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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

It is the simple truth to say that the volume entitled *Science, Religion and Reality*, published at 12s. 6d. by the Sheldon Press, is one of the most important and valuable books that have appeared in recent times. The 'man in the street' will no doubt pass it by, as he passes by much else that it would be good for him to know; but no one who is really interested in the problems of modern thought, and least of all those who have had a scientific or philosophic training, can afford to pass it by: for it courageously grapples with the perpetually insistent problem of the reconciliation of science and religion.

Of course there is a kind of reconciliation in which such a volume as this can be in no way interested; it has nothing to do, for example, with re-establishing the scientific credit of the Creation story in Gn 1. 'It is too late in the day,' as Professor Clement WEBB says, 'to rehabilitate the credit of the book of Genesis as a faithful record of the origin of the world and of mankind, or that of the New Testament eschatology as an accurate forecast of their future destiny.' The time is past, as the Earl of BALFOUR reminds us in his prefatory essay, when theologians can found their geology on Genesis. The reconciliation which this volume seeks is vastly deeper and more vital than that; and this reconciliation Dean INGE assures us, basing his judgment upon a useful study of the book before

us, is much nearer than it seemed to be fifty years ago. This is indeed reassuring.

The volume is a collection of essays, all of them thorough, and some of them long and elaborate enough to constitute a book by themselves, written by thinkers who, however they differ in detail, are alike in this, that they are all masters within their own department. Dr. MALINOWSKI deals exhaustively with Magic, Science and Religion, Dr. SINGER with the Historical Relations of Religion and Science, Professor ALIOTTA of Naples with Science and Religion in the Nineteenth Century, Professor EDDINGTON with the Domain of Physical Science, Mr. NEEDHAM, the general editor, with Mechanistic Biology and the Religious Consciousness, Principal OMAN with the Sphere of Religion, Dr. William BROWN with Religion and Psychology, and Professor Clement WEBB with Science, Christianity and Modern Civilization. Not the least important chapters of this important book are the attractive essay of the Earl of BALFOUR which introduces it, and the powerful chapter by Dean INGE which concludes it.

This summary is sufficient to show what a feast of good things is here provided for the thoughtful man, and he will be a person of very unusual culture who will be equally at home in all the chapters. Even the versatile and accomplished Dean INGE has

to confess that there are some subjects dealt with in this book with which he has only a superficial acquaintance; but though we shall all be taken out of our depth at some point, and most of us at many points, it is something to see some of the ablest minds of our generation playing upon the highest of problems. _____

It is good to find so much fundamental agreement on points vital to the religious man. One of the writers confesses that he is more convinced than ever that religion is the most important thing in life and that it is essential to mental health, another that neither philosophy nor science can take its place, that in prayer we are speaking to One who hears us, this being 'the strongest argument that the religious quest is not in vain,' and that the life of devotion carries its own evidence with it. But there is naturally many an utterance that will challenge some minds to disagreement. Not all will agree, for example, with the writer who maintains that in middle life God becomes for us less an object than an atmosphere; or with the other writer who argues that 'at the end it looks as if we shall have to dismiss individuality with other aspects of existence as appearance and not reality. It is very doubtful,' he goes on, 'whether we shall be able to preserve individuality as an ultimate value in the scheme of things. . . . In the end, even personality must go, because in the universe there is no room for merely separate persons.' _____

Questions of many kinds are touched upon from different angles—miracle, mysticism, the personality of God. On miracle some of the wisest and most trenchant things are said by the Earl of BALFOUR. So far from dismissing miracles as things that 'never have happened and never can happen,' he drily remarks that 'the intrusion of an unexpected and perhaps anomalous element into the company of more familiar factors in world development may excite suspicion, but it does not of necessity violate anything more important than our preconceived expectations.' From the feeling of timelessness which accompanies the mystical experience Dr.

