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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THEY who desire to know the difference that Christ makes should read in succession (as we have happened to do) two autobiographies—first the *Memoirs of My Life* by Edward GIBBON, and immediately thereafter *An Autobiography* by Robert F. HORTON. The first book was published a century ago; the second is just out (Allen & Unwin; 7s. 6d. net).

GIBBON'S Life is the life of a heathen. Not of a heathen who never heard of Christ, but of one who deliberately rejected Him. HORTON'S Life is the life of a follower of Christ. The one shaped his character, so far as he found it possible, without regard to the example or influence of the 'Founder of Christianity.' The other consciously, consistently, whole-heartedly took Christ first as Saviour and then as Lord. The difference between the men is a difference in character. And it is not only an appreciable difference; it is a difference that is overwhelming.

Dr. HORTON has written many books. He has never written a book like his Autobiography. The work he has done is worthy, and it has been done in many fields. But he himself is greater than his works; and this surprisingly unreserved revelation of himself will do more for the causes he has at heart than all the rest of the books he has written. It does not offer us a perfect Christian. Two necessary features are plainly absent. Dr. HORTON is not imaginative enough, and he is not playful enough, to be perfect. But it offers us a Christian, and the life which a Christian can live.

Is there a secret in the Christian life? Yes, there is a secret, and because Dr. HORTON found the secret he lived the life. The secret is Prayer. He prayed personally, and he persuaded his congregation to pray. He prayed for himself, and he prayed for others. He undertook nothing without prayer—or if he did he repented it. Moreover, when he prayed he believed that his prayer would be answered. He looked for the answer till he found it, even if it were by means of the first text that the opened Bible offered him. He is the man that this biography makes him to be because he lived every day and hour in an atmosphere of prayer.

He taught his people to pray. 'The opening of the new church had been prepared for by a week of early morning meetings (from 7.15 to 7.45) for prayer. This became an annual institution. Ever since, in the corresponding week of July, the people have gathered morning by morning in large numbers to pray for the Church and the work. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord," has been the fundamental idea.

The meeting for prayer every Saturday evening has been similarly sustained. And my own irrefragable argument for the reality and power of prayer lies in what prayer has accomplished at Lyndhurst Road. That week of prayer annually, and that hour of prayer weekly, to one who sees the course of things extended over many years, furnish the explanation of all that has been accomplished. We know at Lyndhurst Road, and those who do not discover it never become incorporated in the life of the Church, that Christ in the midst fulfilling His promise and gaining for us the answer to our prayers has maintained us all these years and enabled us to do whatever has been done.'

He taught his church to pray for him. In 1914 he went to Kansas City in America to attend a Convention in connexion with the Student Movement. On the opening day he had to speak to five thousand students, together with two thousand others. The day before he was taken seriously ill. 'All that night I was awake in pain, and fancied myself dictating a farewell letter to my people at home. A great peace came over me. Next day I rose, very weak, and walked to the Convention Hall. Before that vast audience I could hardly stand, and thought I had no voice. But I remembered that my people had agreed to meet at that hour, making allowance for the five hours' difference in time, and to pray for me. A strange accession of strength came to me, and when I sat down Mott whispered to me, "Your long journey is justified." I went back to bed. But by Saturday I was fit to take the intercession, and in that brief quarter of an hour I knew why I was sent to Kansas.'

He prayed before every undertaking, before every individual act. If he did not, he repented it. Once in an article to a paper he referred to the *Academy* as a Catholic journal. He had some excuse. 'A journalistic friend told me that the editor was a Catholic; and from the *Catholic Who's Who* I saw that he belonged to a Catholic family.' But Lord Alfred Douglas brought an action for libel, which cost much money and more humiliation. He says: 'My error was easily explained, though, as I remembered afterwards with pain, it had occurred because the article had been written without specific prayer.'

