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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

MESSRS. JAMES CLARKE & Co. have published for the Free Church Council a volume of essays and addresses on the issues raised by the War. The title is *Problems of To-morrow, Social, Moral, and Religious* (4s. 6d. net). The volume is readable throughout and worth reading, but somewhat miscellaneous. Prudently enough the editor, the Rev. Fred. A. REES, has brought its contents within two book covers and left them there. Right in the middle there is a paper by Dr. Rendel HARRIS on the eternal youthfulness of Christ, a truly charming paper which some of us would buy the book for, but it has nothing to do with the problems of to-morrow. Nearly all the rest of the authors have something to say about the problems and their solution. It is left to Dr. John OMAN and the last paper to tell us definitely what is wrong and how to set it right.

This is what is wrong. We have been content to believe what we have been in the habit of believing and to do what we have been in the habit of doing. In one word, our religion has been *tradition*.

Now it is right that our religion should be tradition to begin with. We must begin by believing what we are taught to believe, and by doing what the religious people around us are doing. But the time has to come when we believe and do for ourselves. To some it comes imperceptibly; to others it comes catastrophically. The men at the front have had to believe and act for themselves, and to most of them the change has been catastrophic. The War has thrown them out of their habits. There is nothing to which the ministers of religion who have had to do with them bear more unanimous testimony than this. The men have discovered that for the greater part they have never had a religion. It has been tradition. And tradition is not religion.

There are three ways, says Dr. OMAN, in which tradition takes the place of religion. He says so because he finds that the men say so. First, there is the tradition of Orthodoxy. A correct creed is not religion.

Now that does not mean that the men at the front have rebelled against the doctrine of the Atonement, the doctrine of the Incarnation and Divinity of Jesus Christ, or even the doctrine of the Resurrection from the dead. These are the difficulties of the men of thought, not of the men of action. It is the philosopher in his study, not the soldier in the field, that is troubled about miracle.

The soldier's objection to the tradition of Orthodoxy is that he has been taught to believe and not to do. In the trenches he has discovered that it

is conduct that tells, not creed. Very likely he has rushed to the opposite extreme and made conduct everything. But he is certainly right when he says in his own way, however different that may be from the way in which James the apostle said it, that faith without works is dead.

This then is the first thing that is wrong with the religion of the Churches. Let us accept the situation into which the War has led us. Let us meet the demand which the men at the front are making upon us. Let us see to it that henceforth we will not pretend to believe what we do not believe. Above all, let us make sure that our creed never seems one step in front of our behaviour.

The second tradition is the tradition of Conventionality.

One of the discoveries which the men at the front have made is that in the great crises of life, caste goes to the wall. In the crisis of this war the servant has been made an officer and the master has remained a private. And the sense of incongruity, so strong for us, has been unfelt by them. 'I noticed,' says one of the writers in this book, 'I noticed the very courteous salute which a young officer returned to one of the men. "Do you know that officer?" said I to the man, whose speech showed he was no ordinary person. "Yes," said he, "he was my father's private secretary."'

Ah, this is a more difficult matter than the other. We agree that our conduct should correspond with our creed, however short we come of the correspondence. But we do not even agree that there should be no difference between man and man. We raise objections to such a thing as a doctrine of human equality. We dare to doubt the Lord's own wisdom in all that He said about the rich and the poor; we deny the inspiration of the Apostle Paul when he declared that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

But what are we to do with the men when they come home? If we imagine that they will settle down again to the old conventions of caste and clique we shall find ourselves mistaken. They have seen the futility of it all. They have found out the monstrous mischief of it. The West-end Church and the East-end Church and the Mission-hall for the lowest of all—they will insist, they tell us in their emphatic tongue, on having the whole thing 'scrapped.' And how shall we be able to resist them?