William BROWN suggestively argues that 'it is quite conceivable that we *are* passing beyond the limits of time, and proving, to ourselves at any rate, that time is appearance and not reality, and that immortality is not something we have to wait for at the end of this life, but something we can and do achieve in varying degrees while still living this life.' (But can there be degrees of immortality?) Of the personality of God, Principal OMAN has this to say: 'There is only one sound reason for saying that it (*i.e.* the sacred reality) is personal, and this is, that the more we have stood on our own feet and thought and felt and acted for ourselves, the more the whole universe has responded to us.' _____

The writers differ sometimes on fundamental points: one will tell us, for example, that we have no choice but to acquiesce provisionally in an unresolved dualism, another that the dualism of Nature and supernature is intolerable to science, and that since the attempt to explain life materialistically and mind mechanically appears to have failed, nothing remains but to explain Nature spiritually. But despite such disagreements, the book may be described as a sustained plea for the recognition of a spiritual element in, or the spiritual quality of, the universe. Mind is not explained by electrical sub-atoms. If it be true that, so long as we speak merely as psychologists, we are tending to leave out the truly religious attitude altogether, it is, if possible, even more true, so long as we speak merely as physicists. _____

It is no disparagement to the other contributors to the volume to say that the chapter written by Dean INGE will be read with peculiar interest. And this for several reasons: partly because he sums up and criticises with his customary independence several of the contributions of the other writers, partly because in his trenchant criticism of Naturalism he makes a characteristic contribution of his own, and partly because he has contrived to impress his personality upon this contribution with perhaps even more than usual vividness. Apart from his penetrating philosophic judgments, ex-

pressed with great lucidity and power, there is much caustic and some humorous criticism to regale the reader and lighten the grave argument.

Illustrations of the caustic temper occur in his criticism of progress, to which he has given expression in earlier work. There has been very little intrinsic progress, he assures us, for twenty thousand years—the belief in a natural law of progress was the great superstition of the last century. Characteristic, too, is the sentence, ‘Galileo was intimidated and persecuted: this was only to be expected’—a sentence involving an attitude not unlike that of another sentence, where he says, ‘It is even possible to speculate (though I should not go so far myself) whether the religion of Christ might not be a greater power in the world, if its professional custodians were removed.’

Nor is a certain grim humour lacking. In answer to the anthropologists who maintain that religion is to be explained not in terms of the devotional life and the ethical influence in which it issues, but of the barbarous beliefs and customs in which it begins, he reminds us, drawing upon an analogy from embryology, that ‘it tells us nothing about Newton to know that he once had a tail.’ And he reminds us again that ‘it is quite unnecessary to go to Australia or Central Africa to find the savage; he is our next-door neighbour. The mentality of the Stone Age exists on our platforms and in our pulpits.’

But, besides the caustic and humorous comments that are scattered about the essay, there is much serious and solid thinking, which, in the main, takes the form of a criticism (i) of the effect of the Reformation upon scientific progress, (ii) of the anti-intellectualist movement and, (iii) more particularly, of Naturalism.

The Reformation, he believes, not only checked but obscured the scientific progress which had begun in the century which preceded it. It was neither Catholicism nor Protestantism, but the state

of war between them, when propaganda became more important than truth, that destroyed the hopes of the humanists, and created the fatal rift between religion and science which we are now trying to close.

Again, the anti-intellectualists, whose position, of course, is thoroughly intelligible as a reaction against an intellectualism which did less than justice to feeling, imagination and instinct, come in for some trenchant and well-deserved criticism. Their position seems to the Dean to lead to sceptical subjectivism. The objection to the position could not be more incisively put than in the words, ‘A philosophy which has no place for the intelligence is a contradiction in terms.’

But perhaps the Dean appears at his best in his criticism of Naturalism, which he describes as ‘a poverty-stricken and ultimately self-contradictory philosophy.’ He rejects its attempt to describe everything in quantitative terms: life, mind, and spirit are irreducible to quantitative categories of physics, chemistry, and mathematics. He goes on to develop the case for the spiritual interpretation of the world, which rests, he argues, on the belief that the tendency to attach values to all experience is an avenue leading to objective truth. Every religious view of the world demands that values have an objective existence, and ‘the ultimate values known to us are goodness, truth, and beauty.’ It is helpful to see this argument, which Dean INGE has used before, set in the large context of this book.

