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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

BIBLICAL study is of two kinds. We may study the literature with a view to the discovery of the original documents in their literary and historical relationships, or we may study it with a view to the apprehension and absorption of its spirit. These two types of study are distinct, yet in the last analysis they are not separable; for the documents enshrine the spirit, and the spirit reveals itself in its completeness only to those who take the trouble to understand the documents.

A good illustration of the way in which these two studies run into one another is furnished by the discussion of the Book of Job in Dr. SELLIN'S *Introduction to the Old Testament*, noticed elsewhere in this issue. Like a true scholar, the writer seeks to analyse and interpret the literary history of this book, but this analysis incidentally reveals the soul of the incomparable poet in his successive efforts to probe the secret of life's riddle: for, in Dr. SELLIN'S view, the Book of Job is a unit in a sense which few critics have hitherto been prepared to allow—he even defends the Elihu speeches, which all but one or two great critics believe to be no original part of the book at all.

Every one, of course, recognizes that the writer of Job is a man with unusually wide experience, not only of life, but of the world; but Dr. SELLIN throws out the interesting suggestion that he may

have been 'a member of the Jewish colony in Egypt, which we now know to have been not inconsiderable as early as the sixth or fifth centuries B.C., and in which it is clear that literary interests and international culture were well represented.'

It is with the history of his mind, however, that we are more particularly concerned, and Dr. SELLIN makes the rather startling suggestion that 'the original book did not propose to offer a solution of that problem'—the problem of retribution—'at all.' The original book is represented roughly by chs. 3-31, and its real theme is the testing of the righteous in suffering and death. The meeting with God for which Job had longed and repeatedly asked could not have been that embodied in the great speech of the Almighty Lord of Nature (chs. 38 ff.), 'in which there is hardly a reference to Job's physical and spiritual suffering, to his sins or righteousness.' The original work, which concluded with the grand appeal in 31³⁵⁻³⁷, consisted only of the dialogue between Job and his friends, and was composed 'as a glorification of the righteous man who proves himself in suffering.' So argues Dr. SELLIN.

Then the poet, his religious sensitiveness grown keener, revised his view; he let the vision of God become a reality; but the God who now appears 'is not the righteous God to whom the Job of the

original poem had appealed, but the Incomprehensible and Absolute, and the effect is quite other than he had expected—only condemnation.'

Then his mind moves on to another problem, which it is customary to regard as the real problem of the book : Why does the righteous God allow the righteous to suffer? His contemporaries, or some of them, imagined that this problem could be solved by speculation, or Wisdom, as it was called ; and it is as a protest against this attempt that the famous ch. 28 was written. Thus this chapter, which is usually regarded as a later interpolation, is saved by Dr. SELLIN for the original writer of the book.

But this merely negative conclusion is obviously unsatisfactory. Consequently, in the Elihu speeches, the writer attacks the problem again ; and in them, Dr. SELLIN holds, is the only solution to be found in the book. It is this—that 'the purpose of suffering is to purge the righteous from spiritual pride.' From this point of view this much decried section would represent the crown and climax of the poet's great argument—as Dr. SELLIN puts it, 'the ripest fruit of his own life of trial.'

This view does not differ radically from that more commonly held—that the Elihu speeches represent the contribution of some later critic who was dissatisfied with the inadequate solution or solutions adumbrated in the original book ; but it would have a peculiarly pathetic human interest if, with Dr. SELLIN, we could regard the book as embodying successive struggles of the same mind towards the light.

Despite the skill of the argument, there will still be many who prefer to believe that the real answer to the problem which tortures Job is contained in the wonderful speech of the Almighty, where, indeed, of all places, we should expect to find it. The universe, as there revealed, is haunted by no cruel and irresponsible Omnipotence, but by One who orders it in wisdom and in love. It is within

such a universe that Job, for all his pain and sorrow, lives and moves and has his being ; and there he may be well content to live on in humble trust. But, if Dr. SELLIN should prove to be right, the book would be no less wonderful, and almost more fascinating, if possible, than before.

