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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine, translated, with Introduction and Notes, by H. J. Lawlor, D.D., Litt.D., and J. E. L. Oulton, B.D. Vol. i. Translation (S.P.C.K.; 10s. 6d. net). As indicated, this volume contains only the translation. We shall deal fully with the work as a whole when the second volume with Introduction and Notes is in our hands. Meanwhile let us say that the translation is excellent. Eusebius is not easy to translate into smooth English. But the authors have accomplished the task, with all its difficulties, successfully. The footnotes are exceedingly valuable.

We are indebted to the Rev. H. Curtois for a piece of useful work in *The Conversion of the English* (S.P.C.K.; 6s. net). In this book the author has given us the substance of Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History,' in a popular form, and without some details and elements more interesting to the scholar than to the man in the street. In other words, he has given us the story of the Church in England in its earliest stage as told by one of its most interesting chroniclers. The work is very well done, and the interest is greatly increased by a large number of illustrations and four excellent maps. We commend this 'immortal story' of the planting of the gospel in England. It would enrich both Church and school libraries, and ought to find many readers in and outside the Church of to-day.

In the end of 1925 a Commission on Christian Healing was appointed at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church of America. One outcome has been the preparation by two of its members, a priest of the Church and a leading physician—A. J. Gayner Banks, M.A., D.S.T., and W. Sinclair Bowen, M.D., F.A.C.S.—of a manual of devotion for those who care for the sick. The title is *The Great*

Physician (London: S.P.C.K.; 5s. net). It contains offices for the Healing of the Sick and for the Ministry of Absolution, An Order for the Anointing of the Sick, and a Form for the Laying On of Hands. There are prayers for Sleep, for a sense of God's Presence, for Cleansing of the Heart, for Healing, and for Courage. The whole has been compiled with care, insight, and a fine spirit of reverence.

We have received *The Problem of Evil and Sufferings: A Solution and the Antidote*, by Jeremiah Zimmerman, D.D., LL.D. (Stratford Co., Boston; \$2.00). The solution offered is familiar—the possibility of evil is inherent in the bestowal of real moral responsibility on man; and by ignorance of natural law and by wilful rebellion man has converted possibility into actuality. So is the antidote—have faith, seek the Kingdom of God, and ever keep Christ. The greater part of this big book is just padding, much of it of an ego-centric, 'I'll-tell-the-world' kind. In the quotations from the poets, in the index, and in the grammar, there are several inaccuracies. In some of the statements too.

We have received three more numbers of 'Tracts for Better Times' (Teachers and Taught). They are an attempt to reinterpret the Christian religion for our day, and they come from a band of editors that represents all the Churches. Among them are Mr. Maltby, Mr. Reid of Eastbourne, Mr. H. G. Wood of Selly Oak Colleges, Dr. Lofthouse, Mr. Malcolm Spencer, and Dr. Raven. The new issue includes *The Omnipotence of God*, by the Rev. H. C. Carter, M.A., *The Grace of God*, by the Rev. J. Reid, M.A. (of Eastbourne), and *What is Prayer?* by Professor W. E. Wilson (of Selly Oak). The price is 3d. each. Nothing better could happen than the broadcasting of such excellent booklets.

The Parable of the Two Sons.

BY PROFESSOR W. M. MACGREGOR, D.D., GLASGOW.

'What do you think? A man had two sons, and to the first of them he said, Go, my boy, and work to-day in the vineyard; and he answered, Certainly, sir! But he did not go. Coming to the second, the father spoke in the same way, and got the answer, I do not want to; but later the lad changed his mind and went. Now which of them did what the father wished? The people answered, The latter. And

Jesus replied, Be sure of this, that the worst of outcasts go into the kingdom of God in front of you.'—Mt 21²⁸⁻³¹.

THIS rearrangement of the story is preferred by scholars like Bruce and Westcott and Moffatt, both as resting upon first-rate MS. authority and as matching the facts of the moral record. God's

appeal for special service came to the law-abiding Jews before it passed out to Gentiles ; to-day it speaks to people within the Church who acknowledge His authority before it goes to outsiders. The same order (the respectable coming first) appears in several of Jesus' parables ; it is the older son who behaves prettily and stays at home, though in the end he comes out worse than the prodigal ; the people of standing in the city are first invited and send their excuses, and then from highways and hedges guests of all sorts are brought in ; and again, it is only when the tenants in actual occupation of the vineyard have proved recalcitrant that others are called in to give the landlord his share of the fruit. Wellhausen pleads that, but for the blunt refusal of the rude son, the father had no need of turning to the other ; but that is based on the unwarranted assumption that only one pair of hands was required. So, on the whole, I take it as probable that this was the original sequence.

But what of the people's reply ? The famous Cambridge Codex D, always independent and often audacious, represents them as defiantly answering that the polite son did best. Every one knows how readily confusion arises in the telling of a story through the use of 'the former' and 'the latter' ; and it is possible that nothing more than this lies behind such an eccentricity of judgment. But, if we take it seriously, we must understand the people as declaring their view that the supreme duty of a son is to be respectful to his father, and that no belated obedience can ever atone for failure in this. Or else we may take it as a mischievous attempt to throw Jesus out in His argument. Nothing is more baulking for a disputant who is going to base a fresh appeal on what he counts the inevitable reply to a question which he has put than to have another answer thrown at him. Wellhausen is convinced that D has in this preserved the original form of the story, and that it was the cynical perversity of their reply which drew from Jesus the stern words that 'publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God in front of you.'

