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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

UNDER the attractive title *The Bible of Jesus* (Hodder & Stoughton; 7s. 6d. net), the Rev. W. M. GRANT, M.A., D.D., has written a book, the contents of which are thus modestly summarized in the publishers' notice: 'How Jesus used the Old Testament—and why.' The book really covers more ground than the title would lead us to expect. There is, for example, a chapter entitled 'The Education of Jesus,' dealing with His home, school, pilgrimages, work, etc., and another on 'The World to which Jesus Came,' which discusses the various parties in Judaism—Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Herodians. Such chapters furnish us with the historical context, and they have their own relevance.

The interest of the book is twofold. Dr. GRANT shows us that Jesus, like ourselves, had a 'Bible within the Bible,' and, further, he uses Jesus' attitude to the Old Testament as an avenue along which we may advance to a more adequate understanding of the consciousness of Jesus. His mind is reflected alike in His appreciative selection of some passages and in His criticism of others.

On the first point he reminds us, following a careful computation of Dr. Moulton's, that twenty-five per cent. of our Lord's quotations or allusions come from the Pentateuch, about fifty per cent. from the Prophets and Daniel, and twenty per cent. from the Psalms, while the other books yield some five per cent. This statement reveals not only the

range of His knowledge but the nature of His preferences. It is no surprise that, in One whom popular opinion regarded as a prophet, interest in the prophetic and cognate sections of Old Testament literature should considerably preponderate.

On the second point, which after all is but another aspect of the first, he writes with much discrimination in the chapter on 'The Temple and Sacrifice,' perhaps the most valuable chapter in the book. There he points out that our Lord's adoption of the description of the Temple in Is 56⁷ as 'a house of *prayer* for *all* peoples' is a vivid revelation of His own real mind about the Temple. He does not think of it as a place of sacrifice, but as a place of prayer; nor does He think of it as a place for the Jews only, but for all peoples. In other words, His real interest in the building, which was popularly identified with ritual and sacrifice, lay in its furnishing an opportunity for the exercise of the spiritual and universal religion of the prophets. So by this road again we are led back to the conclusion that our Lord's supreme interest in the Old Testament was the prophetic interest. Indeed, Dr. GRANT roundly says, 'For the sacrificial system Jesus had no use'—in which case He would but be animated, according to many scholars, by the spirit of His great predecessors, the pre-exilic prophets.

Twice in the course of the book a gentle remonstrance is administered to the Fundamentalists. They are reminded that mechanical theories of the

inspiration of the letter find no support in the teaching of Jesus, and further that those are not the best friends of the Bible who say of it 'all or nothing.' Our Lord's own attitude to the Old Testament was one of 'authority, superiority, and reserve.' While some of its utterances and tempers He endorsed, others He criticized and either modified or superseded. 'A base nationalism, retaliation, revenge, and blow for blow He reprobated either in overt act or in motive, even though ancient Scriptures had sanctioned them.'

More particularly did He transform the Apocalyptic and Messianism of His time by spiritualizing and moralizing them in the light of the prophetic ideals which inspired alike His activity and His thought. But more or less is this true of His attitude to the entire Old Testament. This Dr. GRANT happily illustrates by an adaptation of a familiar quotation, remarking, in the words of the hymn, that what Jesus did for the Old Testament was :

To pour fresh life on every part,
And new create the whole.

In discussing our Lord's use of Ps 110, Dr. GRANT utters the timely warning—a warning which we would fain hope will soon be unnecessary—that He is not here 'throwing His shield over the Davidic authorship of the Psalm.' This question, which is a purely literary one, was not before Him, nor indeed before any one of that time. On this and similar questions, such as the authorship of the Pentateuch, He accepted the traditional view. His mission was to lead men into a more abundant life, not to teach them literary criticism. Or, as Dr. GRANT wisely puts it, questions of origin and date, 'important as they are in their own sphere, do not give us the face of God, for they were non-essentials then, and they are non-essentials now.'

