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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

WE are glad that Principal John OMAN, D.D., has revised and re-issued *Vision and Authority* (Hodder & Stoughton ; 8s. 6d. net). For, although it originated in thoughts and feelings that were stirred by the Robertson Smith controversy, and was first published in 1902, it is a book that might have been written to-day. Neither in form nor in substance does it reflect that controversy. But the author hints that, if the book had been written to-day, it would have been less 'intuitional' and more 'rational' in tone.

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The main subject of the book is 'the true religious authority and the kind of person who exercises it,' and it is well suggested in the sub-title, 'The Throne of St. Peter.' Not that the Principal of Westminster College appears here in the rôle of a defender of the Papal authority. On the contrary, he seeks to emphasize the note of freedom that was struck, but not deeply enough, at the Protestant Reformation. The true successor of St. Peter, and the heir of his authority, is neither an infallible Church nor an infallible Book.

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It is, in fact, the burden of Dr. OMAN'S work that the real authority of religion is to be found, not in the potentate who sits on the throne of the Cæsars, nor in the prelate enthroned at Canterbury, nor in the stern presbyter who rules his Highland glen, but in him who, be he potentate or prelate or presbyter, owes his apostolic succession to his vision of the kingdom of love. 'And the authority

of this vision is what alone it will be of profit to restore.'

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It might be noted that the book falls into four parts, namely, The Internal Authority, The External Authority, The Church's Creed, and The Church's Organization. It might also be said that it is written in a style which is compact, suggestive, and pointed, often vivid and eloquent, and which may be readily understood by ordinary people. The absence of technicalities is in this case a sign of independence of thought.

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If we select one of the most theological portions of the book, it will serve to show the popular way in which the author can express his religious thinking. But this portion—the 'Four Veils'—should also be of interest and help to the expositor, showing as it does how the revelation of the Divine love removes the ignorance, sin, weakness, and evanescence that shut men out from the mystery of God.

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First, there is the veil of ignorance, which is removed by the Incarnation. If God manifests Himself in our human form, even the ignorance of the unlearned need not be a hindrance to knowledge of God. But Dr. OMAN does not encourage us to speculate on the mode of the Incarnation. If to do so could yield us practical fruit in the knowledge of God, 'would it ever have been necessary at all to teach us, like children at God's footstool, the mystery of godliness by the condescending mani-

festation of God in the flesh? For beings who could sit inside the heavenly council and differentiate the Divine essence and map out the Divine scheme an Incarnation were a superfluity.'

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The second veil is that of sin, which is removed by the Atonement. If God Himself reconciles us to Himself, our practical denial of His purpose of love may not ultimately hinder us from knowing it and loving it. Why is it, Dr. OMAN asks in this connexion, that, while all abstract presentations of the Atonement are unsatisfying, the presentation of the Apostles remains attractive and persuasive? 'Is not the very simple answer that the theologian always deals with the doctrine from without, and the Apostle always looks at it from within?' 'Love cannot be interpreted from the outside.'

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The third veil is weakness, which is removed by Grace. If God Himself is our strength, no weakness need make us despair of the highest victory. Here, again, we would fain know by seeing, by sight, how the enshrouding veil is taken away. 'The working of Grace, however, cannot be known before we have experience of it. We cannot, without rising to the height of its embrace, determine how it enfolds us. But then we find it singularly free from perplexity. Without any sense of incompatibility we are enabled to place the largest value that may be assigned to anything finite upon man's free choice, and at the same time to assign an absolute value to the Will that embraces all things.'

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The fourth veil is evanescence, which is removed by Immortality. If in God we live eternally the shortness of our earthly life does not deny us our share in the final glory. Were we to know what lies beyond, the glory might dazzle, or the length of the journey dismay; in any case our present life would cease to be our immediate sphere of discipline and duty. Our true hope rests in the discovery that now we have eternal life. 'Utterly different the Future may be from all we have experienced. It may be in still greater contrast to all we have anticipated. Immeasurably it may be beyond our most daring imagination. Yet the Christian hope

has this assurance that it admits of no strong dividing line between this life and another.'

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From all this it may be gathered that Dr. OMAN recognizes the limitations of theology, and that, if he had written his book to-day, it might have been more 'rational' in tone, but would not have been 'rationalistic': experience, he would say, is richer than thought, religion than theology.

