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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE preacher is exposed to two temptations : the first is that of seeing too much in his text, the other is that of seeing too little. The historical method sharpens his intellectual conscience. He will shrink, if he be honest, from preaching on the coming of Christ from Haggai's prophecy, as given in the Authorized Version, that 'the desire of all nations shall come,' when he discovers, as he may from the Revised Version, that the reference is to the silver and gold, the 'desirable things,' which are to stream from all nations into the temple of the Lord in the days to which the prophet looks forward.

But while there is the real danger of misinterpreting, by unwarrantably enlarging, the original meaning of his text, there is the equal danger of unwarrantably limiting it. The men who wrote the Bible, we may be sure, saw deep into the essence and mystery of life, and few things are more astonishing than the large and almost ilimitable meaning to which their simple words lend themselves, when we learn the art of giving them the earnest consideration to which they are entitled.

As we read, for example, through the brief tale of Isaac as told in Gn 26, we light upon one of those simple verses which seem at first to have no more than historical value : it is this—'Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.' This is one of the verses to

which the preacher is apt to do less than justice. He can read it and pass on, without observing that in it there may be a well of refreshing water for himself. A glance at the Hebrew, or—if his Hebrew be far to seek—at the margin either of the Authorized or the Revised Version, will reveal to him that the 'springing water' of the text is 'living water' in the original ; and, if he have the preacher's eye for a homiletic hint, his heart will leap, with the same sort of thrill as Isaac's servants experienced when they came upon the living water, as he observes the close connexion between digging and life. It was the man who dug who reached the living water.

There are parts of Palestine refreshed the long fierce summer through by springs and copious fountains, and there are other parts where springs are few, and men who needed water had to dig for it. Child of the promise as he was, Isaac had to face the practical problem of finding water for thirsty men and cattle. In part he was heir to his father's wells ; for the rest, he must dig for the water he needs till he finds it. How the eyes of the diggers would gleam as, almost like a human thing, the fresh, kindly water leaped up to welcome them ! Living water for living men, for men who will steadily and bravely cut their way through all difficulty and impediment to the refreshment without which their souls languish as in a thirsty land.

And is not Palestine, with her hills and her

valleys, her dry places and her wells, the mirror of all human experience? Sometimes a thirsty tract of our own life is blessed by wells which we have not dug. We have all fallen heir to wells which our fathers have dug for us. But there are other tracts on which our fathers can do nothing for us, and we shall perish of thirst if we will not ourselves dig down till we reach the living water.

The clear cool water is not to be had for the wishing, but for the digging. With faith in the ground beneath our feet we must dig down and down till the sweat stands upon our brow. Thus and thus only can we reach the water, and only thus do we deserve it. This treasure, like many another, is hidden, and will only reveal itself to the man who bends his back to dig for it.

If genius is rare, industry, the capacity for taking infinite pains, is nearly as rare. That is why so many lives are insipid. They are not refreshed by living waters, because there has been no digging. We will do nothing more than scratch the surface of our experience; most often, not even that. We stand lazily upon it, without piercing through it to the thing that would refresh us. We forget that, if we descend to the depths, He is there. From thoughtlessness or indifference, we will not descend into the meaning and purpose of the passing days, and so we remain unrefreshed. There is no living water for the man who will not dig.

All this has its special application to the preacher. Pressed by the weight of many engagements and cares, from some of which at least a wise congregation would, even for its own sake, readily release him, he loses the student's habit. He reads what little he has time to read, but he does not study; he skims the surface, forgetting that the secrets are hidden in the depths. Of all books the Bible is the one which is most dishonoured by superficial study. Much of it, let us be thankful, is plain enough: in the Psalms and in the Gospels there is food for the simplest and most unlearned souls. But much—let us confess the truth—is difficult enough, much, too, that it is of the highest importance to know. He is a clever man indeed who completely under-

stands the Prophets or the Epistles on the first, or even the twentieth, perusal.

Literature like this is not to be grasped by skimming over it, and even the more seemingly simple books will yield their richest treasure only to the man who will dig for it. But when we find ourselves content to move airily across their chapters, we should pause and assure ourselves that deep down are living waters, and brace ourselves to the patient search without which those waters cannot truly be ours. Surface meanings are for idle souls; the more patiently and prayerfully we search the depths, the more surely and abundantly shall we find that well of water which springeth up into everlasting life.

One of Christ's parables pillories for all time a man who said, 'I cannot dig.' And it is no accident that this man was a dishonest knave, who had wasted his master's goods and was destitute of any sense of stewardship. Ashamed to beg and unable to dig—what a sorry fate! and not least sorry for the preacher. He is indeed not always ashamed to beg, or at least to borrow. He sometimes plunders shamelessly enough the resources accumulated by the patient toil of other men; but he can never make them, in any proper sense, his own, until he has learned something of the intellectual and moral discipline by which those from whom he borrowed have acquired them.

So it comes back to this, that the preacher who would reach the living water that he may present it to the thirsty lips of others, must learn the art of digging. He must recover the lost habit of real study. He must take the time or make the time. It is never competent to him to say, 'I cannot dig.' He can, if he will; and why should any man of us refuse to dig whose hope is sustained by the promise of the Lord that he that seeketh findeth?