And he looked for the answer. He looked sometimes in the Bible. 'In the middle of February my sight went wrong. I could not read. I consulted an oculist, who was a member of my Church. While I waited in the reception-room I took out my Bible to test my sight. Opening at random, I read 2 Sam. xxii. 29, "For thou art my lamp, O Lord, and the Lord will lighten my darkness." This swift message of God, coming from so unlikely a part of the Scripture, had an indescribable effect upon me. I was nerved to endure whatever should come. I did not take the promise to mean that my sight would be spared, but that in losing it I should keep the Lord as my Light.'

He prayed for small things as well as great. 'Once in Norway, it must have been in this very year 1896, I had a startling illustration of the little things being in God's hands. We had rowed three miles up the Esse Fjord from Balholm, and then wandered among the birch woods and the broken boulders which covered the low spur of the mountains. When we returned we found an overshoe was missing, and for our delicate traveller those overshoes were absolutely necessary for wet steamer decks, and irreplaceable without many days' delay. Where the lost shoe was on that trackless mountain-side none but God knew. But in the afternoon I pulled up the fjord again, and through the three miles' row I asked God to show me what He alone knew. When I landed on the beach, and went clambering up the rocks, and without knowing how or why, plunged my hand down into a chink between them, there was the shoe! Nothing could be easier for an outsider than to ascribe the recovery to chance. Nor would it be worth while to quote the incident as

a proof of the power of prayer. But to me it was an unmistakable evidence of the truth, so often verified in the important duties and difficulties of life: God is at hand, and hears, and answers. He does not often work miracles, but His answers to prayer form a continuously miraculous life.'

'What shall they do who are baptized for the dead?' We have never been able to answer, for we have never been able to say who they are. One curious commentator has discovered thirty-nine different identifications. Will Mr. BOREHAM be counted fit to make the fortieth?

Mr. F. W. BOREHAM has written another of those books of sympathetic interpretation of life which have given him so enviable a name among present-day teachers. Its title is *The Other Side of the Hill* (Kelly; 3s. 6d. net). The chapter which gives the book that title is a defence of the spirit of exploration—in religion as in geography—and incidentally a defence of Mr. BOREHAM'S own original method of preaching the gospel. The chapter which identifies the persons who are baptized for the dead is entitled, 'On the Old Man's Trail.'

'"This woman," said Greatheart to Gaius [so it begins], "is the wife of one Christian, a pilgrim of former times, and these are his four children. The boys take all after their father, and covet to tread in his steps. Yea, if they do but see any place where the old Pilgrim hath lain, or any print of his foot, it ministereth joy to their hearts, and they covet to lie or tread in the same." I always think of that as one of the most charming and affecting passages in the whole of Bunyan's wonderful allegory. "*If they see any place where the old pilgrim hath lain, or any print of his foot, it ministereth joy to their hearts, and they covet to lie or tread in the same.*"'

This sentence of Bunyan's is to Mr. BOREHAM the most searching and most illuminating exposition of St. Paul's question. He is much interested in the question. He is concerned for its fate among the commentators. 'It is a thousand pities,' he says, 'that we should allow this radiant and pregnant phrase to drift among the barren sands and shallow pools of ecclesiastical debate and theological controversy. We must find a place for it in the warm atmosphere of our happiest and most evangelistic ministries. The setting is so exquisitely simple.'

St. Paul belonged to a new generation. He had never companied with Jesus. Perhaps he never saw, except in vision, the Saviour's face. He was as one born out of due time. Is the day of romance over then? No; there is room for heroism still. He is determined that the second generation shall be worthy even of the first.

But how? By every man of earnestness seeing to it that he is baptized for the dead. Stephen is dead. How vividly, and with a shudder, does Paul remember the dying scene. Stephen's work shall not die with him. Paul himself will carry it on. He will be baptized with the baptism of Stephen's enthusiasm. He will take up Stephen's work. He now recognizes that 'that unforgettable revelation on the road to Damascus was a call to perpetuate the splendid testimony of those heroic spirits who had fallen—some of them at his own hands. He has been baptized for the dead.'

By and by Paul's own generation will pass and be succeeded by another. As he has been baptized for the dead Stephen, his son Timothy will be baptized for him. God buries His workmen, but carries on His work. Each new worker is baptized for the dead worker who preceded him.