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A thoughtful writer in the 'Times Literary Supplement' hazarded the remark recently, 'Who can tell if the coming revival of religion so confidently predicted in certain quarters may not be waiting for the time when we are able to respond more vigorously to the presentation of the Gospel most intimately associated with St. Paul?' It may be so, for in the great historic revivals Paul's gospel has been much to the front. It is, therefore, with great expectation and hope that we welcome the appearance in English of KARL BARTH'S *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (Pilgrim Press; \$2.25). Rarely have we heard the Pauline note sounded with such tremendous earnestness and power. It is in many ways a difficult book. The style is often rugged and abrupt; it surges along brimful of passion with the force of a swollen mountain torrent. It is full of antitheses, contradictions, paradoxes, many of them thrown in, doubtless, in the desperate hope of awaking dead souls and dead churches to face the eternal reality. It is certain that many will repudiate with vehemence and indignation the viewpoint of this book, for it implies an utter condemnation of 'this present world' as a lost and fallen world. It may be that many who have not been brought up in the traditions of the Reformed Church will find something amazing and even repellent in its overwhelming insistence on the sovereignty of God and the utter dependence and insufficiency of man. But no one who reads this book can fail to hear in it the authentic voice of a prophet.

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For here is a man who trembles at the word of God. Religion for him is Revelation and Re-

demption. It is not man's search for God, but God's gracious approach to sinful man. This movement is essentially and from first to last miraculous. It is the bringing into this world of a miraculous new order. 'The many miracles of the Bible are only illustrations of this, *the* miracle. . . . The Bible without the *absolute* miracle is simply *not* the Bible. Some day people will smile at the pictures of Jesus which we have made acceptable to the cultured by purging them of miracle, even more than our eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have smiled at the miracle stories.' The Bible is the Word of God. Its content is not human thoughts about God, but Divine thoughts about men. 'The Bible tells us not how we should talk with God, but what He says to us; not how we find the way to Him, but how He has sought and found the way to us. . . . The Bible lifts us out of the old atmosphere of man to the portals of a new world, the world of God.'

But what of the human element in the Bible? What of the Higher Criticism? Karl BARTH is no fundamentalist in the controversial sense, but he is undoubtedly impatient with the pre-eminence which has been given so long to literary and historical questions. Taking these for granted, he says, let us *get on*. 'For it is too clear that intelligent and fruitful discussion of the Bible begins when the judgment as to its human, its historical and psychological character has been made and *put behind* us. Would that the teachers of our high and lower schools, and with them the progressive element among the clergy of our established churches, would forthwith resolve to have done with a battle that once had its time but has now *had* it.'

We want to come at the kernel, the special content of this human document, the Biblical object. At a glance we can see that the men of the Bible had a quite extraordinary mental attitude and interest. 'Always there is the same seeing of the invisible, the same hearing of the inaudible, the same incomprehensible but no less undeniable epidemic of standing still and looking up.' What can it mean? Surely this, that God has come with overpowering reality into their life. 'It can in

truth be no less than a *mysterium tremendum* that draws the men of the Bible before our eyes out and on to the edge of all experience, thought, and action, to the edge of time and history, and impels them to attempt to leap off into the air, where obviously no man can stand.'

One of the most heart-shaking chapters of this great book is on the need and promise of Christian preaching. The minister must be past all feeling who can read it unmoved, so profoundly does it reveal, not the difficulty, but the impossibility of his task. That task is to relate the Word of God to the problem of human life. 'Often enough these two magnitudes, life and the Bible, have risen before me (and still rise!) like Scylla and Charybdis. If *these* are the whence and whither of Christian preaching, who shall, who can, be a minister and preach?' On Sunday morning when the bells ring, what a strange and momentous situation faces the preacher. The presence of the congregation expresses the expectancy of the people. The deepest question of the human heart will no longer down, but breaks out in flame—*is it true*, all this talk of God and life eternal? 'Blood and tears, deepest despair and highest hope, a passionate longing to lay hold of that which, or rather of *Him* who, overcomes the world because He is its Creator and Redeemer, its beginning and ending and Lord, a passionate longing to have the *Word* spoken, *the* word which promises grace in judgment, life in death, and the beyond in the here and now, *God's* word—this it is which animates our church-goers, however lazy, bourgeois, or commonplace may be the manner in which they express their want in so-called real life. There is no wisdom in stopping at the next-to-the-last and the next-to-the-next-to-the-last want of the people; and they will not thank us for doing so.' And over against that there is the greater expectancy of God, symbolized in the opening of the Bible. 'If the congregation brings to church the great question of human life and seeks an answer for it, the Bible contrariwise brings an answer, and seeks the question corresponding to this answer. It seeks questioning people who are eager to find and able to understand that its seeking of them is the very answer to their question. . . .

It is expectant of people who in its question will recognize their own question as well as God's answer—a final answer, which redeems, recreates, enlivens, and makes happy; an answer which casts the light of eternity upon time and all things in time, an answer which generates hope and obedience.'

