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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

In the opening chapter of Principal H. Wheeler Robinson's recent volume on *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit* (reviewed in another column) there is a useful analysis of the characteristic features of Christian experience, which is the result of the fellowship of God and man through Christ. If that fellowship is ever to become universal, then we should expect that Christian experience should reveal itself as possessed of catholicity, in the sense of being intimately related to human experience in general.

The first postulate of Christian experience seems to be the worth of human personality. 'This gives a cosmic setting to the humblest life; what more can be said of man's importance than that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth?' The idea of the value of personal life is emphasized in Greek thought, and is sometimes represented as the particular contribution of Greece to the historical preparation for Christianity, but none the less Dr. Robinson is right in insisting that in the Old Testament also man's dignity is normally asserted. In fact, the Old Testament gives to man a meaning in the universal scheme of things which we shall hardly find elsewhere. It is enough to cite in this connexion the prophetic consciousness.

The second characteristic of Christian experience is its central ethical principle, which Dr. Robinson names 'the spirit of the Cross.' In *agape*, a new name for what is essentially a new thing, the Spirit of the Cross is reproduced. The early Christians were conscious of this, and even to-day to be a 'Christian' is to display those qualities of charity, mercy, and forgiveness which are supremely exemplified in the Passion of Jesus. And the example of Jesus provided an interpretation and manifestation of the nature of God. The Spirit of the Cross received, in other words, a 'theological apotheosis,' so that from the beginning Christians could say, 'We love, because He first loved us.'

The third characteristic of Christian experience is deliverance or 'salvation' by grace—deliverance from adversity, moral evil, and death, 'the three great and deep shadows that fall across the human pathway.' In Buddhism deliverance is by escape from the illusion of personality, in Hinduism through union with the supreme Brahman, in Islam through submission to the will of Allah, but in Christianity it comes from the nature of God as revealed by the prophets of Israel and in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. In all theories of atonement there is a common appeal to the grace of the Divine nature; and in both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, different as are their conceptions of the mediatorial function of the Church, there is a vital discovery of the Divine nature as gracious.

The fourth characteristic of Christian experience is dependence on the Holy Spirit, by which name

is indicated the new factor in Christianity, the whole activity of the Divine as mediated to the believer through Christ—'through Christ we have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.' It is not that the operation of the Divine spiritual energy is limited by man's consciousness of it, but as a matter of experience it is immeasurably enhanced when psychologically or sacramentally mediated through Jesus Christ. 'In some form or other, this dependence on the Holy Spirit is an essential mark of any experience that deserves to be called Christian.'

Lastly, the fifth characteristic of Christian experience is the corporate realization of the Kingdom of God. The emphasis in the phrase 'Christian society' may be on the adjective 'Christian' or on the noun 'society,' but it is more important to recognize that the foundations of the Christian Church go back beyond the New Testament or even the Old, being grounded in human nature itself, to which the social aspects of personality belong as really as the individual aspects. While there is thus nothing characteristic in the existence of the Christian Church, perhaps its most characteristic feature is its reconciliation of the individual and social aspects of life, or at least in its ideal of their reconciliation.

The record of a spiritual evolution is always of interest and value, especially if it be the outcome of prolonged and strenuous thinking, and if it amounts in the final issue to 'a mental rebirth.' Such is the record embodied in *The Psychology of Socialism*, by Dr. Henry De MAN (Allen & Unwin; 16s. net), which has been translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul. Dr. De MAN, by birth an 'intellectual,' joined the ranks of the socialists in his native city of Amsterdam as long ago as 1871, and he has devoted his life to the cause. A study of the new psychology and, still more, his experience of three years in the trenches led to profound changes in his thought. While still a believer in socialism, he has outgrown Marxism, and he gives his reasons. His book is far more than a personal record. It is one of the most profound and searching criticisms of Marxism that has yet been published. It reveals in the writer an extraordinary knowledge at first hand of socialist movements in Europe and America, and a wonderful insight into the mind of the so-called proletariat (hateful word). In this last respect it is a valuable contribution to psychology.

The War made Dr. De MAN a pacifist. 'My personal experience of the war has produced a conviction that I must henceforth abstain from any sort of action which will involve me in war-making or in the preparation for war; and must repudiate the claim of any state or other collectivity that it has the right to dispose of my life—or, through me, of the life of another. . . . A good end, the suppression of war, cannot be achieved by the use of bad means, participation in war. The reason is that warfare sets at work motives which are the driving force of war, and which survive war. It is equally impossible to establish liberty by despotism, to install democracy by dictatorship, and to end the reign of force by the use of force.' All this the writer is clear-sighted and logical enough to apply to the class-war. 'If my inference from my war experience has been that all war is an evil, it is because I can no longer believe in the possibility of attaining a good end by these evil means. Well now, force in the service of a revolution would not act in any different way from force in the service of a war. It would lead away from the goal we wish to reach.'

