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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROBABLY few people who habitually use the word Evolution as part of their working vocabulary could define the term in a way that would satisfy a scientist, and there are probably nearly as few who have read Darwin's 'Origin of Species.' That epoch-making book was published sixty-seven years ago, and directly or indirectly it has profoundly affected every department of research and thought; yet it may be questioned whether its ideas have really percolated into the popular mind.

The idea of evolution entertained by most unscientific persons is summarily expressed in the phrase that 'man has sprung from the monkey'—to which a cynical wit once added, 'And some men have not sprung very far.' Now, against this shallow and misleading view of evolution, Professor J. Arthur THOMSON lifts up his voice in protest in the Essex Hall Lecture which he delivered this year on *Man in the Light of Evolution* (Lindsey Press; 1s. 6d. net). When we envisage the sifting-out process by which man has come to be what he is, this view is not only shallow and misleading; it is, he says, a view of 'unutterable vulgarity.'

Now it behoves us to give careful heed to anything Professor THOMSON may say on such a matter. We do not know whether he would care to be considered as a preacher, but he is without doubt one of the most effective preachers of our time. Through his books, his articles, and his lectures he addresses a constituency which the most eloquent preacher might well envy, and he does his readers or hearers the invaluable service of keeping them in touch with the wonder, and, shall we say, the Divinity of the world. He is preacher and poet, almost as much as he is scientist; and, though he would be the last man to claim finality for his pronouncements, in him the old quarrel between Science and Religion is laid to rest. His religion may not be the dogmatic religion of the Churches, but it is a religion that would have won the approval of the writer of the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of the Book of Job.

This question of the relation of Religion and Science is very much in the air just now. Only a few months ago a striking book on 'Science, Religion, and Reality' was reviewed in these columns; and it is interesting to note the points of contact between that book and Professor THOMSON's. Apart from the general similarity of outlook and spirit, there is a curious correspondence of detail in the reference each book makes to Newton. Each has occasion to emphasize the fact that, in the consideration of evolution, attention should be as earnestly concentrated on the issue as on the origin of a process. Professor THOMSON remarks, 'Who thinks less of Newton because he was once a peculiarly miserable infant'? Dean Inge, in the concluding essay of

the longer book, gives a witty turn to this by remarking that 'it tells us nothing about Newton to know that he once had a tail.'

The relationship of man to the anthropoid apes is a real one, but it is not a relationship of descent. Professor THOMSON is concerned to rebut this vulgar error, and twice, in varying language, he makes it clear, to those who entertain this common but erroneous idea, that 'no living ape is ever thought of as man's ancestor.' The truth is that the highest apes are only man's 'collaterals on another branch of the genealogical tree.' There was first the Primate stem which two or three million years ago sent out its first tentative branches, with a resulting 'tangle of monkeys.' The monkeys diverged, but the main stem grew on. Giving off first the lower, then the higher anthropoid apes, it still grew on. More branches were given off—tentative man eventually; till at last came Homo, and even within his species the same sifting went on.

Nor is the process over. Evolution is still going on, as is evidenced, among other things, by the number of races within the species of *homo sapiens*; and even in the bodily structure of man, though there are no startling changes, variations are continually cropping up. Some vestigial relics are disappearing from his body, and 'it is not unlikely that deep constitutional changes are in progress, changes in the shape of life's trajectory, perhaps correlated with changes in the ductless glands.' It is an amazing process, moving without haste, without rest, down the countless ages, and well calculated to rouse a feeling of awe at the contemplation of the creature who is the product—though it would never be quite correct to say the finished product—of it all.

But man, the final if not the finished product, is so wonderful that even a convinced evolutionist like Alfred Russel Wallace feels constrained to postulate for him some 'spiritual influx,' some origin, distinct from that which accounts for his animal characteristics, whether of body or mind. This is an honourable inconsistency, due to a recognition of the real 'apartness' of man, a clear recognition of the undeniable fact that he is in a deep sense a new creation.

But, deeply as Professor THOMSON respects Wallace, he will not allow that his view on this point is sound. For from two antecedents, such as oxygen and hydrogen, there may arise an entirely new synthesis, such as water, a synthesis with properties entirely unpredictable on the basis of even the most accurate knowledge of its constituent elements. And so, Professor THOMSON believes, it is with man. The circumstance that we cannot describe all the factors in the process of his evolution does not give us the right to postulate a spiritual influx: that would be tantamount to the introduction of a factor which might fairly be described as alien, or at any rate external, to account for facts which the scientific man must believe to be ultimately capable of a scientific explanation.