That is Mr. BOREHAM'S identification. And having given his exposition of the passage he does not forget its illustration. 'The fact is that the principle enshrined in this neglected text is the divine answer to one of the deepest and most tender cravings of which humanity is capable. It is akin to a man's yearning for a child of his own

body, a woman's silence and unutterable longing for motherhood. This old world of ours holds nothing more truly and intensely pathetic than a dying man's anxiety about the perpetuation of his life-work. George Eliot has twice portrayed this hunger of the soul with a very delicate and tender touch.'

'Yes; it is a great thing for Stephen to have his Saul, for Paul to have his Timothy, for the dying man, as he turns his face to the wall, to feel that another has been baptized on his behalf. It is good for a man to make his will, to leave all his affairs in perfect order, to die with no anxiety concerning things in this world or in any other. But surely that man can greet the angel of Death with a radiant face who can point to another—youthful, virile, enthusiastic—who will grasp the tools as they fall from worn-out hands and carry the good work to perfect completion. That man rears his own immortality who prudently toils to raise up to himself, whilst his sun is high in the heavens, spiritual successors whose voices will be heard when his sun has set for the last time.'

'Now a great spirit often does his best work, not in his own proper person, but by means of the disciples who rise up to succeed him and carry on his work. The eighteenth century was dominated by three very remarkable men—Immanuel Kant, Samuel Johnson, and John Wesley. We owe very much, of course, to the work done by each of them; but we owe still more to the influence which they exerted over their disciples and successors. After the death of Kant we had a great philosophical revival; after the death of Johnson we had a great literary revival; and after the death of Wesley we had a great religious revival. Johnson died in 1784; Wesley died in 1791; Kant died in 1804. Immediately upon the death of Kant, we have the work of Hegel and Schopenhauer, of Schleiermacher and Herbart, of Goethe and Schelling, of Thomas Brown and Jeremy Bentham, of Sir Thomas Mackintosh and Sir William Hamilton, of Johann Fichte and of many others. In the same way, Dr. Johnson was scarcely buried when there arose Coleridge and Wordsworth, Southey and Lamb, Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Moore, James Hogg and Lord Byron, George Crabbe and Percy Shelley, Thomas Campbell and Walter Savage Landor, Leigh Hunt and John Keats. These, and a host of contemporaries, form a galaxy of literary brilliance unequalled in English story. It is no wonder that when, not long after the death of Johnson, the poet-laureate died, the Government of the day was embarrassed by its wealth of riches, and knew not whom to appoint. Of John Wesley exactly the same may be said, save that in his case it would be futile to mention names. Strictly speaking, Wesley was a childless old man when he died; yet we all know that the sons of John Wesley form a host that no man can number. In each case we are reminded that a really colossal personality often wields a more widespread, if less dramatic, influence through the instrumentality of the disciples who succeed him than is possible to his single individuality.'

The Parable of the Unjust Judge is enough to assure us that God will see justice done to His own. But what of the world? Have we any like assurance that He will see justice done between the nations? We are told that the Judge of all the earth will Himself do right. But we do not seem to be anywhere told that He will see right done between one nation and another.

Nay, if God is Christ and Christ is God, we seem to be told the opposite. The passage is difficult. Who ever heard a sermon preached upon it? It is the story of the man who called out to Jesus from the crowd and begged Him to speak to his brother in order to make him divide the inheritance between them (Lk 12^{13-15}).

Jesus refused. 'Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?' Yet it was a clear case of injustice. Jesus refused, not because He did not

recognize the injustice from which the man was suffering, but plainly because He reckoned it none of His business to interfere.

The passage is difficult; but we do not make it easier by refusing to see the manifest meaning of our Lord's answer. He was always ready to see justice done to His 'little flock.' He was ready to answer their plea before they could utter it, and say, 'Fear not; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' But this man was none of His, and He refused to become a judge or a divider between his brother and him.