Among the handicaps which Christianity takes with it as it goes to face the 'heathen' world is its doctrine of the Trinity. Specially serious is this handicap in face of a religion like Muhammadanism, which is uncompromisingly monotheistic. Perhaps it is possible to state our belief in the Trinity in such a way as to make it clear to philosophers that we do not believe in three Gods ; but it is not easy to make Trinity in Unity plain to the 'plain man,' to whom we love to think that our religion makes a special appeal, especially if that plain man happens to be a Mussulman with whom it is axiomatic that God is One.

Muhammadans, some of them at least, take special offence when Jesus is described as the Son of God, as the filial relationship is one they seem able to conceive only in physical terms. Even in Christian circles the relationship of Jesus to God, the precise sense in which Jesus can be called 'a member of the Godhead,' has been discussed at great length, perhaps at too great length ; but about the nature and work of the 'third person in the Trinity' most Christians would confess that their ideas are hazy.

Probably most of us have at some time heard the 'Holy Spirit' addressed in prayer as 'the neglected person in the Trinity' ; but that neglect, if we have been guilty of it, has been largely due to our failure to distinguish in any satisfactory way between the Spirit and the Living Christ. Recent discussion of the origin of the belief in the Spirit makes it clear that we are not wholly to blame for the confusion of our ideas on the subject. In some circles it has become almost a commonplace to say that Paul spoke indifferently of the

Risen Christ and the Spirit, and special reference is made to Ro 8⁹⁻¹⁰, where it is claimed that 'Christ,' 'the Spirit of God,' and 'the Spirit of Christ,' are used synonymously.

We turn to Bishop GORE, whom nowadays on New Testament questions we expect to find on the side of authority. In 'Belief in Christ' the Bishop is quite clear that in the Pauline Epistles, as in Acts, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a Person, a Person who intercedes with groanings for the Church, who bears witness within the heart of the Christian, and who can be grieved and disappointed. If Paul speaks of the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ, it is only to *distinguish* Him from the glorified Christ. Only once does he seem to identify the Lord and the Spirit (2 Co 3¹⁷), and then the exception is only apparent; for it is 'eminently probable' that the true reading is: 'Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty.'

In 'The Apostle Paul and the Modern World,' Professor PEABODY finds himself unable to regard Paul as a Trinitarian. It is not so much that the Apostle falls short of the Trinitarian conception as that his reverence for Christ bears him beyond it. 'The unity of divine love is manifested in a duality of divine care.' The modern conception of the place and function of the Holy Spirit is vague and indeterminate, and in this matter Paul was a modern. 'A duality in God rather than a Trinity is affirmed,' and if the Athanasian Creed truly expresses the mind of God, the great Apostle has, without doubt, perished everlastingly (or should it be 'is perishing'?), since he was guilty of the sin of confounding the Persons of the Trinity.

Another recent writer on the subject, Professor A. H. MCNEILE, reminds us that Gregory of Nazianzus in the latter half of the fourth century intimated that 'some people in his day were uncertain what opinion to adopt as to the nature of the Holy Spirit, because the sacred Scriptures did

not teach anything definite on the subject.' Both in Paul's writings and in Acts many expressions are used of the Spirit that suggest a 'personality,' but none of them implies a 'Person' in the sense of the Athanasian symbol; and neither Paul nor any one else had at that time advanced to the point of precise definition. If the course of Paul's thought had led him to separate the Spirit from God, he would have spoken of God as 'He,' of the Spirit as 'It.'

With this question in view, we turn to the masterly work on *The Spirit in the New Testament* (Hodder & Stoughton; 7s. 6d. net), by Professor E. F. SCOTT, the latest product of the pen of that fine scholar. He also notes that till our own day the question of the Spirit has a subordinate place in discussions on the Trinity, and that theology still finds it difficult to draw any real distinction between the Spirit and the glorified Christ. With a characteristic absence of dogmatism Professor SCOTT hesitates to believe that the New Testament writers attributed personality to the Spirit.