An interesting question raised by Dr. GRANT at different points of the argument touches the originality of Jesus. There are worthy people who are grieved to learn that some of the sayings of Jesus are not new, and that He repeated many of the great ideas and even much of the language of former

days. There are, however, more answers than one which ought to satisfy the timid souls who are jealous for the Lord and His originality.

The first answer is that in an historical religion such leaning upon the past is not only reasonable but inevitable. The ages are linked each to each. Each teacher stands in a great succession, and Jesus, who is incomparably the greatest of them all, yet stands in that succession, albeit as its crown and consummation.

The second answer is that, even when Jesus endorses an older utterance, He sets His own peculiar stamp upon it. He accepts the Decalogue, but in accepting it He transforms it. How vastly more comprehensive and awful are its demands when interpreted by the penetrating spirit of Jesus. The sixth and seventh commandments stand ; but how they search and try the secret places, when the mind of Jesus is behind them !

The third answer is that the kind of originality which some people desiderate simply does not exist. As a great Scottish philosopher used to say, 'A thought which was original in the sense of never having entered, in any shape or form, into any one of all the thoughtful minds among the generations of men would probably stamp a man as qualifying for an asylum.' Originality should not be strained to mean the saying of something which has never been said before. To the scholar who pointed out that every petition in the Lord's Prayer could be found among the sayings of the Rabbis, Wellhausen is said to have replied, 'Yes, and how much more !' Originality, on one of its sides, is the power to see the thing that matters : and on the field of human life, did any one ever see as Jesus saw ?

Dr. GRANT does well to emphasize the point that our Lord's use of the Old Testament has a persuasiveness about it which by no means always characterizes the allusions to it of the evangelists or of Paul. Such an application of Hos 11¹ as is made by Matthew, or such an allegorical interpretation of Abraham's two sons as is offered by Paul in Gal 4, would be as good as inconceivable

upon the lips of Jesus. It would be folly to make the modern mind the final measure of all reasonable interpretation; nevertheless, the inevitableness and cogency with which His use of the Old Testament appeals to us to-day in all its pristine freshness enhances our sense of adoring wonder and confirms in us the assurance—though it needs no confirmation—that He is Lord indeed.

In a preceding volume, 'Personality and Reality,' Dr. J. E. TURNER set out his proofs of a Supreme Self, personal, self-conscious, dominant in the universe, not merely of material and physical existents, even when we include the starry worlds far beyond our ken, but in the universe of elements, forces, and factors, and, in a word, all the realities 'other than and exclusive of the Supreme Self.' Now, in *The Nature of Deity* (Allen & Unwin; 10s. net), this accomplished Reader in Philosophy in the University of Liverpool carries on the argument to a further and a higher stage. If it is important to have a proof of the being of a Supreme Self in the universe, it is vital to know what kind of Deity He is. The question as to the Nature of Deity Dr. Turner answers, chiefly after the method of Butler, by proofs from analogy. The analogies are drawn from human personality—always with a caveat as to its imperfection—with its self-consciousness, will, and freedom. As the human personality lives within its environment, acting upon it and through it, developing its resources, realizing its possibilities, creating and adapting its methods and machineries, and again is reacted upon, so the Supreme Self is dynamic, free, purposeful, a Real, who can be known and loved and served.

This leaves the primary question of creation on one side, although it is discussed after the main positions have been stated. Yet the admission is made that it does not lie within the power of human reason to solve it. But a clear light is thrown on the evolution of the universe. On page after page there is explained the ever-continuing advance of the universe in complexity, diversity, delicacy, and in fitness for further and higher function, under the

purpose and will of the Supreme Self. Every stage in progress results in a recognizable Emergent. A new type, a more sensitized creature, a more subtly functioned being, appears. The whole universe is passing onwards and upwards, leaving vestiges of the past, but producing ever more definitely constituted and more responsive personalities. In this lies the proof of the Supreme Reality. In these personalities and their nature we find the illuminating analogies of the Personality of Deity.