The third tradition is the tradition of Ecclesiasticism. The charge is (we quote Mr. OMAN) 'that we have turned religion into a mere business of running religious institutions. God, as Seeley put it, is regarded mainly as the head of the clerical interest, and that on purely traditional grounds. Religious work is work to keep churches going, a sort of widening of the clerical interest. Zeal in that work, it is even hinted, compensates with us for much lack of doing justly and loving mercy and walking humbly with our God. And, then, the various denominations devote such zeal as they have to their own particular success, proclaiming themselves the one superior article. All alike are occupied with ecclesiastical fribbles, all fiddling while Rome is burning. They did nothing to prevent the War, and are doing nothing to place its issues on a higher basis; and they will do equally little to settle peace on a better foundation when the War is over, or to inspire men to endeavour after a better world.'

That is a bitter charge. And it is often expressed with needless bitterness. For what are we to do? We find that our 'best' people are interested in the Church because it is their own. They have not the imagination to see otherwise. If we persuade them that it is no better than the Church over the way, what will become of them? And what will become of the Church?

It is quite true that the men at the front have found out that 'one Church is just as good as another.' But then many of them have found out

more than that. They have found out that a Church is no better than no Church at all. And we cannot agree to that. Perhaps it will be necessary to tell them that we cannot give way to them in everything.

But if we do not give way in this we must be ready to tell them why. And our reasons must appeal to them. Dr. OMAN thinks that we will make no impression upon them if we say that anything whatever is essential to the Church which is not essential for conduct and life. They have found out for themselves that the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; and they will give that phrase a wider comprehension than we may care for.

Meantime, 'what is needed is for each of us humbly to wait God's guidance and to go forward to the dark, possibly the distressing future with the prayer in our hearts, Lord, show me what I have to do, and make me, in the doing of it, a follower of Him who taught us that we are all brethren and that we who would be first in service must be content to be last in honour.'

It is a frequent and an ancient charge against the schoolmaster that he is too hard upon the stupid boy. The defence is sometimes an admission. If the schoolmaster were not hard upon the stupid boy, H.M. Inspector would be hard upon the schoolmaster.

But Bernard BOSANQUET, D.C.L., LL.D., Fellow of the British Academy, and the author of *Some Suggestions in Ethics* (Macmillan; 6s. net), holds that 'we are not hard enough on stupidity.' He does not claim to be the inventor of the phrase. But he is a discoverer of the fact.

It is surprising that it had to be discovered. For it is a feeling which is universal to-day. 'It is within the mark to say that the greater part of the world is resenting the stupidity of war, and many other special forms and cases of stupidity which lead up to it or are embodied in it. Our social administration is full of things that are stupid. And the mildest of critics must say the same of our social stratification and the uninformed public opinion which results from it.' Dr. BOSANQUET believes that every one feels that to be so.

Are we about to return to the schoolmaster and praise him for his hardness upon stupidity? It may be so. No doubt it depends on the kind of stupidity. If stupidity is simply the opposite of cleverness, we should in nowise praise the schoolmaster for dealing hardly with it. We should condemn him as we never did before. For 'the recent fashion in reflective thought has been hostile to what is stigmatised as intellectualism. "The retirement of the intellect" is a phrase which has been used to express the line which the modern mind is taking.'

But even intellectual stupidity has sometimes a moral element in it. It may be 'due to self-absorption, inattention, inappreciativeness of what is important to others. Here we are fairly on the track of censurable stupidity. It is irresponsive; it is insensitive, unappreciative, unadaptive. It is inability to *see*. "There are thousands," said Ruskin, "who can talk, for one who can think; and there are hundreds who can think, for one who can *see*."'

The author of *Ecce Homo*, 'in trying to bring home the full humanity of Christ, said we must be prepared to think of him as a carpenter, and perhaps a clumsy carpenter. In discussing this passage, a friend, himself well skilled in woodwork, protested against the word "clumsy." He said that it implied a moral defect, and could not be applicable to a man who was perfectly good. He meant, I suppose, that clumsiness involved an inattentiveness or unresponsiveness to minute obligations of one's work. Things would be done wrong, which were perhaps not the main things, but which yet a normal man, fully attentive and appreciative, would be careful to do right and

would succeed. I should suppose that there is the same plurality of causes in clumsiness that are found in stupidity. Either might come from a defect in the mental machinery, or from a want of interest or scrupulousness. My friend's suggestion illustrates at all events the censurable aspect of stupidity.'