Thus, though man is a vital new creation, the consistent evolutionist will refuse to admit that the emergence of his distinctive qualities involves any breach of continuity, and this continuous unbroken process is just as capable of a religious interpretation as would be a process interrupted at special points by intrusions from without, which seemed to postulate for their explanation a special Divine intervention. Indeed there are many minds, even among those which have no particular scientific training, to which such an unbroken continuous process would be religiously more impressive than an interrupted one. At any rate, we must begin to familiarize ourselves with the idea that, after all, there may be no 'gaps.'

Professor THOMSON is undoubtedly right when he suggests that the resentment of the evolutionary doctrine, where it is resented, is due to the fact that it seems to compromise or impoverish the dignity and uniqueness of man. But surely he is equally right in arguing that the very reverse of

this is the case. The creature who crowns so long and stupendous a movement must be impressive indeed. 'What origin could be more dignified than the long Ascent that led to Man!' 'Origin does not affect value'—that is well said and worth saying, especially worth saying to those who tend to forget the end in the beginning.

And the end is not yet. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. But in view of what man has already become out of beginnings so unpromising, 'there is no thinkable end to the evolution of Human Personality. Where this evolution of the Personality may lead man, who dare say?' It has not entered into the subtlest or the most prophetic heart to conceive what God has prepared for this most wonderful of all His creatures. This winsome lecture of Professor THOMSON'S creates in us afresh the conviction that man, despite his blemished record, can yet fairly be described as but a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour, and confirms in us the assurance of the yet greater glory and honour to be.

In *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought* (Longmans; 4s. net), Dean INGE tells us that the record of Christian institutionalism is one of the darkest chapters in history. From the highest point of view, ecclesiasticism, he argues, has been a dismal failure; and if at present it is having a kind of success, it is only at the expense of other types of religion, much nearer to the intention of the Divine Founder of Christianity. The book concludes with the reflection that 'There is a city in which we may have our "conversation," our πολίτευμα, even if secular politics become too debased for our participation, and Church policy too medieval for our loyalty—that city of which the type is "laid up in heaven."'

In this book the Dean returns to his contention that the doctrine of temporal progress as commonly held is no part of the Christian religion. Properly understood, the real teaching of Jesus about the future casts a deadly chill on what passes for Christianity among the majority. One would like to think that the point of view the Dean is decrying is that which looks forward to an indefinite increase in material welfare. But it is not that; at least, not only that; for the discussion of the subject is occasioned by his refusal to imitate the politicians in assuring us that the type of religion he advocates will soon be the prevailing type. He feels no certainty that it will.

Let it be granted that facile conceptions of human progress have usually been based on abysmal ignorance of the past, and that belief in continued material advancement has no very close relation to Christianity. But we have surely not been wrong in thinking that it is an item in the Christian faith that the downward pull in life will not always be the strongest pull, and that evil will not win the final victory over good. But, whether we share the Dean's depressing views of the present state and future fate of the type of religion for which he stands, or whether we do not share them, we can at least pay our tribute to the beauty and power with which he expounds that type.

Since the Reformation, there have been two schools of thought in Western Christendom, the Protestant and the Catholic. Catholicism is the religion of authority; it emphasizes the institution and the creed. Protestantism believes in the individual; its motto is a free Church in a free State, freedom for all, especially the right of the individual to think for himself and to accept whatever new truth in any sphere inquiry may bring to light. Protestantism misunderstands itself when it, too, seeks an infallible authority and finds in the verbal inspiration of Scripture that final court of appeal which the Catholic finds in the Pope. By undermining this false foundation of Protestantism, Biblical Criticism will, in the long run, be doing it a service.

Yet there is a third kind of belief in life which

transcends the distinction between Protestant and Catholic. The followers of the Reformers have dwelt much in the thought of Paul; but Paul was most truly Pauline, not when he wrestled with the problem of the Law, nor when he enunciated his doctrine of justification by faith, but when his mind revolved around the thoughts: 'Christ in me,' 'I in Christ.' He who lives in view, not of the seen things that pass but of the unseen things that abide, has penetrated to the core of Christianity. Since the days of Paul and of John, there has been a Christianity which is a religion of the spirit, which believes that the most real things in the universe are absolute and eternal values—what Plato called Ideas—and that these values can be known by all who are prepared to pay the price. The price is not asceticism in the things of the bodily passions, but 'whole-hearted consecration of the intellect, will, and affections to the great quest.'