The original New Testament conception of the Spirit is that of a Divine energy, abstract, though in the ancient way often spoken of in personal terms. As time went on, the Spirit tended to be identified with the Christ, and thus to be endowed with His attributes, including that of personality. This 'personification' (if we may use the word in its root sense) of the Spirit was made all the easier because, through the influence of the Logos idea, the conception of Christ Himself was becoming more vague and metaphysical.

But is not Paul's Trinitarian orthodoxy guaranteed in the blessing of 2 Co 13¹⁴: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost'? Unfortunately, the last phrase is ambiguous. There are three possible interpretations: 'fellowship with the Spirit,' 'communication of the Spirit,' 'fellowship brought about by the Spirit.' Professor SCOTT thinks the last translation the most probable,

and if he is right, then this verse yields no certain inference as to Paul's possible Trinitarianism. What is in his mind is not a view of the nature of God, but a testimony to the way in which Divine blessings are imparted. 'May you possess the grace of Christ, and the love of God will then be yours, and you will be united with one another through the Spirit.'

Nowhere in Paul do we get the suggestion that the Spirit is a third Person along with God and Christ, nor do we find anywhere in the New Testament any real trace of the later Trinitarian doctrine. In apostolic times the Spirit was the Divine power at work in the life of Christians. But it was Christ who had brought them into the relation with God which allowed Him to work on them through the Spirit. However, the Spirit, even if at first conceived impersonally, was from the first vitally connected with God and with Christ, and so the later Trinitarian development was natural if not inevitable.

No one can ever hope to do justice to Jeremiah who is not both poet and prophet. That is why we extend so cordial a welcome to Sir George Adam SMITH's *Jeremiah*, noticed elsewhere in this number. Jeremiah himself is both poet and prophet, and essentially, if not formally, Dr. SMITH is too.

In one place he speaks of Jeremiah as 'the Prophet, the greatest whom God ever sent to Israel.' That is high praise, when we think of Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah; but no one can read this eloquent and penetrating sketch of Jeremiah's personality and work without feeling that such praise is not too high. Jeremiah explored the human heart as no other prophet of Israel, and in his vicarious sufferings he is the great Old Testament prototype of Christ. He fascinated the mind and influenced the spiritual experience of the nobler sons of Israel for generations after he was in his grave.

But his achievements as a poet Principal SMITH does not rate quite so high. Profoundly as he appreciates his elegiacs, with their exquisite feeling for nature, and the surge of their passions of love or indignation, he finds in them occasional 'coarse images and similes,' and figures 'sometimes even ugly.' However that may be, Dr. SMITH, by his singularly skilful reproduction of the original metre, has captured the lilt of their music and made it ring in our ears, as the noblest rhythmical prose translations could never do.

Here is a specimen :

A voice in Ramah is heard, lamentation
And bitterest weeping,
Rachel beweeeping her children
And will not be comforted.

In different connexions the same piece is sometimes quoted afresh, and so completely is Dr. SMITH master of his resources that these translations occasionally appear in different forms.

His poetic imagination also comes out in his power to express and develop all that is implicit in a metaphor. He makes very happy play, e.g., with the possible etymology of the word Jeremiah as meaning *Yahweh hurls* or *shoots forth*. 'For he was a projectile, fired upon a hostile world with a force not his own, and on a mission from which, from the first, his gifts and affections recoiled and against which he continued to protest.' And further on in the chapter he recurs to the figure by asking the question, 'What was the powder which launched this grim projectile through his times?'—a question which he answers by saying that it was, partly at least, his faith in his predestination.

In the best sense of the word this is a conservative book. For it conserves for Jeremiah much that some recent scholarship has been inclined to deny him—much both of poetry and prose. For Dr. SMITH will by no means have it, with Duhm, that all that is prose in the book is to be rejected, and still less that all that is poetry is to be emended

and conformed to an elegiac metre with lines of rigidly mechanical length. He gives good reasons for believing that Jeremiah, like the men of his race, could easily pass from poetry to prose—the prose passages he picturesquely describes as ‘portages’ between the clear streams of poetry—and that irregular lines readily crept into the metre.

