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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE 'Modern Churchmen' have been vigorously stirring the ecclesiastical pool of late. Certainly there is nothing stagnant about their faith. Some of them seem to be more aggressive than others, like the Rev. W. M. PRYKE, whose challenging book is reviewed elsewhere. And some of them go much further than others in repudiating tradition. But it is always interesting, and frequently instructive, to listen to men who are confessing their faith, even when that confession takes the form of a criticism of other people's faith. And so the latest issue of the *Modern Churchman* is welcome, since it contains the statement of 'The Faith of a Modern Churchman'—the subject of the last conference of Modern Churchmen.

Many of the names of contributors of papers are well known and respected, like those of the Dean of St. Paul's, Professor Bethune-Baker, Dr. Glazebrook, the Bishop of Birmingham, Professor Sorley. Miss Maude Royden, and others. There were many voices, and they did not all say the same thing. This is natural, since the Modern Churchman claims a great deal of freedom (it is one of the points on which all are agreed). But there are certain things that seem to lie behind all the papers. All the writers would agree in emphasizing the Immanence of God as the fresh discovery of our generation rather than the Transcendence which a former generation stressed. And probably all would agree in saying that the basis of religious faith is experience, rather than authority in any form, whether Book or Church.

Perhaps the most disappointing paper was that of Canon GLAZEBROOK on 'The Bible and Modern Churchmen.' Not because of what it contained, but because of what it lacked. The question of the Authority of Scripture for many people overshadows every other just now. Are the Fundamentalists wrong? If so, why? And what ground are we to seek for our belief in the Bible as the Word of God (in any sense) if we remove that of verbal inspiration? Dr. GLAZEBROOK mentioned several reasons which lead us to value Scripture, but they are all trivial and would apply to a great deal of other literature. And when he went on to deal with the something more it proved to be nothing else than this, that the writers of the Bible were guided in their search after God and led on and up to the true vision.

This is true. But what one asks is whether there is nothing more. Why does the Bible, which is the various literature of a nation, show also a profound religious unity, which is not racial, as the unity of Russian literature is? Is there not something beyond the guidance which all seekers after truth have received? Is there not something more? Is there not something special and unique which

differentiates the Bible from other literature, and which justifies and explains that experience which readers of it in every age have had? Can the Modern Churchman, while he rejects Fundamentalism, not point to an authority which is all the Fundamentalist professes to have, and is yet independent of any theory of inspiration and consistent with any and all new knowledge which science or criticism has to offer?

When we turn to the crucial point, the Person of Christ, we find the Modern Churchmen, represented by Professor BETHUNE-BAKER, sound and satisfactory. 'I pause for a moment,' he writes, 'to emphasise the fact that Christian Faith is in One who was at once both very Man of very Man and very God of very God. . . . He was one, and the One was human and divine.' This is orthodoxy, and orthodoxy at the one point that matters. There does not seem to be anything in these papers that contradicts it, though one sometimes wonders how some of the writers can maintain it.

That is the real, and only, criticism one would offer on essays that are both helpful and enlightening. Professor B. W. BACON wrote last year in an admirable article a strong plea for a positive and evangelical message from liberal Christianity. He said the real motive behind the best kind of Fundamentalism was a fear that the Gospel of Grace was being jeopardized. A similar fear holds the minds of many Christians to-day about 'Modern Churchmen.' And we should say that one of the clamant needs of to-day is that liberal Christianity should emphasize its positive message and show that it has a gospel to preach which can save souls and is as true as the traditional faith.

This reflection is emphasized by the somewhat thin, and here and there negative, character of some of the statements of faith contained in this volume. 'Neither the Ascension nor the return, as these were understood by the primitive community, has the smallest claim to be regarded as facts by believers to-day.' 'The majority of modern scholars are of opinion that Jesus both expected and taught His return to judgment, and that the expectation has been falsified by the event. If so, then the mistake is, after all, relatively unimportant, since such teaching belonged to the husk, not to the kernel of His message to humanity . . .' 'I do not believe it is true because Jesus said it . . . but, rather, because Jesus said it, I believe in Jesus.' All this may be valid. But what the ordinary believer really wants to know is how, with it all, the 'old gospel' of the Grace of God is certified to him.

