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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

SINCE the premature death of Dr. Denney left a great blank in the ranks of the champions of educated conservatism, one of those to whom we look to carry on his work is the Principal of Hackney and New College, London. Yet we are not certain that Dr. GARVIE would altogether thank us for our confidence expressed in this particular manner. In *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead* (Hodder & Stoughton; 16s. net), on fourteen out of the four hundred and eighty-one pages he has references to Dr. Denney; in one of them, in connexion with Dr. Denney's exegesis of Ro 8<sup>9-11</sup>, he speaks of his 'characteristic impatience, and almost intolerance to ideas not congenial to his own type of piety, evangelical but not mystical,' and decides that he is 'not accurate either in his exegesis or his theology.' We shall never now have the pleasure of hearing Dr. Denney's reply.

Perhaps this extract is less characteristic of Dr. GARVIE than a certain disarming and almost Pauline naïveté, as when he tells us in the Preface that 'he has not only read theologically but also lived religiously through the changes of the last forty years.' He informs us, and it is self-evident, that he has done much independent study of the New Testament sources; so that when he twice quotes without comment Rev 13<sup>8</sup> as saying that 'The Lamb hath been (was) slain from the foundation of the world,' we assume that he adjudges

this to be the correct translation of the true reading.

Dr. GARVIE moves with easy mastery through the immense mass of material he must have read on the many subjects of Christian dogmatics discussed in this volume; some of them still of living interest, some of them now relegated to the professionals and the historians. The aim of the book is to present an instructive statement of the Christian faith for the thought and the life of to-day, the keynote of the volume being, in the author's words, 'through fact to faith.' The incisive historical account of Atonement theories begins with Paul and Marcion, and ends with Dr. Denney. The author insists that neither the Atonement nor the Incarnation is fully intelligible in separation one from the other.

The critical position of the volume is indicated by the attitude to the Resurrection of Jesus. The appearances of the Risen Jesus were not subjective hallucinations or spiritual manifestations. To substitute the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul for the Hebrew idea of the complete restoration of the human personality is to juggle with words. There was no identity between the physical attributes of the body of Jesus in the days of His flesh and those of His risen body; yet the latter was a real body; it was the same person with a

changed body. We take it that Dr. GARVIE accepts the fact of the empty grave. He is inclined, though with no great confidence, to accept the Virgin Birth, but assumes there is some mistake in Martha's account of the condition of the body of Lazarus (Jn 11<sup>39</sup>).

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In one aspect of it, the book is a contribution to the problem of the reunion of the Churches, and the author would be well content if the apostolic benediction were taken as the basis of the creed of the reunited Church. The three sections into which the exposition of the doctrine of the Godhead is divided are headed respectively, 'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 'The Love of God,' and 'The Community of the Holy Spirit.' With such a creed the Church of Jesus Christ might well find room for a representative and constitutional episcopacy (though not for that 'corruption of episcopacy'—prelacy), for presbyterial councils and for 'congregational liberty in the essential functions of the Church, the preaching of the gospel, the observation of the sacraments, and the administration of discipline,' for which last function a less misleading term is 'the cure of souls.'

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If we are ever to find a Christian creed that will be something more than a divisive formula, we must first define our attitude to the old creeds. The weight of learning and the acute analysis which Dr. GARVIE brings to bear on the historic creeds make clear once more that their absorption in abstruse metaphysics disqualifies them as working creeds for us who love to call ourselves 'the modern man.' It is indeed something of a puzzle for us that for centuries Christian thinkers imagined that the kind of discussion that went on in the schools—on the Person of Christ, for example—had some vital relation to the Christian religion, and that some even made man's immortal salvation depend on acceptance of the right formula.

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'From the standpoint of Christian faith the creeds are profoundly disappointing as regards both what is included and what is excluded.' Dr.

GARVIE shows how, in the course of their formation, the Church had to find new terms or adapt old terms to meet the new requirements of Christian thought, especially since ancient thought had no proper conception of personality; and much ambiguity resulted. For example, the same term came to have different meanings as applied to the Godhead and as applied to Christ. Thus, 'hypostasis' and 'ousia' were originally identical in meaning ('substantia' or substance). Gradually, however, 'ousia' was reserved for the unity of the 'Godhead,' 'hypostasis' for the unity of the 'Person' of Christ.