We have no space to deal more extensively with this enriching book. Suffice it to remind ourselves of the seriousness of the problem which it so courageously and honestly faces. ‘Those Churchmen’—if we may quote Dean INGE again—‘who airily declare that there is no longer any conflict between Christianity and science are either very thoughtless or are wilfully shutting their eyes; there is a very serious conflict.’ His own view is that the materialistic monism of the last century is giving place to a spiritualistic monism which is still

in a very tentative stage. But whatever the ultimate solution may be, we shall agree with the Earl of BALFOUR that 'we are spiritual beings and must take account of spiritual values.'

One of the most acute thinkers in the Church of England at present is Dr. W. R. MATTHEWS. He has just published a very useful book, *The Gospel and the Modern Mind* (Macmillan; 7s. 6d. net), in which he analyses the religious situation in our day, describes the 'modern mind' in its attitude to science and religion, and restates the gospel in its permanent essentials in a fashion that will make it acceptable to modern men and women. Needless to say the book is fresh, pointed, broad-minded, and yet loyal to the facts of the New Testament and to Christian experience.

In the chapter 'The Trinity in Human Experience' there is an extraordinarily interesting piece of Biblical exposition with a modern application. The passage expounded is from Ps 55: 'As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, morning, and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.' More correctly this should read, 'As for me, I am calling upon Elohim; and Jahweh is answering me,' and so on. It may be assumed that the writer of the Psalm is deliberately using two different names for God.

If that be so, then he clearly meant to bring together two slightly different ideas. For the two names denote two different aspects or conceptions of the Divine Being. The name Elohim is probably connected with the oldest word for God in the Semitic group of languages, and has as its root-meaning simply power. It emphasizes in the Old Testament the power aspect of the Divine nature. Elohim is the Almighty, the Unapproachable, the Transcendent Being who dwells above all that is. Perhaps the best equivalent is the Eternal.

The other name, Jahweh, has a different implica-

tion. It is the personal name for the God of Israel. It denotes God in His relation to His chosen people. He speaks to them through prophets and in historical events. He is the God of the Covenant, of History, the personal God who dwells among men.

It is helpful to consider also the situation of the psalmist. He is in deep distress. His hopes and aspirations have failed, and the cause with which he identified himself has been crushed. Godless oppressors rule the Holy City and disillusionment and despair oppress him. 'Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.' It is out of this despair that the cry to Elohim rises. He lifts up his hand to the Eternal. Is there no purpose in the world? Is there no meaning in life? But it is from Jahweh that the answer comes. The Divine response and reassurance come from the Covenant-God, out of the midst of human life and history, through the personalities of other human beings.

This is the typical religious situation. Frequently it is made a reproach to faith that men find God because they cannot get satisfaction out of life. The gibe is not well founded, but the assertion is true all the same. We turn to the unseen world when this world gets beyond our control. The passage from religion of the derivative kind to that of first-hand originality is always through disillusionment. 'Before I was troubled I went wrong.' The perception of the hollowness of the aims and ambitions which have formerly filled the life seems to be a necessary moment in the religious consciousness. There are countless illustrations of this. Buddha is one. Augustine is another. Man always calls to God 'out of the deep.' Whatever be its explanation, the *fact* of evil is the starting-point of religion.

Our psalmist called to Elohim. This, again, is true to experience. What men want is to reach the ultimate ground of existence. Nothing but reality

can finally satisfy the religious impulse. The thirst out of which it arises cannot be slaked except by that which is final. Hence the constant reflection on the nature of God. If religion ceases to criticise the conception of God it dies. It must be constantly stripping off the veils of mythology that it may draw nearer to the ultimate Truth and Reality.

Then comes the third 'moment' in religious experience, the response of the Divine to the cry of the human soul. It is Jahweh who sends it. It comes through human life and history, mediated through human personalities. All genuine religion is revealed religion; that is to say, we can trace it back to some alleged disclosure of the Divine. The religious type of revelation is through inspired men. From the beginning the revelation of the Divine has been found in human life, human experience, human personality. Thus the Christian gospel is in line with a conviction which runs through the entire history of religion.

