence Campaign?

One other point of interest in Islam is the intellectual activity which accompanied it for centuries. 'Aristotle was better known in Islam than in Christendom.' True, there has been a long period of stagnation and sterility, but there are signs that this may pass, and that high hopes of good may be justifiably cherished from the fresh activity of the Moslem intellect.

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Professor George MILLIGAN, D.D., D.C.L., has published the address which he delivered to the Assembly this year, under the title, *The Church and the New Testament* (Blackwood; 6d. net). One advantage of appointing an eminent scholar to such an office is that, like the President of the British Association, he has

the opportunity of reviewing the present position of the science of which he is an expert teacher. The address which lies before us is an admirable proof of the wisdom of such an appointment, for Dr. MILLIGAN does here what was very much needed. He gives in popular language a statement both of the results of New Testament scholarship and of the principles that guide the scholar in his inquiries.

Dr. MILLIGAN starts by referring to two important facts. One is the real desire among educated Church members for knowledge about the origin and authority of New Testament writings. The other is the perplexity and apprehension which exist in connexion with the results of inquiry. These facts make it an urgent matter for the Church to share with her people the best knowledge she can reach on the primary documents of her faith.

The Moderator begins his exposition by dwelling on the fact that there was a Church before there was a New Testament. Christianity was not at first a book religion, and its writings were not the cause but the product of Christian faith. The power of this Church lay precisely in a personal witness to the power of a great truth. That is to say, in New Testament times there was no New Testament.

Of course this could not continue. The need of instruction, the claims of heretical opinions, the dubiety about crucial questions, all created a demand for authoritative written documents. And such were provided in plenty, perhaps too great plenty. First there were letters. Naturally so. A letter is the most direct form of writing and it was the obvious way of answering questions when these arose. But the Gospels were not long in following. There are strong reasons for believing that the first three Gospels were all in existence before A.D. 70.

In some admirable pages Dr. MILLIGAN describes the growth of the New Testament Canon. First

the process of ratification given to certain books by the spiritual life of the Church, and of elimination of others by the same standard. Then the second period when the exact limits to be set to the Canon were discussed and settled. The Epistle to the Hebrews was regarded doubtfully because of its uncertain authorship, and the Apocalypse owing to the strange character of its teaching. The fact, however, of most importance to be remembered is that the decision on all such matters was given not by any council or external authority, but by the general consciousness of the whole Church.

Dr. MILLIGAN then goes on to deal with two questions on which the ordinary reader desires assurance. The first is this: What security have we that we possess our New Testament in its original form? That is a question of textual criticism and is answered by a brief account of the way in which scholarship has arrived at its conclusions. The second question is more important: What confidence can we place in the trustworthiness of our New Testament writings as historical documents?

As to this the Professor's judgment is quite reassuring. He points out that all along the line the movement of criticism is at present backwards to tradition. Nine Epistles are now 'generally accepted' as Pauline. The sources of the Synoptic Gospels put the Evangelists 'practically into the position of eye-witnesses.' 'In particular, the old charges of idealised fiction or dogmatic bias, at one time so freely brought against them, are no longer worthy of serious attention.'

As regards 'the only strictly historical book in the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, we may take it as now fully established that it was the work of the third Evangelist, St. Luke.' In writing it he made use of earlier documents, one, perhaps written in Aramaic, containing materials dealing with the first thirty years of the Church's history; another, a travel-diary, on which he depended for his account of Paul's journeys. The date of Acts is quite probably as early as A.D. 64.

Dr. MILLIGAN concludes with an earnest appeal to the clergy to exercise a teaching ministry with regard to this whole matter, and quotes Canon Streeter's striking words: 'The danger to-day is, not that the clergyman, in trying to solve difficulties, shall only suggest them, but that, by studiously avoiding them, he shall suggest that no solution exists.'

In the *Hibbert Journal* for July there is a fascinating article by Professor LUTOSLAWSKI of the Polish University at Wilno on 'The Conversion of a Psychologist.' It is a striking piece of autobiography, rivalling in its dramatic character St. Paul's account of his conversion. Religious conversions, the writer says, differ from other conversions in being more thorough, involving a greater change in the whole personality. But this very thoroughness makes them more difficult to investigate, because the convert becomes so much of an apostle that he ceases to take an interest in the scientific value of his own experience.

To get a reliable judgment on any conversion two conditions must be fulfilled. It must be lasting, for one thing. It must endure for a long time. And, secondly, the convert must retain his scientific curiosity during all this time, his interest in objective truth. Apostles are rarely scholars, and almost never scientific investigators. If a scientifically trained scholar should undergo a religious conversion, become an apostle of his particular creed, and remain, through all the long time needed for a thorough testing of his conversion, also a scholar, an investigator, and a scientific teacher, then we have the requisite conditions for a sound judgment on his experience.