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If we translate 'hypostasis' by 'person' and 'ousia' by 'substance,' then in the type of thought represented by the so-called Athanasian creed, we are required, on peril of our salvation, to believe that in the one 'substance' of the Godhead there are three 'persons,' and that in the one 'Person,' Jesus Christ, there are two 'substances' or natures. But if by 'person' in the first statement we mean the same as in the second, then we announce our belief in three Gods. If by 'substance' in the second statement we mean the same as in the first, we declare our acceptance of two Christs.

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The old categories of 'substance' and 'subsistence,' 'nature' and 'person,' have had their day; or rather, we have to revise our conception of personality. Even more important than to find a correct formula for Jesus is to have a Christian thought of God; and this we get, not from Greek philosophy or Hebrew theology, but from the teaching of Jesus. Far from shrinking with the Council of Chalcedon from the 'monstrous doctrine' that the Divine nature of the Only-begotten can suffer, we maintain that a God who does not suffer in us and with us can never be a God for the people of our time.

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Dr. GARVIE is not afraid to ascribe personality to God, even if by personality we mean the conscious subject, thinking, feeling, and willing, self-consciously aware of these activities, and seeking

in them self-satisfaction, self-expression, and self-realization. God is not the 'unlimited' of the philosopher, nor the 'limited' of the popular writer, but the 'self-limited'; He is not the unrelated, but the self-related. He limits Himself that He may fulfil Himself; His 'kenosis' (Ph 2<sup>7</sup>) is His 'plerosis' (Eph 1<sup>23</sup>).

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The Incarnation was but the consummation of the long process of creative evolution. God was ever revealing Himself more and more fully, until in man a creature arose, capable of receiving God's revelation in the form of ideals, and of realizing these ideals in a personal relation, conscious and voluntary. The human development was complete when Jesus knew Himself as Son of God and knew God as Father, and perfectly did the Father's will in intimate communion with Him.

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Dr. GARVIE is a whole-hearted believer, not in a Duality, but in a Trinity. There has been a tendency to identify the Holy Spirit with the living Christ, a tendency which some think they have detected in the Apostle Paul as well as in more recent writers; but Dr. GARVIE makes an absolute cleavage between them. The Holy Spirit is not a Person in our sense of the word; only the Triune God is personal; yet as Spirit, dwelling and working in us, He is just as personal as God or Christ. It was a misfortune that the early Church transferred to the Logos the functions of the Spirit, for they are not the same.

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The term Logos may be applied to the pre-existent Son in the Godhead; the term Christ should be reserved for the historical, personal God-Man. When the Church forgot the Spirit, she became less susceptible to His influence; and in our own day, if we had more experience of the working of the Spirit, we should have a more intelligent understanding of His nature. The Church is the community of the Spirit; and whether we open our eyes and respond to His leading or not, He is ever active in conversions, in revivals, and in the Christian life of faith and hope and love.

This latest product of the pen of one who has long been recognized as a leading Christian thinker is suffused throughout with the earnest purpose to convince the educated man of our day, in language and by arguments that he can understand, that God is continuing and completing His revelation and redemption of man in Jesus Christ by the Spirit.

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Whatever may be said of the modern novelists and dramatists, it cannot be said that they have neglected the sex problem. Their contribution to the solution of it has often been anything but edifying or elevating, but at any rate they have not ignored it. The Church, for reasons thoroughly intelligible, if not quite adequate, has said little about the problem: in Christian circles it has been more or less taboo. But at last the long conspiracy of silence has been broken; and not the least significant of the signs that we are living in a new world, and that Christian men—if not yet the Church as a whole—are cultivating a more adventurous spirit, is the appearance of the Rev. John W. Couatts's book on *The Church and the Sex Question* (James Clarke; 6s. net).