It can hardly be denied that the disciples' belief in the resurrection of Jesus played a vital part in the formation and development of the Christian

Church. But for the 'Resurrection-faith,' the Christian Church would probably, or almost certainly, not have come into being; and the interpretation of the 'Resurrection-faith' has largely determined the history of Christian thought. A Christian creed ending with 'crucified, dead, and buried' is practically inconceivable.

There may, however, be a real distinction between the Easter faith and the Easter message. It may be one thing to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, another thing to accept the narratives of the Resurrection as they have been handed down to us, through apostle and evangelist. Even so essentially conservative a critic as Dr. E. G. Selwyn can say: 'While the Christian creed asserts an unequivocal belief in the fact of our Lord's resurrection, it lays down nothing as *de fide* in regard to the manner of it; and on the latter point many different interpretations have been given by theologians of unquestioned orthodoxy at different times.'

The late Principal Denney went the length of saying that the manifestations of the Risen Saviour which created the Christian Church and the New Testament retain their original certainty even under the supposition that we can 'make nothing whatever of the testimony of the evangelists'—although he was himself far from asserting the need of contemplating a supposition so extreme. Yet he suggests that Luke's tendency to 'materialize' the supernatural has left traces on his narrative of the Resurrection, in which the Risen Lord is represented as eating, an idea 'not only incongruous but repellent.'

As the conviction that Jesus still lived may have led Luke to materialize the Resurrection stories, so it may be held to have suggested the further belief in the empty tomb. Thus a distinction may be made, within the distinction between the Easter faith and the Easter message, between the personal existence and activity of Jesus after His death and the reanimation of His dead body. There can be little doubt that the Resurrection in the first sense is essential to the Christian faith. But it

may be maintained, as for example by Mr. Bevan, that the truth of the continued activity of Jesus does not seem to depend on whether the body taken down from the Cross was reanimated or not.

This position is supported in a recent essay by the Rev. C. J. CADOUX, M.A., D.D., on *The Resurrection and Second Advent of Jesus* (Independent Press, Memorial Hall, London; 1s. net), in which two main statements are made and defended. The first, that by 'rising from the dead on the third day,' Jesus meant precisely the same as 'coming on the clouds in great power and glory,' does not immediately concern us in this Note. The second statement is that 'Jesus after His death manifested Himself to individual disciples and groups of disciples, not with the physical flesh of His body raised out of the tomb, but in the manner obscurely suggested by various psychical experiences recorded in later times.'

This statement, we may remark, catches up the teaching of Dr. Kirsopp Lake in 'Resurrection.' We may also remark that Dr. CADOUX has not found space within the limits of his essay to indicate the 'psychical experiences' which are in view. But what we chiefly want to say is this, that while the 'objective-vision theory' may be offensive to many Christian believers, it has also proved helpful to many, enabling them to make their subscription to the historic Christian faith. They cannot identify in their minds the Easter faith and the Easter message, and yet they cannot abandon the Easter faith in favour of some 'subjective-vision theory' such as Schmiedel's. The distinction here involved between 'objective' and 'subjective' may not be altogether happy, but it is one in which apparently the mind may rest.

Every new interpretation of the life of Jesus has to deal with the Temptation, because that is a crucial point on which all the rest hangs. Many of the 'modern' constructions come to grief at this obstacle. Dr. Warschauer, for example, in his 'Historical Life' of Jesus, endeavours to make out

that Jesus shared the belief of His time about the coming of the Kingdom of God. But the Gospel accounts of the Temptation show that this idea is a fallacy. The inner significance of the Temptation is that Jesus met this current conception of the Kingdom at the outset of His career, considered it, weighed it, and rejected it.

In the impressive little book, reviewed in another column, *Jesus as I see Him*, by Johannes MÜLLER, there is an attractive exposition of the Temptation. The author begins, of course, with the experience of Jesus at the Baptism. 'That he was expressing directly at every minute the divine life of God now for the first time became a fact of which he was aware. This sudden realisation at baptism radically altered his consciousness, took root and unfolded itself in his mind, and became human experience . . . He felt compelled to face and fulfil this extraordinary new position, and the tumult within him urged him into the loneliness of the desert . . . For, as soon as a personal experience emerges from the region of divine immediacy and is intellectually grasped, the race mind with its individual personal bias asserts itself. Then it is that there arises the possibility of misunderstanding and distortion, of the outlook becoming dimmed and discoloured.'

This is how the Temptation arose. The more the Divine call to bring in the Kingdom of God echoed through His soul, the more persistent became the thought: how can it be brought about? There flashed before Him the possibilities, the ways and means that present themselves usually to the human mind. For the three temptations represent the three ways in which men, even up to the present day, think they will bring in the Kingdom of God.

The first temptation is the thought of bringing about a new order by the alleviation of hardship or evil, through changing the conditions and multiplying the necessaries of life. To-day the parallel is the effort to solve the social problem, for example, by destroying capitalism. Jesus' answer was that the Kingdom comes in a different

way, that man's salvation has its source not in earthly reform but in the creative act of God. 'Nothing but the action of God can redeem and transform humanity. Corruption and misery are not healed by reforms, and nothing fundamental is wrought by culture. World-renewal comes through God's life germinating and growing.'