Is this the reason for the use of the word 'fool' by the prophets and wise men of the Old Testament? They meant, we are told, the atheist, the man who said in his heart, 'There is no God.' What was he guilty of that they called him fool? Apparently of stupidity. He was guilty of censurable stupidity, of stupidity with a moral element in it. In Dr. BOSANQUET'S phrase, he was 'unresponsive to values.'

Then this must also be the reason why He 'hath blinded their eyes that they may not see.' The centre of difficulty in that difficult saying is not the action of God but the response of man. God maketh His sun to rise upon the evil as well as upon the good, and sendeth His rain upon the just and also upon the unjust. Why does the one man take good out of the gift and the other evil? It is because of his stupidity. The very gift, though it is so blessed a gift, is the occasion of his blindness. For he is already a fool. To him that hath shall be given—of understanding? Yes, if he has it; but of stupidity also, if he has that. And every act of God's gracious providence, even the supreme act itself, becomes the occasion of more misunderstanding.

What are we to do with the fool, then? We are to turn to Christ. There is a sentence in St. Luke's Gospel, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' We are told that it is not well attested. Is it not bracketed in Westcott and Hort? Nevertheless it is a true word of Christ. The world will remove the brackets. It is His own clear way with the stupid. 'Father, forgive them,' He said. And yet He knew how responsible they were for their stupidity. But He came to seek and to save the lost—even those who were lost in their stupidity.

What is the end of education? The usual answer is, the making of character. Mr. Kenneth RICHMOND prefers the word liberty. He has written a book on education and has given it the title of *Education for Liberty* (Collins; 6s. net).

Education for liberty. That is better than education for character. Because it needs explanation. Education for character—that is obvious, and may be overlooked. But you cannot overlook education for liberty. You must discover its meaning and so gain the truth it teaches, with some at least of its fruitfulness.

Suppose we approach it in this way. What are the nations fighting for? They are fighting for liberty. All of them? Yes, all of them? The Germans? Yes, the Germans also. Then are there two kinds of liberty? Yes, there are two kinds. There is the liberty to be *I* because I am *I*. That is the German idea of liberty. And there is liberty to be I because I am part of humanity. That is the other idea. We may say, may we not, that that is the British and the French and the American idea?

Liberty to be *I* because I am *I*. There is no serious harm in it, so long as the *I* is impotent. But give the *I* power and the harm is great. It is great in proportion to the power. Because *I* am *I*, says the German, I mean to live, and I do not mean to let live. I demand liberty for myself, and in proportion to my power will take it; and I will make the rest of mankind my slave. The Germans are fighting for liberty as we are, but it is liberty to be the only race with liberty on the face of the earth. Have you not read what they mean when they speak of the freedom of the seas?

True liberty is not an individual thing, whether the individual be a man or a nation. It is a

social thing. It is a demand for self-development certainly, but for self-development in the power of effectual co-operation with others. It is a demand for service.

That is Mr. RICHMOND'S great word. Are you afraid of it? You may well be afraid of it if service is drudgery. But 'once service'—we quote Mr. RICHMOND now—'once service has become an inspiration rather than a duteous drudgery, freedom to serve effectually is the highest freedom. Indeed, all the other forms of apparent freedom lead into blind alleys, into various forms of enslavement to self. Liberty might be defined as the union of personal self-determination with the spirit of service. The only danger of the definition would be the danger of putting an illiberal interpretation upon the term "service"—an interpretation by which Shelley would have been conceived as better employed in producing tracts or keeping the books of a bank than in writing the ode "To a Skylark."'

'We must not interfere with the self-expression of a potential Shelley or Rousseau; but the anti-social faults of a Shelley or a Rousseau, like the anti-social faults that he can detect in a prosperous banker or a respected organiser of charity, are capable of being transformed by education. By taking thought, we can establish a habit of mind through which the common opposition of liberty and duty, as though there were generally a choice to be made between the two, is convicted of falsity.'