Is there not, in the circumstances of the time, the condition of the world, the religious state of our land, an urgent summons to positive statement, the proclamation of a Divine message of grace to heal the wounds of humanity? This would be an eirenicon which would draw together men of all shades of belief, and reassure many who are alarmed by the trumpets of controversy. Not that any man or body of men should cease to assert what they believe to be truth, but that, if there is a gospel, we should oftener proclaim it.

One might reasonably have supposed that, after nineteen hundred years of experience, the Church would have come to some kind of agreement about what Christianity is. Yet it is possible to-day for Christian teachers to divide into two camps on a question which is surely sufficiently fundamental: What do we mean when we speak of the gospel *of* Jesus? To use the language of the grammarians: Is *of Jesus* here the subjective or the objective genitive? Do we mean the gospel that Jesus preached, or do we mean the gospel which has Jesus for its centre?

A whole generation has passed since Professor Haussleiter of Greifswald argued that in Ro 3^{22} 'the faith of Jesus Christ' means, not, as had been generally supposed, 'our faith in Jesus Christ,' but 'the faith in God which Jesus Christ had.' Very few, however, would care to deny that Paul

represented the salvation of the individual as depending on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A not inconsiderable body of opinion which cannot be ignored is now maintaining that in this Paul was giving a new Mystery turn to the simple religion that Jesus taught.

The controversy goes back, it is claimed, to the first days of the Faith. In one aspect of it, Professor Bacon's 'Gospel of Mark' is a contribution to the study of the question. Speaking generally, Peter, he thinks, stood for the gospel that Jesus preached, Paul for the gospel about Jesus. The narrative Gospels, resting on Aramaic sources, have much to tell us of the words and works of Jesus; though, to begin with, even the narrative is limited to the work of the Servant, for the Gospels are not biographies of Jesus. The Epistles, on the other hand, written for the Greek-speaking Churches, show extraordinarily little interest in the facts of the ministry and the sayings of the minister.

It is to a systematic study of this question that the Rev. A. T. CADOUX, B.A., D.D., devotes *The Gospel that Jesus Preached and the Gospel for Today* (Allen & Unwin; 6s. 6d. net). Accepting the opinion so widely held that the Church is losing touch with men and women, Dr. CADOUX believes that the explanation is very simple. The Church is still teaching as a life-transforming truth that sin is forgiven through the death of Jesus; the sanction of this teaching is the fear of hell. Thanks largely to ourselves, men no longer fear hell; consequently our gospel has lost its appeal, and the Church that preaches this gospel is becoming impotent.

Dr. CADOUX does not propose that we reinstate hell; on the contrary, he believes that the emphasis put on personal safety in the hereafter has disastrously handicapped the power of the truth of Jesus to remake the world. Nor is it only against hell that he has a grievance; he believes that popular conceptions of miracle have given men distorted ideas of God, of Christ, and of the Christian religion. For most men, the Incarnation implies a God essentially apart from the world and above it; else, why must Jesus, if He is to be Divine, have to come *down* from heaven, and at the end to re-ascend?

The ethical element in our thought of God has been as unchristian as the metaphysical element. 'The popular God of Christendom has been the God of the Old Testament, and not often of the Old Testament at its highest. He was nominally a just God, but one who punished sin with a cruelty that would have enhanced the reputation of Nero. His love was confined to comparatively few, and the cost of it fell on some one else.'

Popular Christianity, then, teaches that our sins are forgiven through the death of Jesus. What Jesus Himself taught was, that if we forgive others, God forgives us. How, then, did the traditional Atonement doctrine arise? According to Dr. CADOUX it was, to begin with, the product of various factors in the thought of the first Jewish Christians. Their Bible was the Greek Old Testament, believed to be verbally inspired. In that Bible there was much about animal sacrifice. It was tempting to think of Jesus as a sin-offering, and to extend the idea of the sin-offering to cover wilful as well as ritual sin.

Further, the idea of a crucified Messiah was, to the Jews, a stumbling-block. The Christians, therefore, felt themselves impelled to search the Scriptures, to prove from them that it behoved the Messiah to suffer, that a true service of God involves suffering. Here, again, the sin-offering presented a natural, if unethical, interpretation of the death of Him who died, the just for the unjust. Further, the Christian Jews carried into the Church their Jewish belief in predestination. If Jesus died, it must have been that for some wise purpose God willed that He should die. Here again the conception of the vicarious sacrifice offered a tempting solution of a real difficulty.