The criticism of Karl Marx is weighty. Full appreciation is shown of the greatness of the man and of his work. 'Marx was the first to combine into a closely reasoned system the outlook of political economy and the outlook of historical evolution; and he thus effected for the social sciences a step forward analogous to that which Darwin effected for the biological sciences.' But Marxism is now seen to be a product of the materialistic rationalism of the nineteenth century, an age when 'exact science, with whose aid technique was producing such stupendous material values, was supposed to provide the standard by which all values were to be measured.' 'The twentieth

century way of thinking, and, above all, the thought of the post-war epoch, has a very different stamp. What Spengler termed "the century of psychology" no longer believes that human knowledge can be subsumed in logical thought. We are seeking for a conception of the world which, instead of being based upon the indirect experience of the conceptual universe, shall derive from the direct experience of the real universe of feeling and will.' Marx regarded man as nothing but an economic unit whose reaction to his environment was absolutely determined. The new psychology has shown the hopeless inadequacy of this. Reason has not been set aside, but has been given its due place in the hierarchy of human nature.

Man is not governed simply by economic forces, or by considerations of self-interest, or by any conscious reasonings, but by impulses far more profound. 'The men of the nineteenth century, unwilling to hear a word about the possible limits of scientific knowledge, did a great deal to shake the faith of the twentieth century in scientific knowledge. They were far too inclined to find salvation in technical progress and in the increase of knowledge which subserved this progress—as if these things alone would suffice to give us more understanding, more wisdom, and more happiness. Whether they went to church or not they no longer had any religion, no longer had any kind of faith which could say to them, "You ought." They tried to replace their lost faith by science; to make of science, instead of a servant, a master. This idolatry transformed men into the barbarians who revealed themselves in the world-war. There is only one science which can claim to guide us on the path of duty. It is the science of good and evil, in a word, conscience.' Even the Freudian psychoanalysis, dissecting the soul with cruel delight in every new discovery of animal instincts, comes at last upon a mysterious force which can neither be decomposed nor derived from any other force, to which Freud himself gives the name of 'the censor.' 'Is it not touching, is it not sublime, that when we delve deeply enough into the human mind, even if we are only on the look-out for traces of man's animal heritage, we should always find these elements of the divine? In truth we did not need to wait for psychoanalysis to disclose the power of the faith in good and evil. But how brilliant a confirmation it is of the intuitive knowledge of former days; and at the same time how precious a testimony to the profundity of the psychoanalytic method, that psychoanalysis, after all, finds itself unable to say what Lalande once said of God, "I have no need of this hypothesis!"—but must say, on the contrary, "There is nothing more real in man than the divine power of the moral law."'

And so Dr. De MAN reaches a socialism which is not merely an economic policy but a moral ideal. 'The highest aim of scientific socialism is to become a social science in the service of the social conscience.' 'I no longer believe in the revolution as a sort of Last Judgment. But I believe all the more firmly in a revolution which will change ourselves. . . . I insist upon the need for a renovation of social conviction by means of the moral and religious consciousness. . . . I fancy that the day is not far distant when even opportunists will discover that they are throwing away their best trump when they fail to take into account the masses' need for faith.' How soon this fundamental need will reassert itself with vigour, the writer cannot tell, but he feels the outlook to be hopeful. 'Will a new spirit descend on mankind, as has happened from time to time in the course of history? This is a secret of the future, whose veil we are unable to lift. . . . For my own part, I firmly believe that there will soon be a swing of the pendulum, and that the masses will return from the materialistic cynicism which now prevails to the religious fervour which animated socialism in its early days.'

Professor PEAKE has rendered many valuable services to the Christian Church. No man in Britain has done more than he to popularize the scientific study of the Bible. He has toiled with almost incredible industry to bring the message of the Bible, as interpreted by sane and reverent

criticism, home to the mind and conscience of to-day. Both by the books he has written, and by the literary enterprises he has either initiated or controlled, he has done much to inform and influence public opinion on things Biblical and theological.

But there is another side to Dr. PEAKE. He is anything but a recluse, confined to his study or his professorial chair; he is as practical as he is scholarly, and he has long been recognized as a man whose counsel in matters affecting the life of the Church is as well worth seeking as it has long been acknowledged to be in the department of Biblical literature and criticism. One proof of this is that, in the joint negotiations which were the sequel of the now famous Lambeth Appeal, he was one of those appointed by the committee of the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches to represent those Churches in their discussions with representatives of the Church of England in the joint sub-committee. Another and almost more convincing proof is his election this year to the Presidency of the National Free Church Council.

This was indeed a high honour: how well it was deserved is plain for all to see in the report of his eloquent and virile *Presidential Address* (Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4; 2d.), which we hope will be read for its admirable statement of the Protestant position, and for its peculiar timeliness in view of recent discussions in Parliament which have stirred England to its depth, and which incidentally show that, deep below the surface of what seems to be an indifference to religion as widespread as it is deplorable, the people of Great Britain not only are still essentially a religious people, but that they can be moved by religious issues as by nothing else.