We need not then be puzzled with the fact that all the nations which are engaged in the present war are fighting for liberty. We have simply to ask each nation the question, What do you want liberty for? We have, simply to ask, What would you do when you had perfect freedom to do it? There is, says Mr. RICHMOND, 'a certain amount of sense in the idea of liberty for its own sake, just as there is a certain amount of sense in the idea of art for art's sake, but both ideas partake of the perilous nature of any doctrine that rests upon a half truth. And in both cases the other side of the truth is the duty and the joy of service, without which neither artistic nor moral liberty exists in any real sense.'

No, nor national liberty, though that is not so evident yet. For what is the story of the rise and fall of civilisation? It is simply the story of success and failure in effective mutual service. 'The feudal system stood as a social contract, chivalrously interpreted, and fell as a system in which—as, particularly, in pre-revolutionary France—effective service was all on the one side, the side of the dispossessed. The industrial revolution introduced a new ethical contract between controlling, organising power and the power of simple productivity, and is vitiated by the share-holding system, in so far as a shareholder can be held exempt from contributing any value to society.'

'Among ethical principles of general application, there is, perhaps, none upon which our future more depends than that everyone has to pull his weight in the boat, and that to be a non-worker is not a distinction but a disgrace; and an inner sense of this truth is not inculcated by preaching in general terms, but by working out its application to all phases of human life. It is important, when speaking of social contracts of all kinds, to emphasise the point that mutual service means mutual giving, and that there is both an ethical and a practical unsoundness in any system which is based less upon a common desire to contribute than upon the close-fisted bargaining that aims at getting as much as possible for nothing. The one gives to civilisation a surplus, the other a deficit, of productive energy.'

The most original chapter in Mr. Edward MOORE'S book of 'Enigmas and Guesses' which he calls *We Moderns* (Allen & Unwin; 4s. 6d. net) is the chapter on Original Sin. He is proud of

that chapter. He directs our attention to it. But it is all wrong.

Mr. MOORE is a literary man. What that signifies in religion we have been astonishingly told by Mr. H. G. Wells. It means—no, not 'anything you like.' But it means anything you like except orthodoxy. Hold off and hate the religion of the Church—of all the Churches—and then anything you please to think, or to say without thinking. Mr. Edward MOORE is more of a thinker than Mr. Wells. He takes more time. He is not so omnipresent. But he does not know what is meant by Original Sin.

'The believer in Original Sin,' he says, 'regards mankind as that in which—the less said about the good, the better—there is, at any rate, a fixed substratum of the bad. And *that* can never be lessened, never weakened, never conquered. Therefore, man has to fight constantly to escape the menace of an ever-present defeat. A battle in which victory is impossible; a contest in which man has to climb continually in order not to fall lower; existence as the treadmill: that is what is meant by Original Sin.'

Is it? Mr. MOORE has been reading the Book of Genesis. With what spectacles on his nose? He speaks of the Fall and Eve and the Apple; and the colour of his spectacles is over everything. How could he read the story of the Fall and so utterly misinterpret the words addressed to the Serpent: 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel?' Does he think that all the world has been wrong when it called that the Protevangelium? Mr. Wells would say, 'Yes, all the world has been wrong till I came,' but Mr. MOORE is not altogether unconscious of values.

We know very well that the doctrine of Original Sin is often said to be antagonistic to the modern ideas of progress and the survival of the fittest. And by his very title Mr. MOORE tells us that if he is not modern he is nothing. We are not surprised, therefore, to read that the believers in Original Sin are supposed to say to the aspiring young man: 'What matter how high you climb! This load which you carry even as we will bring you back to us at last. And the higher you climb the greater will be your fall. Humanity cannot rise above its own level.'

But why should Mr. MOORE or any other modern ignore the New Testament? Does modernity consist in taking the early chapters of Genesis and skipping all the rest until you come to Mr. Chesterton? He has read Genesis, and he has read Mr. Chesterton, and he so argues or asserts as not only to ignore all that lies between, but to deny that anything does lie between.

'Humanity cannot rise above its own level,' he says. Well, lift the level. Lift it up above Original Sin; above all kinds of sin. That is what Christ came to do. 'I came,' He says, 'that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.' That is what He has done. And the manifest result of it? 'Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.'