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The aim of this volume, as defined by the writer, is 'an elucidation of the urgent questions which arise in connection with the drive of Love, with its source and beginning in the sexual constitution of the human race, with its flowering into marriage and the life of the family, with its decay and disillusionment, resulting in the rupture of the life of the home, and with its function in the life of the Christian Church as the appointed means for moral pressure and recovery. Men want to know what the Church of Christ makes of these truly vital questions, and until it gives an answer at once courageous and unequivocal the Church will fail in interpreting the mind of Christ to this generation.'

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No one will deny that Mr. COUATTS's answer is 'at once courageous and unequivocal,' and in it he deals in successive chapters with all the vital aspects of

the question—with sex, marriage, divorce, birth control, and Church discipline. Throughout the discussion, which is as delicate and wise as it is courageous, we feel that we are listening to the expression of a genuinely Christian mind.

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Mr. COURTS begins by tracing the influences that have ended the policy of evasion and led to the greater frankness that now prevails in the treatment of such questions. The feminist movement, of which Nora in Ibsen's 'Doll's House' is one expression, the Report of the Venereal Diseases Commission, the new Psycho-analysis, and, above all, the War with its subversion of so many age-long traditions and conventions and its furnishing to women of hitherto undreamt-of opportunities for service and self-expression—all these things have created a totally new atmosphere of unconventionality and candour, within which problems which were once handled, if handled at all, with infinite discretion and timidity are now treated with a wholesome fearlessness.

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Upon this welter of emancipated discussion it is peculiarly necessary that the mind of Jesus be brought to bear, and this is the business of the Christian Church. Here Mr. COURTS succinctly expounds the attitude of Jesus to woman; and he warns against the easy misunderstanding of the words of Jesus about those who have become eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, which are perverted when they are understood as a recommendation of celibacy; 'but they do undoubtedly carry quite clearly a condemnation of the idea which alone lends plausibility to much modern writing and thinking, that before the insatiable demands of the sex instinct all other considerations must give way.'

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The conviction is expressed that children and adolescents ought to be wisely prepared in school and church to face the problems which in the end cannot be evaded, but that in school instruction ought never to be given by teachers specially introduced for the purpose; and Mr. COURTS, with the courage of his convictions, records that it has

been his own practice to deal faithfully with such subjects in mixed classes of adolescents, where his experience has invariably been that his teaching was listened to with an almost strained attention which attested the feeling that the subject was one of vast and immediate importance to their lives.

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Very suggestive are the writer's remarks about the enormous value of such institutions as the Primary Department and the Girl Guides not only to the members, but to the leaders themselves, encouraging as they do the other-regarding instincts, on which the welfare of society so largely depends; and he makes the interesting suggestion that the Church should co-operate in social work with local authorities by placing at their disposal the services of young women who might be willing to devote such leisure as they had to helping over-burdened mothers, over-worked district nurses, and the like.

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The chapter on marriage contains much wholesome and necessary teaching to an age in which the ideal of a normally indissoluble marriage has been passionately challenged, and in which free love is wantonly advocated, at any rate in literature, without any real attempt to face the consequences to the stability of society or any real consideration for the interests of the children who may be involved. Novels and plays too frequently give a thoroughly perverted and even poisonous view of marriage, but 'it will take more than Ibsen and H. G. Wells to destroy what Jesus Christ has blessed.'

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Even more interesting is the chapter on divorce. Here Mr. COURTS calls attention to the Continental practice, which has much to be said for it, of a double ceremony of marriage—the civil ceremony which binds the parties to the observance of those duties which the State has the right to demand for its own protection, to be followed, if desired, by a religious ceremony for those who sincerely desire to conform their lives to the ideals of Christ and His Church. Much of the trouble in this country comes from people disingenuously seeking the services of

the Church who have no desire whatever to achieve Christian marriage. A marriage which deserves this name is only possible as between a Christian man and woman; and Mr. COURTS goes to the root of the matter when he boldly suggests that 'the first and most obvious step for the Church to take in dealing with the question of divorce is to find out what proportion of those who desire marriage really intend to aim at a Christian ideal.'