Whatever our view may be of the arrangement, there is no question that the Parable was designed to exhibit Jesus' judgment as to the things which matter in religion. At all times He was impatient of merely pious words—of saying, Lord, Lord, and not doing the will of His Father. Once, at table with Him, a smug person with the full vocabulary of piety exclaimed: Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God ! and Jesus retorted with the Parable of the Feast and the guests' excuses, as if to say : My dear man, are you quite

sure that, if you had the chance, you would care to go to that table ? A sentimental woman effusively cried out one day, How blessed a lot to have been the mother of such a Son ! and drew down on herself the austere reply : It is much more blessed to hear the Word of God and keep it. There are men, He said, who 'for a pretence make long prayers,' and they 'receive a greater condemnation.' That was His habitual estimate of values ; but it was His delightful gift to present His teaching not abstractly but in the form of pictures, so here in half a dozen lines He depicts what is worthless and what is vital in religion.

There was a household with two boys in it, the older of whom was faultless in his manners. At any hint from his father, he would hurry off, eager, as it seemed, to do what was required. In the parable itself he utters only the two words, 'I, sir' : *i.e.* you certainly may count on me ; but nothing was done. Perhaps he never meant to do anything : perhaps his memory was short and, distracted by other interests, he forgot : perhaps his purpose was never very stalwart, and the prospect of a scorching day inclined him to keep in the shadow. In any case, his graceful deference to the old man was the whole sum of his obedience. The other lad was of a different make—surly and boorish. If he had plans of his own he was not inclined to lay these aside to suit his father or any one else. And yet beneath that prickly exterior there was a heart and a sense of decency, so, as he passed the vineyard wall to join his friends, he changed his mind, flung off his cloak, and fell to work. The types are familiar in every society and age. It would be grossly unfair to imagine that all Pharisees were pretenders, for many, like Paul himself, were quite terribly in earnest in their obedience ; but the kind of Pharisee that moved Jesus with disgust was a person whose manners towards God were perfect, who had always at command the appropriate word, the becoming gesture, the suitable tone. No one could behave more decorously in Temple or Synagogue, and as a churchman he was irreproachable ; but in other relations his credit did not stand so high. Jesus thought of a poor widow whose cottage had stood on a corner of that man's land till she was harried out of it by his exactions. The cottage and its enclosure had disappeared, and the woman was hiding somewhere with a sore heart. Her pious neighbour had devoured her house, which to Jesus seemed of much more account than all his elaborate courtesy towards God. At the other extreme, Jesus, who noticed everything, observed a man

who had never given any promise of goodness, a girl extravagantly fond of fun and sweetmeats and kisses, without a thought of how much they might cost her. Wild blood was in them, which made them instinctively reply 'I will not' to any voice of authority. The world has always had this tribe of the regardless; and with joy of heart Jesus saw many of them turn right round and make a fresh start—sinful women sobbing at His feet and publicans crying to God for mercy. They had begun badly by denying the authority of their Father, yet some of them who had been last had come to be first—the most loving and loyal servants whom Jesus had. Jesus thus sought to make the contrast clear between those who are complete in the formal requirements of religion, and who rest there, and others whose record has been blotted but who now are loving and serving without stint; which of these, He asked, has got hold of the substance of religion? When the question is thus nakedly presented only one answer seems possible; unfortunately it seldom arises nakedly, but comes veiled and obscured by certain customary delusions.

The most obvious of these is the *delusion of form*. A man who knows how things ought to be done and who sticks to every detail of the procedure is apt to imagine that nothing more can be asked for. That is what outsiders often complain of in Government departments, what Dickens scarifies in his account of the Circumlocution Office. He saw before him a pompous organization, where everything was carried through with minute correctness—applications were filed and schedules passed on from department to department, and he denounced it as a pretentious and costly futility. Its formal completeness actually stood in the way of getting anything done. But the man living in that system, who knew how many letters had been written, how many circulars had been issued, how many appeals had been disposed of, was blinded by his very busyness to the uselessness of it all. A foolish lad wishes, as he says, to be a gentleman, which is a worthy ambition, if, as Louis Stevenson says, 'A gentleman is one who is dead to self'; but it is not in any such direction that most people look. And our candidate for this promotion gathers hints from his school, his companions, his tailor as to what he should wear, and say, and do; and having acquired what is of the surface he is content, without wasting a thought upon what lies below. The form contents him. This formalism runs through every part of life, and in religion it thrust itself upon the sense of Jesus. When the Pharisee in Christ's parable ran over the chronicle of his good deeds, it is likely

that he was accurate in every detail: he actually did fast twice a week, he did give tithes of all he got—so what more could God ask for? The blamelessness of the surface left him with no anxiety about defects lurking behind. It is easy to brand such men as hypocrites, but it is scarcely fair, for the conscious hypocrites are always few. Nothing is rarer than for a man to stand naked before his own soul, and see himself as he is with all excuses and pretences torn away. The smiling youth who promised to work and did not would meet his father at night with the most fluent explanations, and would count the old man most unreasonable if he still seemed angry. For to him the forms of deference counted for everything. So Jesus sternly asks, Do you think God is as blind as you are to the vacancies in your deeper nature?