Now, however unexpected that may be, it does not seriously alarm us. It is a story of another time than ours, another land, and other social circumstances. But what if the Church has to do as Jesus did? And what if it applies to the attitude of the Church to the conflict which is now in progress between Germany and Britain?

The Rev. J. C. ORMEROD makes that application. At a recent meeting of the Congregational Council of the city in which his ministry is cast, Mr. ORMEROD read a paper on *The Church's Message to a Nation at War*. The paper might have been a sermon. He took this passage for a text. And he gave it as his deliberate belief that in the present dispute between Germany and Great Britain the Church has no call to interpose.

Now Mr. ORMEROD is not a pacifist. He is ready for any sacrifice that the war demands, even to the supreme sacrifice. Nor has he the slightest doubt, or ever had, of the injustice done by Germany. He saw the injustice of the first act of war, he has seen the injustice of every act which Germany has sent after the first. More than that, he is very sure that the right will prevail. But he believes that if Christ were here in the flesh He would not step in between the combatants, but would tell them that they both are wrong. And he believes that that is now the duty of Christ's Church.

'Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?' And then He turned to the multitude and included the man, 'Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness.' That was His message then. That is His message now, His message to a world at war. That is the message, says Mr. ORMEROD, and the only message of the Church.

In *The Modern Churchman* for October will be found most of the papers read at the Fourth Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Girton College, Cambridge, in August. Among the rest will be found one by Professor Sir William ASHLEY, Ph.D., Dean of the Faculty of Commerce in Birmingham University. Professor ASHLEY'S subject is 'The Functions of the Ministry of the Church.'

The functions of the ministry of the Church—that is to say, the purpose for which the minister of Christ exists. Why are certain men 'set apart'? What have they to do that other men have not? What should a Christian minister seek to do and be? Professor ASHLEY undertakes to answer.

And first negatively—like the good strategist she is. For let it be understood that he knows what he is about, and knows that he knows. First of all, *the Christian minister is not a priest.*

Now by 'priest' Professor ASHLEY does not mean 'one who is merely an outcome of the division of labour which entrusts certain functions to certain men for the sake of order; nor—and this is a cognate conception—one who acts for the congregation (or the whole Church) simply in a representative capacity.' By a priest he means 'a man who supposes himself, or is supposed by others, to possess the power of calling down

certain divine blessings or favours by means of certain rites, and this by virtue of his ordination.' That, he says, is what the word 'priest' has actually meant for millions of men for many centuries. The Christian minister is not a priest.

For priesthood in this sense involves beliefs which English people no longer dispute about, because the movement of the human mind has placed them outside the range of credibility. Take, for instance, the question of the 'validity' of English orders. 'A few of us,' says Sir William ASHLEY, 'may have a certain curiosity to ascertain just what did happen in the Reformation period in the matter of the consecration of bishops, and to find out whether there is any particle of truth in the Nag's Head story. And when we are confronted by a neat theory like the Roman doctrine of "intention," we are interested by the question whether it can be squared with historical probability. But for all bearing on anything the English people can effectively believe, the "validity" of orders has lost all meaning. Men can't any longer really believe that absolution by a priest has any effect on the mind of the Eternal; or that the value of the communion depends on the validity of the priest's ordination; or that confirmation is helpful in any other way than solemn reception into any great Christian body might be.'

In the next place *the Christian minister is not a theologian.* That is to say, he may be a preacher, but he may not be a doctrinal preacher. 'The "painful preacher" who expounded "the scheme of salvation" and "justified the ways of God to man" reigned for two or three centuries, but his reign is now over. His authority has passed away for the same reasons as that of the wonder-working priest. Mankind has observed that the doctrinal sermon has ceased, as religious rites have ceased, to contribute to what it dumbly felt to be the one object of the Church and its ministry—the promotion of goodness. It has not justified itself by its fruits. And Protestant theological systems have been subjected to the same intellectual forces as have been playing upon Catholic sacramentalism, and with the same result.'

Well, if the 'minister of the word' may be neither a priest nor a theologian, what is it permitted him to be? He may be a preacher, as we have seen; but of what sort? What is he to try to accomplish by his preaching? Sir William ASHLEY has no hesitation in answering.