Christians have the duty of promoting the Christian ideal of marriage, as of other things, among their fellow-citizens, but they have not the right to impose the Christian demand upon them by law; that is, they have not the right to meet proposals for the reform of the divorce law by mere obstructive tactics. No interest of morality would be served by making marriage indissoluble 'for those whose marriage has become intolerable to them and injurious to the welfare of society.' But considering what the marriage tie means to society, divorce should never be easy; and in the case of those whose unions have been sanctioned by the Church, it should be recognized as the right and duty of the Church to pronounce upon the time at which amendment seems to be hopeless, and only then to give liberty to its members to have recourse to this tragic remedy.

The difficult and perplexing subject of birth control is handled with much skill, and there is real illumination in it. Mr. COURTS keeps steadily to the front the importance of safeguarding the spiritual interests involved. He is not afraid to cross swords with Dean Inge, and he reminds us that not a few men who have rendered conspicuous service to Church and State have come from strains which superior people would, if they had the power, arrange to eliminate as 'inferior.' Mr. COURTS rightly maintains that this question is not to be settled by celibates, whether clerical or lay; and, further, that in the attempt to settle it, medical opinion, and especially Christian medical opinion, has the right to be heard. 'Anything like an agreed report on the whole matter by the British

Medical Association would tend greatly to the clearing of public opinion and the creation of a Christian opinion that could meet the test of fact.'

The concluding chapter on Church Discipline, to which a representative Anglican, Methodist, and Congregationalist have made interesting contributions, shows how far the Church has travelled from the severity of a century ago, and how far she has yet to travel in the recognition of the fact that one of her chief duties is to win back her lax, wandering, or offending members.

The whole book is extraordinarily timely. It deals in a vital way with one of the most vital problems of the day, and its counsel deserves to be most carefully pondered by all who are interested in the moral life of our generation.

Messrs. T. & T. Clark have published a book which is both timely and competent—*Religious Experience: Its Nature and Truth*, the Kerr Lectures for 1923, by Mr. Kenneth EDWARD, M.A., D.Phil. (8s. net). Of its competence no reader can have any doubt who seriously embarks on its arguments. He will feel at once that he is in the hands of one who has thought through the problem for himself and brought to bear on its solution a vigorous and clear mind. The language is simple and untechnical, though we do have repeatedly that monstrosity of current English 'centring about' something or other. We have found the book engrossing from start to finish.

The timeliness of this essay is obvious. The supremacy of the Christian hypothesis is to-day assailed from three quarters. First of all, psychology questions the validity of religious interpretation of its own experience. Secondly, comparative religion challenges the absoluteness of Christ as a Saviour. And, finally, a new and aggressive paganism questions the authority of the Christian standard of life and ethics. The most serious of

these attacks is the first, and it is to the problem raised by the claims of the 'new psychology' that Dr. EDWARD directs himself in this volume

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A considerable part of the book is occupied with the *nature* of religious experience. This need not detain us, though much that is said is enlightening enough. The only point to which attention may be drawn is Dr. EDWARD'S agreement with the persistent assertion of a current psychology that there is no such thing as a religious instinct. Dr. Selbie in his recent discussion made the same admission. This seems to us a somewhat unnecessary concession. Both writers agree that religion is a deep-seated something that is universal in humanity, call it 'religious sense,' or 'religious nature,' or anything else. It appears to us to be as distinctive and innate as anything that psychology describes as an instinct. What is worth emphasizing is that it is something deep-seated and natural.

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Dr. EDWARD seems disposed to welcome the theory of Otto, who asserts the existence of a 'numinous' attitude on the part of man, an instinctive, or at any rate natural, sense of the Divine which seems to consist of reverence, awe, fear; and at any rate is a sense of something tremendous and mysterious which is personal and majestic. This is an attractive interpretation of the religious phenomena. But it is only an interpretation of a fact which must be acknowledged to be part of the profound truth of human experience.

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It is the second part of Dr. EDWARD'S book, however, which is of vital importance at the present time, in which he faces the question: how are we to be sure that there is something objective corresponding to the religious experience of mankind, and that this experience is not simply a subjective, self-created delusion? Those who are familiar with Tansley or any of the other 'advanced' new psychologists will recall their calm assumption that when they have analysed religious experience into

its psychological elements they have disposed of its claim to witness to a living God. What is the answer to this assumption? How is the religious hypothesis to be verified?