The event towards which this momentous expectancy is directed from both sides is Christian preaching. 'It is simply a truism that there is nothing more important, more urgent, more helpful, more redemptive, and more salutary; there is nothing, from the viewpoint of heaven or earth, more relevant to the real situation, than the speaking and hearing of the Word of God.' But what peril inheres in this situation for the preacher! 'What are you doing, you man, with the Word of God upon your lips? Upon what ground do you assume the rôle of mediator between heaven and earth? Who has authorised you to take your place there and to generate religious feeling? And, to crown all, to do so with results, with success? Did one ever hear such overweening presumption, such Titanism, or—to speak less classically but more clearly—such brazenness! . . . Can a minister be saved? I would answer that with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. God may pluck us as a brand out of the fire. But so far as we know, there is no one who deserves the wrath of God more abundantly than the ministers. We may as well acknowledge that we are under judgment—and I mean judgment not in any spiritual, religious, or otherwise innocuous sense, but in the utmost realism.' There is no judgment that the world can pass upon us, however bitter and severe, which can equal our own sense of condemnation as soon as we realize what we have been attempting to do and in what manner we have been doing it. 'Ought we, taking our stand against the world, against unchristian views of life, and against the unreligious masses, to have been flinging out accusations which we have not first applied in their full weight to our own selves—and applied so forcibly as to have squeezed out of us what breath we had for condemning others? . . . We are worthy of being believed only as we are

aware of our own unworthiness. There is no such thing as convincing utterance about God except as Christian preaching feels its need, takes up its cross, and asks the question which God demands in order to be able to answer it. From this need we may not hope to flee.'

Among the bright stars in that constellation, the Church Congress of 1928, one of the brightest was Dean INGE, and his paper on 'Evolution and the Idea of God,' printed in the *Report* of the Congress, is so full of suggestions for preachers that we gladly summarize its points. The Dean begins by warning us not to deify the principle of evolution. The more complex is not necessarily the higher or better. There are blind alleys in Nature. There is such a thing as progress in the direction of evil. The German war-machine was as much a product of evolution as the Church Congress. And if we think that the mere process of time must bring about the Golden Age, the Devil will remind us, 'You forget that I am evolving too.'

The idea of progress is a kind of fetish at which the Dean tilts here as he did in his famous volume of essays. He quotes Rodin, the great sculptor, as saying that 'Progress exists in the world, but not in art. Pheidias will remain for ever without a rival.' The Dean adds that 'Jesus of Nazareth will remain for ever without a rival.' And his argument might be reinforced by Lord Haldane's assertion in his Gifford Lectures that in philosophy we have not gone a step beyond Plato and Aristotle. We must not deify evolution. It is only of finite things within a whole. We cannot infer from the fact of human progress within the historical period that the whole creation is engaged in a similar process. That is contradicted by what we know of astronomy.

That is Dean INGE's first point. His second may be said to be a warning not to let the scientific view of the world dominate us to the exclusion of

other points of view derived from religion, morality, and art, which are equally legitimate. The scientific view is an abstract, and therefore an imperfect, view. This liberation from a scientific obsession is becoming easier, since it has been seen how many of the old presuppositions of science have been challenged. Instead of a dogmatic scientific creed, such as the Victorian Age wished to impose on us, we are confronted with a series of notes of interrogation.

'We thought that lines were straight, and Euclid true ;

God said, "Let Einstein be," and all's askew !'

Then follows a list of the 'uncertainties' of science. What, for example, is evolution? Bergson speaks of 'creative evolution,' Lloyd Morgan of 'emergent evolution,' and Driesch thinks he has established a new vitalism. Pringle Pattison thinks he hasn't, and Needham says that the younger biologists will hear nothing of vitalism in any shape or form. So there is no uniform scientific creed.

This does not mean that all modern science is in the melting-pot, and that we can go back to any traditional story of creation that takes our fancy. No. The chief revelation which God has granted to this generation has been through the natural sciences. And when we muse over the wonderful picture of the universe which they have set before us, three impressions will predominate. First, *Sublimity*. 'What is man that thou art mindful of him?' And yet what is the mind of man that can travel over such immensities! We are abashed and exalted at once. Second, *Order*. 'Thou hast given them a law which cannot be broken.' It is a coherent system. Third, *Purpose*. Surely there is something in what Professor J. A. Thomson says: 'A self-stoking, self-repairing, self-preservative, self-adjusting, self-increasing, self-reproducing machine is only by an abuse of language called a machine at all.'