Christianity is the culmination of the belief, begun perhaps in ignorant superstition, that God is revealed in human personality. It is a profound mistake to think that the Christian revelation is a body of infallible truths about God or a supernaturally guaranteed system of doctrine. The Christian faith is not that God disclosed interesting philosophical propositions about Himself, but that He revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

We call unto Elohim. Why? Why is it that the human animal alone cannot be contented with his earthly home and seems infected with this strange 'nostalgia of the Eternal'? The religious explanation has at least the merit of really explaining. It is that man seeks the Eternal because in fact he belongs there. There is a Divine spirit in man which will not allow him to rest in anything lower than the highest. And to this cry of the soul comes the assurance and revelation from the God who reveals Himself on the plane of our own life

always, in prophets and psalmists, in human experience, and finally in the Word made flesh.

A series of 'Papers in Modern Churchmanship,' written by various scholars of the Church of England, edited by the Rev. C. F. RUSSELL, M.A., and published at threepence each, is being issued by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. The papers all deal with matters of first-rate importance, and they represent, each within the compass of fourteen pages, a succinct and admirable statement of the modern position with regard to the topics which they severally treat.

It is a pity that such papers should be necessary. Most of the opinions here presented have been before the world for thirty years or so, some of them for very much longer, and they are, or ought to be, a commonplace among educated religious men. But unfortunately such papers are, and for long will continue to be, necessary; partly because the religious world of England reads very little theology even when it is attractively written, and partly because a new generation is always arising, to whom opinions and conclusions that are familiar and even commonplace to scholars, are necessarily strange and unfamiliar.

So we welcome these popularly written papers, the more eagerly as the editor has cast his net wide, and there is variety enough to suit every type of theological interest and religious taste. The subjects dealt with are not only Biblical, they cover the religious outlook on life and its problems. Canon GLAZEBROOK, for example, discusses the ever-pressing and ever-insoluble *Problem of Suffering and Evil*.

It is a very frank discussion, and the Canon is too wise to suppose that he has found an entirely satisfactory solution. He knows how hard and disconcerting are the facts that have perplexed the minds and broken the hearts and crushed the lives of men from time immemorial; but what he pro-

fesses to do he does well. He simply seeks to clear away some misunderstandings so that the problem may be seen in its true proportions, with its horror not indeed abolished but mitigated and diminished.

And first he reminds us that pain, however we may resent it, is in fact the foundation of half the virtues which adorn mankind, and he appropriately quotes the words of Keats to a friend, that 'the world is the valley of soul making.' The sternness of Nature and the discipline of the society into which each man is born, offer a fine field for the growth of character. Men react upon these things in virtue of their freedom; and the price of the freedom with which God has endowed us is that possible misuse of it which is responsible for so much of the evil and misery that are in the world. We cannot have it both ways: if we are free, we are free to go wrong.

The familiar argument will commend itself to all—much more than the dogmatic statement into which the Canon suffers himself to glide, when he says: 'Not forced, but led, every free will must in the end find its fulfilment in harmony with the will of God.' He may cherish this hope, it is a worthy hope; but he cannot know. The will which is free to resist, and does resist here, may conceivably resist elsewhere.

The discussion of *The Atonement*, by Mr. Douglas WHITE, M.A., M.D., will evoke much interest. It is a bold restatement of that great doctrine in thoroughly modern terms. He frankly admits that the explanation he offers of God's forgiveness has nothing to do with the formal theories of the past. 'They mainly deal with satisfaction to God; this is concerned with revelation of God.' Lacking nothing in candour, he maintains that expiation is a myth, in so far as it implies any alteration in the attitude of God towards men effected by the sufferings of Christ.

What Jesus did was to reveal the attitude of God to sinful man, an attitude which always was and always will be the same. The God revealed by

Jesus is a suffering God, sensitive, as Love must necessarily be, to the misdeeds of men. There is no need, and no place, for expiation, as commonly understood, in the purpose of Jesus, for vengeance has no place in the nature of God.