Those whose Christianity is of this type belong to a spiritual succession which stretches back into history far beyond even the Christian era. In the first millennium before Christ there was a revolt, at first in Asia, afterwards in Greece and South Italy, against that type of culture in which the structure of society was built up on the worship of the forces of Nature. Behind the ebb and flow of phenomena, there began to be recognized an unseen universe of unchanging spiritual realities. In this movement, the great name was Plato. 'What (he asked) if man had eyes to see that pure Beauty, unalloyed with the stains of material existence, would he not hasten to travel thither, happy as a captive released from his prison-house? Such was the call, which, once heard, has never long been forgotten in Europe.'

The religion of the spirit suffered a serious reverse at the Reformation; not that the Reformers were not its friends, but this is a religion that does not flourish in an atmosphere of controversy. All war is barbarous, even religious war. The combatants want popular catchwords and make appeals to ancient authority. In such an environment, he whose only motto is 'The unseen things are eternal' cuts a sorry figure. Yet the Platonic tradition lived on: in poets like Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; in didactic prose-writers like Ruskin and Emerson; in philosophers like Green, the Cairds, and Bosanquet. And when once again the Church holds up Christianity before the eyes of men as the religion of the spirit, then those who ought to be of her fellowship (the Dean will not go further than this cautious estimate) will return to the fold.

To most of this we can all subscribe. To be assured that there is a pearl of abiding worth, such that all the pearls on which we instinctively set our hearts are well lost if we can win the precious pearl, gives to life a meaning and dignity. But is this the deepest thing in Christianity? Is not the central thing in Christianity that God so loved the world that He gave His Son, that the Divine Love takes on Himself human sorrow and human sin, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself?

The primary purpose of Dr. GORE's new book, *Can We then Believe?* (reviewed under 'Literature') is to pay attention to criticisms passed on his three apologetic volumes and to make such restatements as will suffice to meet the critics. Among the criticisms of most importance were certain animadversions by Dean Inge, Bishop Temple, and Dr. Mackintosh on his treatment of philosophical questions. Dr. Inge complains that these questions have not been adequately dealt with, and the other critics suggest that he has made use of terms like 'substance,' 'nature,' and 'person' that have been outgrown, at least in their former signification. To these criticisms Dr. GORE replies with an essay of some length on 'The Relations of Religion, Theology, and Philosophy,' that is full of interest, and with which the 'plain man' will be disposed strongly to agree.

Dr. GORE's first point is that when any one speaks of contemporary 'philosophy' as though it were a consistent body of thought he is speaking of something that does not exist. Science may be spoken of in this way. On the whole, and in spite of certain marked differences of opinion about points on the borderland between science and metaphysics, science does confront us with a solid body of results which we are bound to accept. But nothing of this kind can be said of philosophy. There does not exist a modern philosophy which proceeds from a coherent body and pronounces verdicts which must be accepted in the name of rationality. Both science and Catholic theology might make such a claim, but not philosophy.

There are, roughly speaking, two schools or kinds of philosophy which it is important to distinguish. One is the idealistic, which identifies the real and the rational, is entirely confident in the trustworthiness of the abstract reason, constructs its fabric *a priori* and presents an interpretation of the universe which makes it a phantasmagoria of the self-evolution of God and His return upon Himself. This is a perfectly well-defined 'school' marked by its supreme confidence in the abstract reason and largely oblivious of plain facts. This kind of philosophy is distrusted by the ordinary believer, and Dr. GORE considers that the distrust is well-founded.

The other school is that which grounds its conclusions on experience. Butler may be taken as its representative. Butler sticks close to facts and experience. He disbelieves in the power of abstract reason and in all *a priori* schematisms. He believes that the self-disclosure of God to man vindicates itself by being close-knit into the fabric of the natural experience which all admit. Now, great as may be the fascination of *a priori* rationalism, the method of Butler is the more solid way to truth.