The illustrations by which the broad argument from analogy is pressed are apt and enlightening. The whole world of mechanism, with its passion for the perfecting of the instruments of manufacture and industry, of travel and intercourse, of expression and influence, reveals minds planning and adapting. The personality is concealed all the more certainly as these adapted instruments become almost independent of human guidance. In a similar way, and more closely analogical, the artist who expresses his conception in a picture, the poet who pours his passion into a sonnet, the man of superb genius—a Shakespeare or a Dante—all analogize the method and the power of the Supreme Self in the universe. Even a child's wondering and simple acts lead us into the same secret.

From this exposition of his central position as to the Nature of Deity, Dr. TURNER passes on to deal with the distinctive features of the character he finds disclosed. He meets the problem, which baffles some minds at the threshold, in the term 'infinite,' by pointing out that the only meaning it can have is 'perfect,' or 'complete.' Wherein any declaration of infinitude lies beyond perfection it is incomprehensible. As a Hegelian, Dr. TURNER identifies it with the Absolute. As a consequence the knowledge of the Deity is comprehensive, certain, and instantaneous in its intention. In a like manner he resolves the problem of the apparent conflict of the transcendence and immanence of the Deity by the conclusion that the Deity is immanent throughout the material universe so far as its infinitely complex nature is concerned, but absolutely transcendent of that universe so far as His perfectly automatic function is concerned.

From this point onward the discussion focuses on the more distinctively ethical features of the Deity. Omniscience and omnipotence are evident, but they are not arbitrary in the sense of being free from Law, or subversive of the system of things. The Supreme Self cannot 'do what He likes,' even as a great general or statesman cannot do what he likes, except at a serious risk to his country. Action is dependent on rationality. That leads on to the problem of existence of pain and of evil under such a Deity. But pain is the natural accompaniment of sentience with a purpose of good, while evil is the inevitable correlate of freedom. Man is not an animal with instincts, and evil has its function in a world of men free to choose.

Having outlined the Nature of Deity as against what may be called the background of the *existentia* of the universe, the writer leads us into a more spiritual realm as the climax of his argument. The Divine purpose in creation, the supreme motive of love, and its most august expression in holiness are affirmed. Here he opposes Otto's declaration that the Holy is the 'wholly other' to man, because he is the 'mysterious.' The Deity is 'mysterious,' it is maintained, only in attributes of which we can form no conception, because they do not fall within our experience. But this does not apply to His holiness, for He is not exclusively holy. Were Otto's contention accurate it would raise an impassable barrier between Deity and man. The Divine is not *wholly* other. In the closing chapters, the inner experience of the relationship of man and the Deity are discussed in a tone of fine feeling, closing with an affirmation of the Fatherliness, rather than the Fatherhood, of God. A notable book, full of suggestion, persuasively reasoned, with appealing references to the recognized psychologists of the day! But there is no reference to the mind of Christ—the Master of parabolic analogy!

In a remarkable book, *The Future of Christianity*, reviewed in another column, perhaps the most remarkable essay is that on 'The Doctrine of Christ,' by the Rev. W. R. MATTHEWS, D.D., Dean of King's College, London. Dr. MATTHEWS is one

of the most original and suggestive thinkers in the Church at the present time, and everything he writes bears the stamp of a masculine and fertile mind. This is the reason why one comes to his reflections on the essential Christian faith with keen expectation. We are all alive to the fact that on the answer to the question, 'What think ye of Christ?' depends our judgment of the future of the world and of its spiritual destiny, because this depends on the essential truth of the Christian Fact.