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Dr. EDWARD says that the strength of the attack is largely due to the prestige which the science of psychology at present enjoys. The same thing has happened over and over again. Each new science as it conquers its own field claims in its youthful enthusiasm to have explained everything and to have ejected religion from this field. But this claim has always turned out to be no more than the perfectly valid assertion that it can explain the facts *within its own sphere* without the aid of any theological hypothesis.

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Another point of real importance Dr. EDWARD makes. He asserts that the onus of disproof lies on the critic of religious experience. We are entitled to accept this as being in accordance with reality until it is demonstrated to be otherwise. The religious consciousness testifies unequivocally that its object exists. That is the hypothesis 'in possession.' The question then arises whether philosophy can adjudge this evidence to be consistent with a critical conception of reality. The testimony of religion comes as near as possible to being a world-wide witness. The burden, then, is one of disproof. It is not enough for psychology to analyse experience. Can it show that the object of this experience does not exist?

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But Dr. EDWARD goes on to deal with the claim psychology makes to dispose of religion by analysing its phenomena. He admits at once that psychology *ought* to be able to make this analysis and describe all the phenomena without the aid of any theological hypothesis. That is its business. It is not philosophy and has nothing to do with hypotheses as to ultimate reality. If there were any *surd* left after its examination, that would discredit it as a science. And we are not going to play into the hands of the psychologist by agreeing that the truth of religion can only be shown by unusual or

*sui generis* phenomena. The Reality behind religion reveals itself in the usual, in the very facts which psychology analyses.

Where the new psychologist goes wrong is in claiming, as he virtually does, that psychology is a judge of ultimate reality. Because he can find no trace of God in his analysis, therefore God does not exist. But his argument is far too narrow. It goes much further than he imagines. It sweeps away *all reality*. It makes *all* experience subjective. The argument is valid against our whole knowledge of the objective world. We are shut in a closed circle of pure mentalism. Why should the common experience of the average man prove the reality of an outside world and his religious experience be refused the right to testify to a spiritual world? The simple truth is that psychology is attempting from within experience to solve problems which it has no proper means of solving. The shoemaker should stick to his last, and psychology ought not to deck itself out in the panoply of metaphysics.

Dr. EDWARD does not neglect to point out that the religious hypothesis verifies itself in life. But he is more concerned to show how it is verified in the realm of knowledge. And one of the finest parts of his book is that in which he contends that religious knowledge, the knowledge of God, is parallel with ordinary knowledge, *i.e.* a direct awareness, a 'knowledge of acquaintance' in Bergson's phrase. We know the outside world then. And we know the unseen in the same way. The only difference (and it is a great one) is that in religious knowledge the whole self takes part. It is a 'central and inclusive intuition.' It is the 'united personality

gathered up into a comprehensive act of *rapporl*.' This is not always complete. It seldom is complete. It is not always infallible. But it is real and it is trustworthy. Our religious knowledge is of the nature of recognition.

Is not that element found in all knowledge, even the scientific? Scientists have not infrequently confessed that the process of discovery which has revealed even some of the larger generalizations of scientific theory, while they have come in the course of discursive reasoning, have come as flashes of insight, not results of ratiocination. 'The difference between faith and scientific knowledge is not so great as has often been assumed.' And if it be asked: why, then, is our religious knowledge not as universal as general knowledge and as certain? the answer is obvious: because the facts of sense experience lie nearer the *essential* conditions and needs of physical existence. Religious knowledge does not receive the daily, nay, the momentary, verification received by the objects of sense experience. It is here that the verification of *life* has its place. The test of truth is living, and religion is proved in the school of life.

Finally, the argument concludes with a chapter on the task of theology. The religious hypothesis has to be co-ordinated with the whole of reality, with the world order. And this is the task which Life hands on to thought. Enough has been said, however, to indicate that the problems raised for our generation by the new psychology receive in the volume before us a serious, helpful, and radical treatment. The book is a distinct contribution to the best kind of apologetics.