The second temptation (the Pinnacle of the Temple) is one to win the masses by sensational means. But to Jesus it was clear that the Kingdom was to come 'in a secret, simple, and casual way.' He never dreamed of undertaking anything in His own strength. To 'tempt God' is to launch out on a task in the foolhardiness of our erring human knowledge and desire, and presume that God will make it successful; to depend on 'answers to prayer' and extraordinary efforts, instead of realizing that God is to do everything in His own quiet way. Everything is foreseen, shaped, achieved by Him. And His will is our way.

In the third temptation is the old assurance that the Kingdom can be built up by the very factors that have produced the old world order, by 'new views of ethics,' by culture, by politics, by laws, ideals, art, and science—all applied by the help of logic, pedagogics, suggestive mental treatment, and all the rest! But to Jesus all this was nothing. God has a power which is not of these things. We cannot organize the Kingdom into existence. Jesus rejected everything that savoured of the world and its method. 'All human thought or skill is not merely a useless specific, but a deadly poison. For the Kingdom of God is diametrically opposed to the system of the world, and to everything that the human mind produces, the tools with which it works, the things that it fabricates.' To human judgment it is irrational, unthinkable, impossible, but it is true.

These thoughts of Jesus were soon lost by His disciples. Christendom succumbed to the temptations that Jesus resisted, not only in the desert, but inflexibly throughout His whole life. From the human point of view Jesus and His activities were insane. No one understood Him then, and it is

difficult for us to see Him aright even now. And we shall never really understand Him until we realize that what happened at His temptation was the secret of His whole life—everything of God, God and His ways the one sole object of faith and acceptance as life and guidance, as end and means.

Such is Jesus at His temptation as this writer 'sees Him.' The same truth was once put in a

memorable way by a preacher of exceptional insight and gifts. He put the three temptations in three pithy phrases. The first: 'Necessity knows no law.' The second: 'Faith knows no law.' The third: 'Success knows no law.' To the first Jesus said: 'The one necessity is God's law.' To the second He said: 'Faith accepts God's way.' To the third He said: 'The real success is to be at one with God.'

Commentaries on the Old and New Testaments.¹

BY PROFESSOR ARTHUR S. PEAKE, D.D., MANCHESTER.

IV.

EDUARD MEYER has recently emphasized the view that Luke and Acts are not two distinct works by the same author, but the first and second parts of a single work. This position has been strongly enforced by Cadbury in his *Making of Luke-Acts*. It is accordingly interesting that the two have been constantly treated apart and by different writers. If Luke is taken in combination with other books it is with Mark and Matthew, not with Acts. For this their place in the Canon is partly responsible. It was natural that the force of gravitation should detach Luke from Acts and bring it into the corpus of the Gospels. It is regrettable that the long-promised edition of Acts in ICC by C. H. Turner, with whom Bate has since been associated, has not yet appeared. Our most comprehensive commentary is by Knowling (*EGT*), now nearly thirty years old. It was, indeed, too full, taking account of many things of an ephemeral character. But it was a very thorough piece of work. Rackham's contribution to *West. C.*, which occupies a distinct place of its own, was also fuller than the normal limits of the series permitted. A

¹ I use ICC for *International Critical Commentary*, CB for *Cambridge Bible*, Cent. B. for *Century Bible*, West. C. for *Westminster Commentaries*, EGT for *Expositor's Greek Testament*, HC for *Handcommentar zum Neuen Testament*, HK for *Handkommentar zum alten Testament*, HNT for Lietzmann's *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, KHC for *Kurzer Handcommentar zum Alten Testament*, Mey. for Meyer's *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, SNT for J. Weiss's *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, ZK for Zahn's *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*.

new edition in *CGT* has been for many years overdue. I might mention a rather more elementary school edition by Burnside. It displays a fairly good knowledge of modern literature in English or Latin. Bartlet (*Cent. B.*) is fresh and suggestive; a new edition of this brought up to date would be welcome. In the new series entitled *The Clarendon Bible*, A. W. F. Blunt has written an interesting volume on Acts which is attractively produced and copiously illustrated. He has done Galatians in the same series. A larger commentary on the English text of Acts by Furneaux may also be mentioned.

A very comprehensive work on Acts is designed when complete to form the first part of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, edited by Foakes-Jackson and Lake. The first volume dealt with the background and does not concern us. The second volume consisted of a considerable number of studies, dealing specially with the criticism of Acts, contributed by various writers. The third volume contained a most comprehensive and very important study of the text by Ropes. The fourth volume, which is in the press, is to contain a translation and commentary.

There are several important German works. Wendt (*Mey.*) is learned and sober, one of the best expositions available. Preuschen (*HNT*) appeared almost simultaneously with the last edition of Wendt. It also was a solid contribution, though more extreme. Norden's *Agnostos Theos* could be taken account of in the preface to both commentaries; had it appeared earlier it would presumably