Professor LUTOSLAWSKI claims the fulfilment of these conditions in his own case. It is twenty-two years since his conversion took place, and during all that time he has remained a student and teacher of philosophy. A detailed account of his work is given in support of this claim. And then follows

the narrative of his religious experience. He was born in the Roman Catholic Church, but threw off his allegiance at the age of eighteen.

He passed to complete scepticism in an extraordinary fashion. A girl whom he loved was going to marry an atheist. This outrage he resolved, if possible, to prevent. He prayed to Christ to intervene, and this was to be the test of the reality of the Saviour's existence. He challenged Christ to save the girl from the impending marriage. The marriage took place, and young Lutoslawski renounced all religious belief.

Then began a weary pilgrimage towards the light. The first step was the discovery of his own personality and its significance, and that meant a belief in freedom and immortality. But there was no atom of Christian belief in this discovery. Then came the reading of certain religious biographies which are mentioned. And on the back of this arrived the entirely unexpected revelation, which must be given in his own words.

'Early in the morning I went to a steam-bath in which I remained for an hour, talking merrily with some students on philosophical and political subjects. When I left the bath, suddenly the analogy between a clean body and a clean soul took hold of my thoughts, and without any conceivable reason, without reflection, almost automatically, I entered a small Franciscan convent, where I knew a monk, a veteran of 1863. . . . I found him in the church, and asked him to hear my confession. I kneeled down, scarcely aware of what I was doing. I began a general confession of my life, and concluded with the avowal that I had no faith in Creation, the Divinity of Christ, eternal damnation, and the power of the Church to remit sins.'

The priest urged him to receive communion. He refused at first, having no faith. On being pressed, however, he yielded, 'and in the very moment when I accepted from the hands of the priest the consecrated host, suddenly came the

change which transformed my life.' It was not an intellectual adhesion to faith. 'My chief impression was the awe of a wonder, the clear consciousness of a mysterious powerful Presence.' The first intellectual conclusion of this experience was that, if he wished to repeat it, he had to depend on the Church and become a member of that Church again.

The sequel was a long succession of experiments in order to ascertain whether he could really become a member of the Church. He practised daily communion and mental prayer. The latter habit became the stay of his soul until he lived more by it than by the rites of the Church. He analyses at length the results of his mystical experience, and declares that the moral and spiritual power then received has lasted and increased during these twenty-two years. The general discussion of conversion with which the essay closes is intensely interesting and enlightening, and the whole story, so vivid and so penetrating, is a substantial Christian apologetic.

No living scholar has a better right than Sir George Adam SMITH to tell us how the Old Testament should be taught. For many years from the Professor's chair, and for many years in pulpits, he has been teaching and preaching it with a power, skill, and eloquence which have carried his fame across the world. He has, as he reminds us, had forty-five years' experience of the influence of modern criticism upon his own faith. So it is with peculiar interest and hope that we approach his lecture on *The Teaching of the Old Testament in Schools* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6d. net), which was delivered to the Conference of University Tutors and Schoolmasters at Cambridge in January of this year.

He introduces the discussion with the modesty of a man who recognizes that even in a subject on which he is an expert, certain aspects of it may be more familiar than certain others. He is address-

ing schoolmasters on the Teaching of the Old Testament, and he begins by reminding himself that 'to schoolboys I have never taught it at all.' And towards the close it is delightful to hear him admit that he does not know 'with what period it is best to start the teaching of the history to younger pupils'—whether with the Patriarchal period or the Mosaic, or the Conquest of Canaan or the beginning of the Monarchy; nor does he profess to know where the story of Creation should come in. These are indeed provokingly difficult questions, and perhaps only very experienced teachers of boys could solve them, if indeed they can ever be finally solved at all.

Principal SMITH has been assured from many quarters, he tells us, that of late years the influence of the Old Testament has waned. We hope not. Dr. SMITH'S own magnificent expository work on the prophets has surely established, definitely and unchallengeably, that the Old Testament—not in spite of, but precisely because of, criticism—is not only preachable, but amazingly modern. And this is one of the many points that he makes, that 'the effect of the critical movement as a whole has been not destructive but constructive and illuminating.'

The principles on which the teacher must proceed are (i) the frank recognition that 'the Old Testament contains the record of a Divine Revelation, but exhibits that Revelation as proceeding, as do all the works of God, by gradual development; and (ii) that the teacher has the duty of using the liberty which Christ has proclaimed and exemplified.'

The true understanding of the first principle obliges the teacher to recognize the strength and, just as frankly, the weakness of the Old Testament. There are in it beggarly elements: the more honestly he recognizes their presence, the more surely must he also recognize the presence within them and the action upon them of the Divine Spirit, which was potent to transform them so wonderfully, and to effect so unique a Revelation. Again in

adopting the second principle, that of liberty, the teacher is but following in the footsteps of Christ, who 'was the greatest and most drastic critic of the Old Testament,' as is evident, among other things, from His attitude to the old laws of retaliation and divorce.