There is a fine sanity about the address, and a large and tolerant sympathy towards other types of rite, creed, and organization than that with which Dr. PEAKE himself is identified. He could live and work happily, he tells us, under any form of Church order except a despotism, and so long as Episcopacy is not regarded as of the essence of the Church, he would be prepared to accept a limited form of Episcopacy, that is, one combined with elements of congregational and presbyteral order. Deploring as he does the existing divisions of Christ's Church, and willing as he would be to make certain concessions in the interests of re-union, he is, however, well aware that the general sentiment of Free Churchmen would not be in favour of reordination, even if this were 'conditional' and cast no aspersion on the validity of their previous ordination.

Next to the Lambeth Appeal, the Lausanne Conference was one of the most significant phenomena of recent times—especially significant because the Eastern Orthodox Church participated in it. Not, of course, Rome; from all such efforts at re-union Rome holds stubbornly aloof. Her aim is not re-union, but absorption; or, if in some fashion we might yet characterize her aim as re-union, it would be a re-union purchased at the price of abject submission to her, a price which no self-respecting Church would dream of consenting to pay.

In view of the 'arrogant self-confidence' of Rome, it is not surprising to find Professor PEAKE admitting that if, in the inconceivable event of his feeling obliged to transfer his ecclesiastical allegiance, he would be much more strongly drawn to the East than to Rome. Both, however, he argues, contain elements which Protestantism cannot possibly accept; and his careful and comprehensive summary of these features is one of the most valuable statements in his speech.

The sentence describing those features is important enough to be quoted in full. They include, he says, 'the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church and, in particular, of the dogmatic decrees of the Councils, the invocation of the Virgin and the saints, the change at the moment of consecration of the bread and the wine into the actual body and blood of Christ, the adoration of this Eucharistic body and blood with the same worship as is paid to the Trinity, the offering up in the

Eucharist of the body of Christ for the quick and the dead, the necessity of confession to a priest and priestly absolution, apostolic succession, the vital necessity of the episcopate to the existence of the Church, and the demand that Scripture must be interpreted in accordance with ecclesiastical tradition.' This last demand is peculiarly distasteful to men who have breathed the free spirit of scientific inquiry.

But Rome is felt to be a much more fatal obstacle than the Eastern Orthodox Church to that reunion of the Churches which many Christian people regard as the desirable and reasonable destiny of Christendom. To certain types of mind Rome no doubt makes an almost irresistible appeal—by the beauty of her services, by the assurance which she professes to bring to minds racked by doubt, by her age-long history, and in other imposing ways. But in one devastating sentence Professor PEAKE disposes of the dogma of Papal infallibility, on the truth of which 'the whole Roman position is now staked.'

Here is the sentence: 'If Matt. xvi. 18 is authentic; and if by the "rock" Peter is intended; and if the passage implies the infallibility of Peter; and if Peter ever resided in Rome; and if residing there he was its Bishop; and if he passed on his prerogatives to later Bishops of Rome; and if he did not pass them on to the Bishops in other places where he resided; if indeed there was any monarchical episcopate in Rome till decades after his time; and if the explicit utterances of Jesus did not forbid such a claim; and if it were not incompatible with much in the New Testament record—then and only then could one concede the Roman claim.' And the value of the dogma is, after all, little more than 'very effective window-dressing.'

But Professor PEAKE touches issues which are much more vital when he comes to deal with the relation of the Free Churches to the Church of England, the relation of the Church to the State, and indirectly with the ecclesiastical problems which are agitating the country at the present moment. His whole argument is coloured by his high conception of the nature and function of the Church.

Without in the very least depreciating the ministry, he maintains that 'the ministry has nothing which the whole body does not possess.' If the ministry has a prophetic and priestly character it is only because this character is already inherent in the Church, and the grace which the minister may claim is in no way different from the grace which may be confidently claimed by and bestowed upon the humblest of the Church's members and workers. No hard-and-fast line divides clergy and laity.

On the question of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion Professor PEAKE takes up a position which is representative of the attitude of the Free Churches. He believes as firmly as any Roman Catholic in the Real Presence; but that Presence, he adds, must be more spiritually interpreted, and 'it ought not to be regarded as different in kind from that which the Christian experiences in prayer and other acts of devotion.' No change takes place in the elements themselves.

Dearly as we love the Church, we must all sorrowfully admit that she is nothing like the potent force for good that she should be and could be; and Professor PEAKE concludes his address by directing his hearers to her fundamental weakness and the remedy. The real trouble with the Church, he says, is anæmia, the 'thinness and poorness' of her spiritual life; and the real remedy is her right adjustment to God. We must recapture that fear of God which from some types of religious and ecclesiastical life has all but vanished, but which happily some theological thinkers are beginning to re-emphasize, and which can best be recovered and nourished by a deeper acquaintance with, and a fresh appreciation of the Bible which, with its revelation of God and its story of Jesus, remains our 'indispensable means of grace.' Its prevalent neglect sufficiently explains the decadence of the Church, in so far as she may justly be called decadent, and the frank and loving study of it would open for the Church once more the flood-gates of power and blessing.