'The preacher,' he says, 'can be one of the main instruments of moral education. From the treasury of human experience and from his own reflections on life he should be able to bring us messages of good cheer when the heavy weight of the world would otherwise become intolerable. He should be able to put before us, with the fresh appeal of the living voice and with the force of personal conviction, the great thoughts of Duty, Repentance, and Trust. He should be able, in simple language, to explain and illustrate the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures used in public worship. And besides this directly "religious" work, there is, for many parsons, an opportunity to do something for the general intellectual education of the country.'

That means that the preacher should be the instrument for providing 'residential suburbs' with a taste of real literature. The men of the residential suburbs read little during the week but the newspaper, the women little but 'novels of the lighter sort.' 'It is their minister,' says Sir William ASHLEY, 'who gives them a glimpse of the fresh thought of the time, and through whom the ideas, say of William James and Bergson, the verses of Masefield and Brooke, reach the serious-minded non-reading classes.'

But the minister is more than a preacher. He is 'responsible for periodically conducting religious services in the public places of worship.' Now in Professor ASHLEY's opinion the clergy as a rule are far too careless about these services. He imagines that 'comparatively few clergy take the

trouble to look through the lessons and psalms before they come into church. 'If they did, they ought clearly, in my judgment, to omit and curtail and substitute—with, of course, a reasonable degree of discretion and tact—wherever this is evidently necessary to preserve the Christian character of the service.'

And then the minister is a pastor. This is to Professor ASHLEY his true function. His business is to promote goodness in the parish, and so he must be good; it is to be a help to intelligent men, and so he must be intelligent. For 'I must confess that the older I get the more I return to the conception of the Christian minister, not as the preacher of doctrines or the performer of rites, but as the promoter of kindly feeling in the parish, the painstaking and thoughtful friend of all in trouble of mind or body.'

The High Church minister is a priest; the Low Church minister is a theologian; and the Broad Church minister is a kindly gentleman who goes about his parish telling everybody to be good. And as you listen to Sir William ASHLEY commending the Broad Church minister to your imitation, you hear a cry from the trenches, 'We know already that we have to be good; can you not tell us how?' It is the cry of a soul in its agony.

Irenaeus and the Fourth Gospel.

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I.

IT may seem superfluous to add another to the numerous discussions of Irenæus' relation to the Fourth Gospel. But it is obvious to all who try to keep abreast of critical investigation that certain positions, when they have been reiterated with sufficient boldness, not to say, audacity, soon take rank as dogmas, to challenge which appears to savour of incompetence. One of these dogmas is the worthlessness of what Irenæus has to say about the Fourth Gospel and its authorship. One may admit that his evidence, if at all trustworthy, intensifies one of the most perplexing problems in New Testament literature. For those who without bias approach the Fourth Gospel in its present form, and take it at its surface value, find it increasingly difficult to believe that this presentation of Jesus Christ can be the work of a man who daily companied with Him in His earthly career. There are, however, ways of estimating the Gospel which help to relieve the difficulty. Most recent investigators agree that it is interpretation far more than history. Many are inclined to give prominence in it to a symbolic element, largely foreign to our modern modes of thought in the West, but congruous with the Oriental mind in every epoch of history. One has little doubt that here lies a most important clue to the standpoint of the author. Further, there is much to be said for the supposition that the document as we have it is a compilation of already-existing materials which the compiler (or compilers) set himself to construct into a Gospel, more or less after the model of the Synoptics, but which lay before him possibly in the shape of historical discourses intended to kindle faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. These two estimates of the Gospel are not contradictory. But they lead us back ultimately to the mind which is responsible for this portrait of Jesus.

Whose mind was it? At least it reveals some one extraordinarily sensitive to the significance of Jesus, some one with a unique power of relating the spiritual experience of Christians at the close of the first century to the living Master who had walked this earth, and thus of preserving the concreteness of history in an age disposed to dissolve facts and events into imposing abstractions. I do not intend to discuss here the possibility or impossibility of identifying this ultimate authority for