The so-called ‘false prophets’ are figures that perpetually challenge our interest, and Dr. SMITH has some suggestive comments to make upon them. He points out that there are two deep distinctions between Jeremiah and them—one moral and one intellectual. The former distinction is the more easily recognized: the false prophets did not feel, as Jeremiah did, the sin of the people against God’s love and light and leading. But the other distinction is almost more interesting. ‘Jeremiah had the right eye for events’ and for the significance of political facts: to such events and facts his prophetic opponents were blind. He had an ‘unwarped understanding of the political and military movements of his time.’ But, as Dr. SMITH takes care to point out, ‘this political sagacity and military foresight have their source in moral and spiritual convictions.’ And now, as then, it is the men who believe in God and in the moral constitution of history who are the best interpreters of events.

Of peculiar interest is the chapter on ‘The Story of his Soul,’ which brings him very close to us by the revelation of him as a man of like passions with ourselves. In it the highly probable suggestion is made that ‘Jeremiah may have been by temper raw and hasty, with a natural capacity for provoking his fellows. That he felt this himself we may suspect from his cry to his mother, that he had been born to quarrel.’ This would explain much. In illuminating sentences Dr. SMITH makes us feel how this trait drives Jeremiah to assert his individuality not only against his countrymen but against God Himself. And the book leaves us with a sense of the indescribable pathos of the career of the prophet, whose message was ceaselessly spurned by the people whom he so passionately loved, and

who, having fought superstitions for forty years, was carried away in the end as a fetish to a foreign land, there to die.

At intervals in the discussion there are flashes of light upon problems raised by the Great War. These, and indeed the vividness of the whole discussion, compel us to feel how alive Jeremiah is, and how much he may mean, when adequately interpreted, to our own generation. Than Dr. SMITH there could be no more competent guide through the labyrinth of the book, and he helps the reader to walk through it for himself by the translations which he has scattered so profusely throughout the discussion.

The steady movement in our time towards Christian unity is a singularly impressive thing. It can hardly be doubted that it is ultimately due to the secret pressure of the Spirit of Christ upon the minds and hearts of His people. Under this pressure certain facts begin to come to light and take shape before men’s eyes. One is the fact that Imperialistic Religion, as Dr. ADAMS BROWN has recently called it, is hopelessly antiquated.

What is Imperialistic Religion? It is the theory that the Kingdom of God is to be modelled after the pattern of the great world empires, with one supreme authority, one system of law and government, and one uniform order. Such is the ideal of those who envisage the perfect Church as a vast organization rigidly held together by uniformity in doctrine, government, and worship, and who look for Christian unity along these lines.

This conception is now seen to be hopelessly antiquated, and it is becoming apparent that there is no road to unity that way. The present trend of political thought strongly confirms this. Never was there a more intense and universal desire for international unity, but never was there less desire to see the world consolidated into one vast empire.

A unity must be found which will respect the freedom of nations, and permit of great variety in government and national life. This is what the world is feeling after in the League of Nations, and it seems the only road to unity and peace.

The Church must move along similar lines. This is the message of the World's Evangelical Alliance, and it is powerfully set forth in the addresses delivered to the Congress of 1923, and now published under the title of *Christian Unity and the Gospel* (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s. net).

'A momentous Christian unity already exists.' It is rooted in loyalty to Christ and His Gospel. Who is this Christ, and what is His Gospel? This Christ, says Dr. WACE, is 'the Person whose character, acts, and origin are described for us with extraordinary vividness, and with solemn asseveration of truthfulness, in the four Gospels.' A century of criticism has left that untouched. This Gospel, says Dr. Carnegie Simpson in an extremely able paper, is the *good news* of certain glorious facts 'about those great questions which are behind all our human reasonings and all our intellectual efforts.' Is God love? Is our life something with hope in it? 'No merely philosophical categories or principles can supply the answer. We want *news* about it.' That *news* is given in the Gospel. We know—what otherwise we never could have known—that God is love, because He was seen living a life of love in Jesus Christ. We know that our life has hope in it, because 'in this Christ, of whose coming we have been told, there is victory over both sin and death, and because this Christ, who is so closely and uniquely related to God that His love is a fact in the life of God, is also, or can be, through love and repentance and faith, so closely related to man that His victory over sin and death becomes a fact, and a glorious fact, in our life.'