In all this, Dr. CADOUX maintains, the Church was misrepresenting the mind both of God and of Jesus. He does not allow that the traditional 'substitutionary' theory of the Atonement is prominent in the New Testament, fairly interpreted. When Jesus said: 'It is written of the Son of Man that he should suffer,' He was not thinking of the Suffering Servant of Is 53, but of the only passage in the Old Testament in which it is written of the Son of Man that He should suffer, namely, Dn 7. This chapter is the most important for the understanding of Jesus' use of the phrase Son of Man, and especially for His teaching about the sufferings of the Son of Man.

An examination of some of the relevant passages yields the result that in essence the gospel of the New Testament books 'has a far stronger resemblance to the gospel that Jesus preached than to the traditional gospel; it was the gospel of God known in the love and life and death of Jesus. Phrases and figures that can be interpreted in support of the traditional gospel are comparatively seldom used; and when they are found, a balanced assessment of the writer's thought always convinces us that they are not a simple and direct expression of his experience of Christ.'

We have to grant that the substitution theory has often been held in foolish, unethical, and unchristian forms; that, held in these forms, it has produced unchristian views of God, and at times, though by no means always, harsh and unlovely lives. On the other hand, as interpreted by men like the late James Denney and John Struthers, it helps us to see into the meaning of sin and the heart of God as nothing else can do, and makes our teaching of an easy forgiveness seem trivial and superficial.

It may be that we have made far too much of the law court metaphor which, even for Paul, was only one of various images that he used. But is the contrast between the gospel as Dr. CADOUX conceives it, and the Lutheran revival of Pauline teaching which he calls the traditional gospel so vital as we sometimes imagine? If the Epistles have much to say of the Christ and little of Jesus of Nazareth, one reason doubtless was that in the epistolary period the gospel literature had not yet taken shape, or, at least, was not yet well enough known to be readily quoted.

Already in Paul there is evidence of the importance attached to a word of the Lord. As Dr. Morgan has said, Paul was far more influenced than he knew by the traditions of Jesus' ministry. To him the gospel about Jesus was also the gospel that Jesus preached and lived. Moreover, as Professor Bacon has shown, even the earliest of our Gospels was written largely under Pauline or Paulinist influence. From the beginning, the gospel that Jesus preached was also a gospel about Jesus.

In the New Testament, we have many answers to the question: Who was Jesus? In no section of the New Testament is there any trace of indifference to the question, any suggestion that our business is to follow Him blindly, never asking who it is we are following or why. In Hebrews, Jesus is the Captain of our salvation, going on before, yet in no book of the New Testament is there a higher doctrine of the person of the Christ.

If it is the case that sin is like a veil that shuts God out from our sight, if it is true, as Dr. CADOUX acknowledges and urges, that it is only in Jesus that the veil is torn down and we know and are known, and if, as the whole history of Christianity testifies, Jesus is revealed to us on His cross as nowhere else, then surely, however we may reinterpret it, the traditional gospel has not lost its ancient power.

The conditions of our time have brought into prominence the problem of the application of Christian principles to public life. The vast disorders and distress following upon the War and the grim uncertainties of the future have led to a growing

inclination to believe that it is worth while to give a trial to a Christian way of life, however it may find expression. All other ways of life having failed, having brought our civilization to the edge of chaos, let us give Christianity a chance, or let us at least explore its possibilities. A helpful and suggestive book dealing with this subject has been issued under the title of *Christianity in Politics*, by the Rev. H. W. Fox, D.S.O. (Murray; 5s. net). The writer seeks to show by what means domestic politics and international relationships may be permeated by the spirit of Christianity, and how the common mind of the Church may be focused and made effective.

It has been held that the Church must have no concern with political affairs, and support for this view has been sought in certain of the words of Christ, such as, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' and 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.' The individualism of the New Testament teaching has been contrasted with the nationalism of the Old Testament prophets, and it is significant that the Reformers in their struggles for religious and civil liberty took their stand largely upon the Old Testament with its many stories of valiant resistance to Kings, while their opponents pressed them with certain passages in the New Testament which seemed to point in an opposite direction. The political situation, however, in the Apostolic Age must be taken into account, and a study of the teaching of Jesus makes manifest that He never countenanced any sharp separation of the Church and the State. 'To Him, on the contrary, life was an undivided whole, with no nicely arranged pigeon-holes into which this or that action might be put away with no relation to the rest. Man was bound to God with his heart, his mind, his soul and his body equally; there was no distinction to be observed in practice between man as a social, a political, or a religious animal; each capacity that he possessed must act and interact upon the others.'