A very interesting point, to which we referred last month, Principal SMITH incidentally touches upon—the place of the prophet and the priest in religion. Are these two dominant figures antagonistic or complementary? In one passage he describes the Prophets as 'great souls struggling towards a purer faith through debates with God and themselves, and *conflicts with priestly and legal tradition.*' But it would not be fair to infer from this that he regards prophecy as a complete exhibition of the mind of God. For elsewhere he reminds us that here 'as in all other ages and nations, controversy between opposite opinions has been a means of reaching the truth'; and still more explicitly, that the differences or contradictions between, *e.g.*, Jeremiah and Deuteronomy with regard to the Law, the Temple, and the Divine origin of sacrifices, 'are only proofs that among the methods of Divine Revelation under the Old Covenant, in addition to the vision and inspiration which came by direct action of God's Spirit on the spirits of men, there were those other processes by which the truth has been sifted and beaten out in all ages, namely, by debate and controversy between equally earnest minds and schools of thought, *with neither of which lay the whole truth.*'

Every teacher, Principal SMITH insists, must take as the basis of his work the Authorized Version, wonderful alike for the music of its style, for its wisdom, and for its uplifting and inspiring power upon human life. The Revised Version, while on the whole clearer, has 'missed a great opportunity' in not adding, *e.g.*, such marks of quotation as would serve to indicate the emergence of new speakers or a reference to older sayings or popular proverbs. The Revisers' failure to indicate the metrical form in which much, if not most, of prophecy was written,

is touched with a gentle hand. It was not 'their blame that they were not so in advance of their time.' This defect has now been remedied by several German and English translations, some of which are specially mentioned by name.

Not the least interesting part of the lecture is that in which Dr. SMITH discusses the difficulties of metrical translations, especially of those which attempt to reproduce the original in modern forms of speech. With some of these latter he is manifestly not well pleased. Some of their phrases sound, as he amusingly puts it, as if they 'had come round the corner—instead of from Heaven.' But he pays a hearty tribute to these versions for their praiseworthy and often successful endeavour to bring out 'the lilt and the charm of the Hebrew verse.' We look forward with special interest to Principal SMITH'S own forthcoming book on Jeremiah, which will doubtless exhibit very adequately the poetic as well as the prophetic quality of that great prophet.

He maintains that the pupil should be made early acquainted with the configuration of the land, and made to feel that much that meets us in history

is explained by geography. But, whatever part of the history should be dealt with first, 'Psalms and Proverbs, at least in selections, could be taken, I suppose, anywhere or rather everywhere. But I know that I would like to reserve for the higher classes the whole period of the Prophets, with its ethics and politics, its spiritual agonies,' and its growing apprehension of the mind of God.

The lecture closes with three illuminating observations: (i) that it is the fashion of the Old Testament, as of the Ancient East, to which the idea of evolution was unfamiliar, to express a long historical development or spiritual process as happening at once. Deuteronomy, *e.g.*, which criticism has shown to be the fruit of centuries, is represented as the utterance of Moses in one day. (ii) Truth comes through controversy and the clash of opinion, and neither of two opposing types possesses a monopoly of it. (iii) The 'rage of the righteous,' illustrated by Jeremiah, is explained partly by a passionate desire for justice and the vindication of the moral order, but still more perhaps by the absence of faith in the life to come. From this latter, especially, we learn 'the difference Christ has made.'

Jeremiah and Jesus—in Comparison and Contrast.

BY THE REVEREND H. A. WILLIAMSON, B.D., LOCHEE, DUNDEE.

JEREMIAH is attracting considerable attention at the present time, partly because he is the most self-revealing of all the prophets, and partly because of his anticipations of Christianity. He has gone far in preparing the way of freeing religion from the bonds of nationalism. While he does not altogether discard the old form of nationalism, he has really advanced beyond it, and places religion on an individualistic basis. Jeremiah's work therefore represents a new step in the evolution of Israel's faith. The aim of the prophet is one of emancipation from out-worn forms. He reaches forward to a new idealism, in which the human spirit is free to get direct into the presence

of God. He is an intuitionist, who dispenses with any intermediary ritual. The radical nature of such teaching is evident. Every priestly office is rendered unnecessary; and the most cherished traditions of Israel become of no value to one who has now the 'inward' law. Torah and Temple, which were the most distinctive features of the national life, are shorn of their worth.

We need not wonder that the prophet suffered for these advanced views, or that the priests of the temple hated him for his 'nihilism.' Apart from their own material interests, they looked at his teaching as subversive of their peculiar greatness. The very institutions which Jeremiah