All Christians are at one here; all are believers in the same Christ and sharers in the same salvation. Let them show this unity to the world by word and life. Instead of discussing terms of

union, let them meet and work and worship together in the Spirit of Christ. The world grows weary of discussions, and requires of us deeds. 'I would like,' says Dr. Norman Maclean, 'to see the Churches adopt a self-denying ordinance, by which they would bind themselves for the space of five years to stop talking about Church union . . . and that, in place of this weary drip of talk, we set ourselves to show each other by gracious deeds of love that the spirit of Christ is in our hearts.'

ERNST TROELTSCH died at the beginning of last year, largely as a result of war privations. Shortly before his death he had been invited, to his own great delight, to lecture in this country, at London, Oxford, and Edinburgh. He prepared a series of lectures which were to be worked up into a volume that was designed to form the conclusion of his last published work (*Der Historismus und seine Probleme*). This work, reviewed in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for December by Professor MACKINTOSH, marked a departure in his thinking, and the English lectures were to explain and apply the lines of his most recent reflection.

Unhappily the visit, to which he was looking forward with so much pleasure, was never paid. The lectures, however, were ready, and they have been carefully and piously edited and introduced by his friend, Baron von Hügel, under the title: *Christian Thought: Its History and Application* (University of London Press; 5s. net). Five lectures are included, the first on 'The Place of Christianity among the World-Religions,' the next three on 'Ethics and the Philosophy of History,' and the last on 'Politics, Patriotism, and Religion.'

The most interesting and vital of these essays is the first, which discusses virtually the question: Has Christianity any absolute validity that would make it unique and alone as a revelation of the Divine? On this point this book registers a change in Troeltsch's views. In a former work, 'The Absolute

Validity of Christianity,' Troeltsch maintained the claim of the Christian Religion to a unique place as the final revelation of God on the ground of its disclosure of God to human experience.

But certain influences were working in his mind to produce a change of conviction. A close study of history impressed him with the relativity and transitoriness of all things. The comparative study of religion emphasized this tendency of his historical reflection. These were the chief influences which led Troeltsch gradually to lay the greatest stress on the principle of individuality, or, to use a more revealing word, relativity, not merely in religion but in the whole region of truth of all kinds.

'Even the validity of science and logic seemed to exhibit, under different skies and upon different soil, strong individual differences present even in their deepest and innermost rudiments. What was really common to mankind, and universally valid for it, seemed, in spite of a general kinship and capacity for mutual understanding, to be at bottom exceedingly little, and to belong more to the province of material goods than to the ideal values of civilization.'

So it seems that only bread and butter have universal validity. Spiritual goods are all of them 'individual' or relative. The application of this to Christianity was inevitable. And the more so since the Christian religion is closely bound up with European civilization. 'From being a Jewish sect Christianity has become the religion of all Europe.' The 'validity' of Christianity is thus reduced to something relative. It is based on the fact that only through Christianity have 'we become what we are, and that only in it can we preserve the religious forces that we need.' It is valid for *us*, as other religions are valid for others.

TROELTSCH says many pleasant things about 'the mighty spiritual power and truth' in Christianity. But the plain English of his newer attitude

is just our old friend, 'every nation its own religion.' TROELTSCH tries to show, at the close of his essay, that the *practical* issues of his new standpoint are not really different from those which flow from his earlier view. In this he is unsuccessful. If, *e.g.*, the great religions are all just 'crystallizations of the thought of great races,' there can be no question of foreign missions so far as they are concerned.