The relation of Church and State has been a burning question throughout the Christian centuries. Rome's magnificent attempt to dominate the State and dictate its policy ended in gigantic failure, and is a warning to all time against any repetition of such folly. Since the Reformation the tendency has steadily been in the direction of separation between Church and State. The strong individualism of Protestant teaching has aided this. It has been argued that 'as citizens we have no right or claim to appeal to motives or ideals specifically Christian, or to lay down lines of policy which have no meaning except from the standpoint of the Catholic Church.' This would mean that the respective functions of Church and State must be separated into parallel columns which run side by side but never meet.

It will be found that this separation is not so simple in practice as it may appear in theory. 'The task of separation was perhaps an easier matter when the rights of every individual to a share in the government of his country were either severely restricted or altogether denied. . . . An entirely different situation prevails in the modern democratic state. In that state Christian men and women, to whatever form of Christianity they may belong, have a double status and a double responsibility and opportunity. They possess rights and duties as enfranchised citizens; but they are also members of the Church of Christ, and that membership brings its own rights and responsibilities. It is impossible to separate this double set of rights and duties; there remains the difficult but necessary task of adjusting them so that they shall not be in conflict. The failure to relate the one to the other, the keeping of each in a watertight compartment, the separation of affairs into secular and sacred, has been responsible for most of the troubles which have befallen our own country as well as the continent of Europe. In consequence of this separation there have arisen, or there have been perpetuated, the idea and the practice of two different moral standards: the one which prevails in private relations, the other in the conduct of public affairs.'

Now that the disastrous effects of this policy have become apparent, the mind of the Church is awaken-

ing, and Christian men and women are earnestly searching for some better way. In these circumstances the question becomes pressing, along what line ought the Church to move in order to reach a better state of things? History and experience warn us against two possible policies. 'In the first place it must be clearly stated that the influence of the Church upon the State must not be exercised by the assumption of any of the political or administrative functions which strictly belong to Governments.' Both Rome and Geneva are warnings against the renewal of any such attempt. 'An equally mistaken line of action would be for the Church to form its own political party in the State or to ally itself with any existing party. There must never grow up in England a political party of Christian Socialists, Christian Democrats, or Christian Trade Unionists, such as are found in other European countries. The connection of the Church with the machinery of party politics would inevitably be fatal to its usefulness.' 'The influence of the Church will always be greater as it is exercised indirectly rather than directly; its first duty is that of enlightenment and education; it must set forth the principles upon which it believes that the State should act. . . . Its teaching must be accepted by a voluntary consent because it commends itself to that which is highest and best in the minds of men. In the long run progress in human affairs is only accomplished when men have become convinced of the rightness of any course of action and are prepared to pursue that course in the face of all obstacles and set-backs, confident that nothing can hinder the ultimate achievement of their aim.'

But the Church must first know her own mind if she is to express it. The Christian view in regard to the various national, international, and racial problems must, with the utmost care be elucidated and expressed. To accomplish this it is suggested that an Alliance of the Churches should be formed similar to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The movement known as C.O.P.E.C. is admirable, but it is not the Church. 'It speaks as the scribes and not with authority; its voice is that of experts, experts in Christianity, experts in some department of economics, politics, or citizenship, but they do not possess official credentials.' Means must be found whereby the mind of the Church may be formed, and, when formed may be uttered with the force of unity and authority to the State. It may be objected that the Church as such has not expert knowledge of political problems, but the answer is that within her membership she has all the experts she needs if only she will set them to work. 'Christianity has not come to such a parlous state in this country that all the experts are outside its borders. The contrary is nearer to truth. But owing partly to a conventional and falsely conceived reticence in matters of religion, partly to the unnatural and equally false idea of the part which religion has to play in the life of the State, the reports of experts on matters of vital national importance have been singularly void of reference to any bearing which Christian principles may have upon the subject of the reports. . . . So long as this divorce between the functions of the Church and State is perpetuated, to call England a Christian nation is a contradiction in terms, and displays a lack of appreciation of realities.'