The most important fact to recognize concerning philosophy is that it is a comparatively late comer into human history. Man had already built up a great structure of experience, relying on certain fundamental instincts, and continually verifying his instinctive assumptions in his growing knowledge of the world. This experience has taken three main directions. Man has come to be certain of the existence of outside bodies in Nature, of the reality of other persons, and of the presence of God. It was only after this experience of Nature, of man and of God (or gods), had had a long history that 'philosophy,' or speculative inquiry into the nature of the universe arose. Now mankind's attitude to this new intellectual inquiry has been this. So far as it has a real bearing on his experience he welcomes it. So far as it is an attempt to penetrate mysteries remote from man's practical experience he tolerates it. When it denies the realities of which he has had long experience he laughs at it or ignores it.

Some philosophers have denied the reality of material objects; others the reality of human freedom and responsibility, others the reality of God. With regard to the first two denials, man has simply smiled, sometimes with contempt. With regard to the third, he has mostly regarded it as a dangerous blasphemy. Now this instinctive reaction of mankind to speculations which seem to it contradictory to experience is rational. Experience is experience of reality. All along it has been verified as real within the sphere of man's present existence. Philosophy has done much in criticising current conceptions, in analysing mental processes, in establishing degrees of reality. But whenever it has cast doubts on the validity of his common experience man has either ridiculed it or ignored it. He *knows* that objects exist, he knows that freedom is a reality, he knows that God is. Let philosophy explain his experience and correct, if need be, his expression of it, but not explain it away. This is the attitude of common sense to philosophy, and it is entirely legitimate.

Sound philosophy, then, is the philosophy of experience. Its task is to show its unity and coherence, and to seek to reach a general and rational conception of the whole world-order. But

it must lay its foundations deep in the actual experience. It becomes negligible just in so far as it lays itself open to the charge of ignoring it and dealing in *a priori* and unverifiable conceptions. Take as an example Christian experience. Religion, and especially the Christian religion, neither has its roots in philosophy nor its development through philosophical considerations. It has developed as a self-disclosure of God accepted in faith. No doubt philosophy can vindicate the existence of God as a postulate needed to give a rational interpretation of the world. But the God of the philosophers falls very far short of the God of the Christian revelation, very far short of what the best spiritual experience of mankind has needed, and has found, in the God and Father of Christian belief. And so one who shares the Christian belief, or even sympathizes with it, will not ground his faith on philosophical reasoning, but will begin at the other end of the problem. He will go to the New Testament, to begin with, where the faith is stated objectively. And he will construct his 'articles of belief' out of the materials of a working religion. That is already theology in the making, and it is worth while saying that not only religion, but theology also, is distinct from and prior to philosophy.

That is the substance of Dr. GORE'S courageous and refreshing essay. In the latter part he vindicates the task of theology in seeking the best terms and intellectual forms in which to express coherently the main basal facts of religious experience. His purpose is mainly to defend the use of 'substance,' 'hypostasis,' and 'nature,' in describing the Trinity and the Person of Christ, and he uncompromisingly declares that no better terms could have been found, or, indeed, can be found to-day, to express the facts about the Divine being and the realities of Christ's life. Theology is not philosophy, but leads the way to philosophy. Its purpose is to reduce to order and coherence the various ideas and doctrines which form the background and supply the motive of religion in practice, and to find the best practicable terms to express those ideas and doctrines. The theology is based upon the acceptance of the religion, and seeks to reduce it to a reasoned system, presupposing its authority. No doubt it has necessary limitations in all directions. It does not claim absolute truth. But the realities are there and are founded firmly in the experience of mankind.

It required some courage thus to beard the philosophers in their den! For Dr. GORE'S contention really is that abstract philosophy is of little account. Its deliverances are abstract and *a priori* and in the air. It is not on solid ground at all. The great facts of religion are grounded on life, on the experience of a thousand generations. The great facts of the Christian religion are grounded on thousands of years' experience and on millions of saintly lives. These are solid foundations. But philosophy is not much more than a beating of the empty air. It required a good deal of audacity to say all that. But very many 'plain people' will be glad to have it said with such emphasis and persuasiveness!

The Parable of the Labourers (Matt. xx. 1–16).

By PROFESSOR W. A. CURTIS, D.D., D.LITT., THE UNIVERSITY, EDINBURGH.

FOR the preservation of this wonderful and haunting story we are indebted to the piety and insight of the First Evangelist. A fascinating gem, he presents it to us in a glorious setting. Who can open his Gospel anywhere between the opening of the eighteenth chapter and the close of the twenty-second without experiencing an overwhelming sense of the power and splendour of the Master's mind? Parable follows parable in swift succession, it matters not whether framed in their original context or caught up by the writer's ecstasy and set down as the spirit moved him. Hard saying follows hard