The Christian Fact is that 'Christ is the completely adequate revelation of the nature of God, Himself one with God, the response of the Eternal to the world's need, worthy of the uttermost service and adoration, the rightful Lord of the Universe.' That is how Dr. MATTHEWS describes the Christian faith, and the object of his essay is to show that what Christian faith has found in Christ can be found still, without disloyalty to the new revelation of scientific, historical, and philosophical truth which we possess. In this connexion Dr. MATTHEWS asserts two things of vast importance to all believers. One is that no development of knowledge can take us beyond Christ. And the other is that 'the advance of thought is making the apprehension of God in Christ easier and not harder.'

The two problems which the essay considers are these. First, that which concerns history and centres on (Dr. MATTHEWS has the unparadonable phrase 'centres round') the consciousness of Jesus and the impression He made on His disciples. And, second, the more fundamental problem which arises from our changed conception of the structure of the universe. The first of these problems has often been canvassed, but Dr. MATTHEWS says his own say about it. He protests very justly against the common fallacy, of which so many recent writers are guilty, of reading back into the mind of Jesus our own fancies. Mr. Murry is a great sinner in that respect. But Dr. MATTHEWS equally sets aside the habit of speaking of the 'claims' of Jesus. He made no claim to Messiahship in a public manner until His trial. Our Lord's method was to lead men, through the knowledge of Himself, to ask whether *this* was not the Hope of Israel.

The essay summarizes what we can gather of our Lord's view of Himself briefly. Jesus associated His own Person and mission with the culminating intervention of God in human affairs. He regarded Himself as the Central Figure in this central event. He was crucified because He admitted that He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. He assumed in all His teaching that He was 'the spiritual ruler of mankind.' He enjoyed an unbroken 'filial consciousness . . . unruffled by any evidence of the sense of sin.' The attempt, therefore, to envisage Jesus as a mere teacher of righteousness makes nonsense of the records. 'In His own consciousness He was the culmination of the religious history of the Hebrews, the centre of God's final self-manifestation.'

If we approach these facts believing in the living God, we shall find no inherent improbability in the estimation of His own significance which the gospel records plainly ascribe to Jesus. But, further, we have to take into account the creative experience which we find in the New Testament, the beginning of a continuous Christian experience which is the standing evidence for the significance of Christ. Whatever the differences may be between John and Paul and Hebrews in the categories, they all found the same thing in Christ, and are all trying in their different ways to say the same thing. And it is the thing that believers have found in Christ all down the ages.

When Dr. MATTHEWS turns to the other point, which is virtually whether we can justify this faith in the face of modern knowledge, he begins with the Ritschlian assertion that faith is a judgment of value and has nothing to do with metaphysics. He admits that all real faith must begin with a judgment value, because our faith is founded on experience. But the absolute separation between

judgments of value and judgments of existence cannot be maintained, simply because we cannot leave aside the question whether Christ, in addition to being a Saviour, is also the revealer of the nature of the ultimate reality of the universe.

This question we must face, and when we do so we meet the fact of evolution, which is the dominating certainty of our age. And we have to state our doctrine of Christ so that it may be in harmony with an evolutionary view of the world-process. The objection that development and finality are contradictory does not detain Dr. MATTHEWS. He points out that when we are considering beauty or truth we assume finality to be possible. The real crux is not that, but the nature of God's relation to the world. Briefly Dr. MATTHEWS' view is that it is of the nature of God to create, and that creation is the self-expression and self-fulfilling of God. This gives us a clue to the meaning of the world-process. It is the history of the growing victory of the Divine life, the triumph of this life over 'negativity' and the achievement of unity in more and more complexity.

In human personality we begin to catch sight of something in the nature of a culmination or end. God seeks the expression of His own Being, and, as an essential part of that expression, the development of free spirits who may be in unbroken fellowship with Himself. The Eternal Personality is not fully manifested until, within time and space, there has appeared a Person who is its own image. In the Person of Jesus the creative life which we may discern working through all the course of evolution, overcomes all the limitations which have prevented it from finding complete expression. The empirical, historical personality of Jesus is the adequate incarnation in time and space of the Eternal Word.