Even more insidious than the delusion of form is the *delusion of sentiment*, against which few of us are wholly proof. A book lays hold of you so that, before you sleep, you must know what the end is. Whilst you are reading, you seem to keep step with the hero in his course of daring and sacrifice; with him you face all risks, and your heart goes out to what is generous and gallant. But you come out of the trance not heroic, but tired and a little cross. The attraction of such a book is that it carries you into another world of feeling without any effort on your part, and it leaves you with a flattering sense that you are in sympathy with what is courageous. That may often be a mere debauch of sentiment, tending to make your character poorer, since sentiment has taken the place which action ought to have taken. By his convincing passion Rousseau made fashionable ladies in Paris ashamed of their neglect of their children, and induced some of them to nurse their own babies; but his children, when they were born, were sent to the Foundling Hospital. His glowing sense of the dignity of motherhood enabled him to make converts, but he did not convert his own habits. Augustine Birrell remarks about Hazlitt that he found it easier to write splendid disquisitions on his father's character than to drop the old man an occasional line of greeting for love's sake. We may suppose that this older son in the Parable had real sentiments of affection and admiration for his father. He would have been ashamed if he had not shown him respect; and we must not call this mere hypocrisy, because in giving a thing a bad name we put it from us as some one else's vice; whereas the grave fact is that nearly every one is inclined to let a fine feeling stand in place of a generous action, and especially is this true of religion. Under the spell of a moving

preacher our hearts grow big and we feel fit for anything. It seems as if we were on the threshold of a larger life ; and it may be so. In many it has been so. But Jesus sternly admonishes us that nothing is worth reckoning which does not find its way past feeling out to action.

I do not mean that emotion is a bad thing ; certainly our Lord had no suspicion of it, if only it were sincere. Without reserve He accepted the offering of a life though the man who made it was excited and unlike himself. The sinful woman in Luke's story could not possibly gauge the stress of what was waiting for her in the city outside, where she was known only for evil, and she certainly would not always be in the same exalted mood. And yet Jesus took her at her word, for He knew that emotion is one of the driving powers of life, which must not be wasted but captured and turned to service. For more than a century in Scotland our religious history was engaged with the struggle between two types or parties—the 'Moderate,' so called, and the 'Evangelical.' The good Moderate laid stress on right behaviour and was a little shy of the sublimities of doctrine ; he talked of diligence and honesty and sobriety and human kindness. But the good Evangelical, whilst not forgetful of these duties, was convinced that for the achieving of them some spring or inspiration was needed. The battle with vice was not to be gained by any amount of good counsel or even of manly effort. The world, as he saw it, was a lost world, and only God could save it. And thus he dwelt continually on an amazing mystery of condescension, of One who for our sakes became poor and endured the

sharpness of death, and thus opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Moderate and Evangelical, in altered forms, are still with us ; but even secular moralists have confessed that the Evangelicals have had much to say for themselves. There is not enough of impulse in a precept. It can point the way, it does not give strength to walk in it ; and the admonition to a weak man to amend his life may be a sort of cruelty, as he feels that he cannot even make a beginning. Before he can hopefully try there must be set free in him some emotion of gratitude, or wonder, or love, or desire, such as in all ages has been stirred by the exhibition of Jesus Christ, 'with whom alone is strength to create goodness in the worst and to make the weakest strong.' Sick eyes all around the world to-day are looking with a sort of despairing hope at Him who was not content with gestures or emotions of pity but actually did something. He loved me, they dare to say, and gave Himself up for me. That has been for many the beginning of the end of evil habits ; for from this point they enter on a new course of effort in which, since God is with them, they are not defeated.

In the Church of Jesus we have no need to be ashamed of feeling, but we do need to be ashamed of the feeling which is never yoked to service. Few people have not at some time longed for a better life, but what of that if they never attempt it ? It is not enough, says Jesus in this Parable, to have emotions of reverence for God and His will, you must push on to action, you must enter on the way of obedience. For it is in obedience that the religion of Jesus finds its goal.

Present-Day Faiths. Presbyterianism.

BY PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD MAIN, D.LITT., D.D., GLASGOW.

I.

THERE can be no doubt of the firm root which Presbyterianism has taken in the ecclesiastical soil not only of Europe but of other continents. An object-lesson on its greatness as a polity and tradition can be found in *The World Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System*, a society which furnishes an imposing array of

churches, clergymen, and communicants. Undoubtedly, there are several varieties of Presbyterianism within the fold of that Alliance, and there may well be a danger hidden in the welcome which such a fold holds out to differing flocks ; but it is obvious to every student of ecclesiastical forms of government that presbytery has a strong appeal to Protestant Churches in old and new countries of the world. Whatever may be its