Does the picture of the Universe which modern science gives us point to materialism, or pantheism, or theism? The Dean can only give us the heads of an argument which is his answer. But here

they are. (1) Evolution is only a process within Nature, a mere variety of change, and there is nothing in its working which can explain how change is possible. Evolution cannot explain itself. (2) Change cannot exist, cannot be thought of, except in relation to the unchanging. This is argued by Kant, and his proof has never been shaken. The idea of evolution implies an unchanging background which is not itself evolving. (3) That which not itself evolving must be a real Being not subject to space or time. And (4) we ourselves would not be conscious of time and change unless we were, in our inmost nature, in contact with the supertemporal and superspatial. Evolution cannot have created our awareness of itself.

If this argument is valid, God can in no sense be a product of evolution, nor can His Being be involved in it. This conclusion brings us into conflict with the school of Hegel, for which the world is as necessary to God as God is to the world. The deity of these philosophers is immanent in the Creation, and has no existence, at any rate for us, outside that relation. But this purely immanent God is not the God of Christianity. Nor can we see how such a Being could survive such a dissolution of His world as science predicts. The hypothesis of a limited God which has appealed to minds as different as John Stuart Mill, Hastings Rashdall, and H. G. Wells may seem to absolve the Deity from complicity in the sin and suffering of the world, but only at the price of introducing an intractable dualism. 'I wish,' says the Dean, 'to emphasize this necessity of setting the object of our worship above the flux of phenomena, just because it runs counter to so much current thought.' The essence of religion is the belief that there is an absolute reality and truth, not within the changing world but above it. 'The Lord sitteth above the water-flood; the Lord remaineth a King for ever.'

There is no real conflict between the assertions of science and those of faith. The belief in Evolution is consistent with the belief in Creation. If science will have nothing to say to unending temporal progress, that does not trouble the Dean, for such a doctrine is not part of Christianity. The

proofs of Divine immanence in no way contradict belief in transcendence. The plain evidence of man's lowly origin is not disturbing, since we all know that every human individual began with microscopic germs much lower in the scale than any mammal. And, finally, if no coherent system can be based on time and space, does this not show that they are not ultimate realities? Even if the very materials of the world dissolve, we know that we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Not only is God above the evolutionary

process; we also have a footing in that eternal world, of which we are citizens.

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 'My conclusion is that Evolution is only the method by which the eternal God carries out most of His purposes in the world. Belief in gradual change is taking the place of the older belief in catastrophic Divine intervention. It is a question about God's method of working. I do not think that the existence or attributes of God are involved in it at all.'

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## The Resurrection of the Body.

BY THE REVEREND J. M. SHAW, D.D., PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN AUBURN  
 THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

ONE article of our Christian Creed is this: 'I believe in the resurrection of the body.' This is one of the distinctive affirmations of the Christian doctrine of immortality. As against the views at once of Greek philosophy and of Oriental pantheistic thought, Christianity asserts the immortality of the complete personality, not of the spirit only, but of spirit and body.

### I.

Here, however, it is necessary to guard very carefully against certain common misrepresentations and misconceptions of the properly Christian New Testament view. The New Testament view with regard to the resurrection of the body is not that the present material body of earth is after death somehow to be revived and resuscitated so as to be united again with the soul or spirit. This was the popular Jewish pre-Christian view, which we find dominant in Jewish Apocalyptic literature and which was held by the Pharisees in our Lord's own day—a view connected originally in Jewish thought with that of the Messianic kingdom as a kingdom to be set up on earth, with the consequent demand that the righteous dead be brought back to life in the body in order to have a share in this Kingdom. It is in this crassly material form, unfortunately, that, chiefly under pressure of the Gnostic controversy, the doctrine of a bodily resurrection first found entrance into the creeds of the Christian Church and has for too long

influenced the Church's thinking on the subject. The earliest Christian Creed, for example, that known as the Old Roman Creed, which is the basis of the later fuller Apostles' Creed, and which Harnack carries back to the early part of the second century, spoke definitely of a 'resurrection of the flesh.' 'I believe in the resurrection of the flesh (*carnis resurrectionem*).' One of these early creeds, the creed of the Church of Aquileia, actually spoke of a 'resurrection of this flesh (*hujus carnis resurrectionem*).' The form 'the resurrection of the flesh' still survives in the Church of England Prayer Book in the Order for the visitation of the sick, and in the Offices for infant and adult baptism, though altered to 'the resurrection of the body' in the Daily Services. This materialistic type of view became dominant in the Western Church chiefly through the influence of Augustine, and in process of time found probably its typical or best known expression in the seventeenth-century Westminster credal or confessional formulations. In the Westminster *Shorter Catechism*, for example, in answer to the question, 'What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?' it is said, 'The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection' (Ans. 37). Here, manifestly, the implication or suggestion is that the body that has gone down into the grave and undergone corruption, will after an indefinite