The treatment of *Inspiration*, by the Rev. T. H. BINDLEY, D.D., is on broad lines, the inspiration of the Bible being regarded as falling under the larger question of inspiration in general. Infallibility is rightly dismissed as being no necessary consequence of inspiration, as indeed being neither a primitive nor even a mediæval belief: it was really the consequence of the Reformation attack on the supposed infallibility of the Church of Rome. *Inspiration*, according to Dr. BINDLEY, is 'that quality which stirs the divinest thing in us, which touches those chords in our inmost self which thrill to the Divine Breath.'

This is pretty vague, but perhaps in such a region it is difficult to be definite, and it is well to remember that the Church at large has never defined the exact nature of the inspiration of the Bible. The fact has been accepted, but fortunately no theory of it or of its implications has been bound upon the consciences of believers; and a useful enough description of the inspiration of the prophets is given by Dr. BINDLEY when he says that 'it is a special illumination that influences them along the lines of their own special interests'—those interests being the great themes of human life considered in the light of God.

A thoughtful discussion of *Religion and Science* is contributed by the Rev. J. C. HARDWICK, M.A., B.Sc. He defines religion broadly as a man's attitude to life, and admits that this is bound to be affected by his mental outlook as determined by the systematized knowledge to which we give the name of Science. But he wisely maintains that the conflict between these two need seldom be aggravated, for a man's attitude to life changes much more slowly than his store of scientific knowledge. We may find, for example, that our own attitude

to life has been tolerably expressed by the writer of the Book of Job, though our conception of the order of the world is doubtless very different from his.

Still, after making every necessary allowance, there is doubtless a conflict between much that the modern scientifically trained man believes and some things, at any rate, which the Bible teaches or seems to imply. At this point Mr. HARDWICK raises the interesting question whether the Christian religion is necessarily bound up with miraculous 'interventions' interfering with the ordinary course of Nature, and he emphasizes the modern tendency to find the Divine rather in the even flow of Nature than in inexplicable or perplexing interpositions. And this leads him to the important statement that 'scientific historians seem to be reaching the conclusion that the evidence for the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Jesus is inadequate—that is to say, inadequate to carry conviction home to one who has no religious or philosophical presuppositions.'

Fortunately one of these questions, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, is dealt with in another pamphlet by the Rev. T. F. ROYDS, B.D. After twenty years' study of the question he offers a temperate statement, which no one who knows the facts will be inclined to dispute. 'It is not true,' he says, 'that the evidence for the Virgin Birth is all contained in the first two chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke. There is a good deal of evidence outside these chapters, but it is nearly all on the other side.' St. Mark, St. John, St. Paul, the Acts, the Epistle to the Hebrews make no allusion to it whatever; further, he quotes many passages which 'cannot fairly be reconciled with belief in the Virgin Birth' at all.

This being so, he is surely justified in asserting that 'no one has any moral right to treat as certain what careful criticism has shown to be beset with doubt.' But he is not so certain to carry the same conviction when he suggests that we should 'say the Creed as the historical expression of the Church's corporate faith, making such mental reservations as we all make when reading certain portions of Scripture'—such reservation as we make, for example, when we recite the clauses affirming the Ascension and the Descent into Hell. Whether we welcome this suggestion or not, it is at least worthy of being considered by those who believe that the preservation and recitation of an ancient creed, and the continuity of the Church which comes to visible expression in such practices, are worth while.

Canon KENNETT deals usefully with *The Stories of Genesis*, reminding his readers that, though many of them are not exactly adapted for devotional reading, they are of enormous importance for an intelligent appreciation of the religious development of Israel, and that, for us, their real importance lies not so much in the facts they record as in the truths they enshrine. He concludes his argument with an interesting discussion of the famous verse, 'He believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.'

All these papers are courageous and suggestive, and, in the treatment of their respective topics, they present the modern position in a nutshell. In them the non-theologically minded can discover, with the minimum of trouble, the attitude of liberal theologians to the Bible, religion, and life.