In the realm of international politics work of a similar kind is urgently needing to be done. The League of Nations as at present constituted lacks a soul. 'Objection is not taken to the fact that the name of God, as the source of all Wisdom, Fellowship and Peace, finds no place in the Covenant; that would have been of very little importance if the thing for which the name is but a symbol had been there. . . . What matters far more is the fact that the Versailles Conference, in framing the machinery of the League, made no attempt to call to the aid of world peace the religious forces of the world.' It has formed a Commission on Intellectual Co-operation, why not a Commission on Religious Co-operation? And this Commission might well be extended to include representatives of other religions, for the Christian Church of to-day sees in these religions a true seeking after God, and aims

at leading those who practise them to the fulfilment of their own aspirations and the satisfaction of their own desires in the person of Jesus Christ. In this way it is certain that the Christian Church as a whole would be rallied to the League of Nations in far greater strength than it is at present. 'Christianity is not dead, its potential strength has lain dormant largely for lack of opportunity. Given the opportunity, there is no limit to its power for peace; add to the force of Christianity the forces of other religions and a new era might be acclaimed as dawning upon the world.'

The Witness of the Baptist to Jesus.

By the Reverend J. O. F. Murray, D.D., Selwyn College, Cambridge.

Wendt,[1] in his 'Gospel according to St. John,' raised the problem of the nature and significance of the witness of the Baptist to Jesus in a form which merits closer attention than it has as yet, so far as I know, received in England or Scotland. It formed part of his examination of the historical value of the narrative portion of the Fourth Gospel. He contended that the stress laid by the Evangelist on the evidential value of the witness of the Baptist to Jesus as his appointed Successor was demonstrably unhistorical, on the ground that it was inconsistent with the evidence of our primary authorities for the life of Jesus, St. Mark and 'the Logia.' He accounted for it, as the development of an idealization of the relation between Jesus and John, the beginnings of which can already be observed in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

According to Wendt, the Baptist in St. Mark simply prophesies the advent of a 'Mightier than he.' He does not say that John saw any sign at the Baptism of Jesus, or that he bore any witness to Jesus on the strength of it. He finds a confirmation of this interpretation of the silence of St. Mark in the account in the Logia (Mt 11^{2-19}, Lk 7^{18-34}) of the mission sent by John to Jesus from prison, asking, 'Art thou he that should come? or are we to look for another?' He regards it as inconceivable that the Baptist, if he had seen the sign, could ever after have been in doubt; or that the eulogy which Jesus pronounced on the Baptist, after the departure of the messengers, could be anything but a grateful acknowledgment of a dawning faith.

This position merits and will repay close examination. The inquiry will enable us to test on a crucial point the historical value of the Fourth Gospel—an issue which cannot be foreclosed by purely *a priori* considerations. It ought at the same time to throw a welcome light on the place of the Baptist in the religious history of the world. In conducting our inquiry it will be well to consider separately the evidence of (1) St. Mark; (2) the non-Marcan document commonly called 'The Logia,' which is assumed to have been in the hands of St. Matthew and St. Luke; (3) passages peculiar to St. Matthew; and (4) passages peculiar to St. Luke.

We begin, then, with St. Mark. The Gospel opens with a brief description of the Baptist and his preaching, especially his prophecy of the coming of one mightier. In so doing he follows the earliest Christian tradition (Ac 1^{22} 10^{37} 13^{29}). According to a perfectly possible construction of his opening sentence, he even describes the Baptist's appearance as 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.' He proceeds at once (1^{9-11}) to the Baptism of Jesus, the Voice, and the Dove. But, strangely enough, the Baptist passes out of sight. We are not told whether he saw the Vision and heard the Voice, or not. No mention is made of any public testimony borne by him on the strength of it. Certainly, if the narrative stood alone in the Gospel, it would have been impossible to maintain, on the evidence of St. Mark, that John recognized in Jesus the Fulfiller of his prophecy. This silence is, however, at best only negative evidence for the assertion that, according to St. Mark, the Baptist bore no testimony to Jesus. And this interpretation of his silence is really precluded by the evidence,

[1] Eng. Tr., T. & T. Clark, 1903.