Further, it follows from TROELTSCH's historical standpoint that Christianity will last only so long as European civilization lasts. Its inner development will follow the course of European changes. And what its future may be is unpredictable. Can we then find nothing absolute in religion in an objective sense which will constitute a common standard for mankind? The best TROELTSCH can think of is something 'yet to be.' No such absolute standard can be found in any of the historical religions; but 'they are all tending in the same direction, and all seem impelled by an inner force to strive upward towards some unknown final height, where alone the ultimate unity and the final objective validity can lie.' As TROELTSCH confesses, this may be 'perchance in the Beyond.' We are not much cheered by the prophecy. And it may be questioned whether, on his principles, even in 'the Beyond' there can ever be anything that is not relative.

It is pleasant to come upon a sane optimist, that is to say, one who grounds 'the hope that is in him' on solid experience, one who knows a great deal and yet is confident of the future. Dr. John R. MORR answers to such a description. He has been all over the world 'not once and again, but again and again.' No man knows the conditions of life and religion all over the earth better than he does. And here is his conclusion: 'My recent travels and other contacts with different parts of the world have convinced me that there has come a revival of interest in matters pertaining to the Christian faith. . . . It may be questioned

whether in all time there has ever been such widespread and deep interest in religion.'

Note these words 'in all time.' It is a large assertion, but the man who makes it speaks with authority. The words we have quoted are taken from Dr. MOTT's recently published book, *Confronting Young Men with the Living Christ* (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s. net). Dr. MOTT spent four months of the last year in a tour among the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada. He held retreats and conferences with all sorts of men, clerical and lay, and the addresses he delivered are published in this volume. They are what we should expect—alive with fervour and faith, and stamped with the spirit of their author as well as with his shrewd sense and insight.

One of the addresses is on 'What has happened to the Faith of Young Men throughout the World in the Past Few Years.' It is in this address that his optimism breaks out. Dr. MOTT is quite aware of the difficulties created for faith by the War. But he tells us that all over the world the faith of young men has been deepened and enriched by the experiences of those years.

Faith has been and is being *purified*. Purified

of the formal and conventional, and made more real. There is a demand for reality. And this demand takes the form of an insistent call that Christianity be actually tried, that the reign of Christ be extended over every area of life. Further, faith has been and is being *simplified*. Probably men don't believe as much as they used to believe. 'Man-made theologies and human speculations' are being scrapped. Formal and dogmatic Christianity is questioned. Questions of life are being reduced to their utmost simplicity: Is there a God? Can He help me in my struggles? How can I find Him? How may Christ become a reality to me? These are the questions men are asking.

Above all, faith has been and is being centred in Jesus Christ. Countless men to-day are being driven to the conviction that in Christ is the one hope of the world. Amid the shattering of many 'isms' the great Reality is more and more seen to shine out from the face of Jesus. Dr. MOTT tells us all this in glowing words, and he ends his analysis by saying, and saying well, that the facts to which he points are themselves a challenge to us to re-think and re-state our religious positions, but above all to apply them fearlessly to the conditions of modern life.

Education and Religion.

BY THE REV. THE HON. EDWARD LYTTELTON, D.D., D.C.L.

THE interest and importance of this subject have never been greater than they are to-day. On all sides we hear clamorous demands on 'the Churches' that they should bestir themselves and give to the rising generation that secret of life—that guiding principle of good conduct towards our neighbours—which alone can save civilization. The 'world' has tried to save itself; and, feeling its own impotence, has turned to the Christian community, confessing that all their machinery is in vain unless mankind can develop a sense of brother-

hood in place of the spirit of rivalry and grabbing which is threatening us all.

But here we are brought up short. There is something in the tone of this request which reminds us unpleasantly of the Kaiser's proclamations early in the War, when he prated before the world of the old Ally of Germany, meaning the Deity. Let it be distinctly laid down that if religion is to be taught to children, it must be for its own sake and not for its beneficial effects on society. This point requires some explanation; and till it is