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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

KARL BARTH utters a passionate appeal to preachers and teachers to pass beyond questions of criticism and give their strength to expounding the special content of the Bible, 'the remarkable *something* with which the writers of these stories and those who stood behind them were concerned, the Biblical *content*.' As if in answer to that appeal one of the greatest Biblical critics of our time, Dr. James MOFFATT, has given us a magnificent exposition of New Testament truth.

He has chosen for his theme *Love in the New Testament* (Hodder & Stoughton; 10s. 6d. net). We are all agreed that Christianity is a religion of love. What do we mean by that, and what is the evidence of the New Testament? These questions Dr. MOFFATT has set himself to answer, and his answer is a monument of learning.

Dr. MOFFATT considers it 'timely to readjust our estimate of Christian love by examining the classical standards as presented in the New Testament literature.' And that for two reasons. '(a) Some detach "God is love" from the context, and regard this either as the statement of a cosmic principle or as a complete definition of Christianity in itself. . . . (b) There is a tendency to isolate brotherly love and to concentrate upon that as the essence of Christianity, as though the ethical message could be detached from the religious basis with which it is organically connected in the New Testament.' As men in previous times were pre-

occupied with the truth of the sovereignty of God and deduced from it what seemed to them to be logical conclusions as to the nature of the Divine decrees, so the Christian mind of to-day has laid hold on the truth of the love of God and has proceeded to draw deductions from it without due regard to the teaching of the New Testament. Hasty generalizations, such as that God is the Father of all men by virtue of His creatorship, that all men are His sons, that all have a natural claim upon His love, and that His love will infallibly assure the salvation of all, are preached to-day as if they were beyond question the very essence of the Christian faith. Those who hold views of this type will find in Dr. MOFFATT'S exposition much that is striking, not to say startling.

The subject is treated under the three heads of the love of God to man, the love of man to God, and to his fellow-men. Under each head there is a most careful and thorough study of the teaching of Jesus, of Paul, of John, and of the Primitive Church. It may be said without fear of contradiction that we have here the most complete and scholarly treatment of this sublime theme which has appeared in modern times. It is impossible even to hint at the treasures of exegesis here contained, and the finely minute studies of New Testament synonyms and idioms. We can only outline some of the main conclusions, leaving the evidence to be sought for in the work itself, which should find a place in every preacher's library.

Dealing with God's love to man, 'one of the most surprising results yielded by any close examination of Christianity as revealed in the New Testament literature is that apart from the redeeming action of the Lord Jesus Christ the early Church evidently saw no ground whatever for believing in a God of love.' In his great statement that 'God is love,' 'John is not thinking of a pervasive love-principle in the universe. . . . For John the revelation of God as Love is not an intuition or obvious inference from observation of the organic universe ; it is only evident to those who see God acting in Jesus Christ's person and mission.' Speaking of those who 'dilute and dissipate the love of God into a vague sentiment about God as the Father of men because He is their Creator,' Dr. MOFFATT adds, 'For this, the New Testament offers no encouragement whatever.' Again, 'God is for Jesus the Father of those who share His fellowship, not of all men generally. . . . Membership in this group is indeed open to all ; this is the invariable conviction of the New Testament, which is implicit in the teaching of Jesus Himself, and in this sense the fatherliness of God for all men may be held ; but nowhere is there any trace of the idea that all men by birth are, as such, sons of God or brothers one of another in the full sense of these terms.' The love and grace of God to men are overflowingly revealed in the New Testament, but the God whom Jesus preached 'was not a *bon Dieu*, genially tolerant of distinctions between truth and falsehood or between right and wrong, but a God whose love embraced moral severity and justice. . . . "There is nothing inexorable but love," as Carlyle once said, and the moral demands of God as revealed by the synoptic Jesus are searching and stringent. This relation of men to Him is crucial. Under His order of Providence, men may do certain things which will undo them ; such was the stern truth which Jesus taught.'

Dealing with man's love to God, Dr. MOFFATT points out that 'there is no reference in the New Testament to the idea that God is to be loved as our Maker and Creator,' and where love to God our Saviour is mentioned it is

Love that breathes not without awe,
Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer.

'Christ is not, for Paul, "my Beloved." It was not that he lacked a passionate devotion to his Master. But he generally chose to say, "I am His *δοῦλος*, His devoted servant." No one valued more highly than he did the freedom of sonship which faith brought, the sense of being within the household of God the Father. But still he said, *δοῦλος*. He never called Jesus even his Elder Brother ; once he described Him indeed as *the first-born among many brothers*, but this was from the standpoint of the Divine purpose. Jesus drew out His love in trust and service and obedience. . . . It is significant that the term *beloved* is used by Paul about his fellow-Christians, not about Christ—a usage generally reversed in the religious world of to-day. While Jesus Christ inspired primitive Christians with far more than mere awe or reverence, at the same time their love and devotion were charged with a sense of Him as their lord (*κύριος*), which imposed an instinctive check upon the use of ordinary love-language.'

Again, man's love to his fellow-men was no mere sentiment but a steadfast will-to-good, which covered all the ethical relationships of life. It expresses itself in various shades of meaning, 'from the heroic form in which it inspires self-sacrifice for one's fellows, to the not less trying duty of forgiving injuries ; from the thoughtful affection which avoids harshness and selfishness, or which under the strain of intercourse refuses to lose its temper, to the patient effort after good-nature and generosity even to the surly and malicious at one's side.' Philanthropy, however, is no substitute for religion. 'The idea of unselfish, devoted love to one's fellows being enough as a religion does not seem to have occurred to any writer in the New Testament. . . . They shrank in horror from any view of religion which undervalued belief. From that they recoiled, as though it non-suited faith. Religion was to speak *de Deo*, or it was nothing. . . . The source of love as well as the standard of it was sought and found in what the Church owed to God who had drawn near to their life in Jesus Christ.'

To sum up, love as declared in the New Testament

is absolutely Christo-centric, revealed, confirmed, and communicated by the Divine will acting in history and expressing itself in the gift of God's Son to be the Saviour of the world. 'Hedonists and humanitarians have claimed in their respective fashions that "love is God, or god," avowing that this love is the one thing in the wide world which they are prepared to label as divine. But Christians in the first generation had not so learned their lesson. . . . According to the New Testament the Church began (and if it fails to continue this, it will soon end) by confessing God is love, but only in the spirit of adoring reverence which inspired the song of praise to *Him who loves us, and has loosed us from our sins by shedding His own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever : Amen.*'

There will always be a welcome among modern men, at any rate among modern religious men, for any earnest and competent discussion of the Christian Faith in the light of the problems that have been pressed upon it from the side of science and, in general, from those subtle influences which constitute the intellectual atmosphere of our time. The days are gone for ever when the confident appeal, which used to be, and still is, made to the Bible by the unreflecting Christian man, can be permitted to ignore the trend of contemporary thinking in the realms of science and philosophy. The thoughtful Christian owes it to-day, as he has always owed it, alike to himself and to the faith which he holds, to find a place for it in the intellectual world in which it has pleased God to place him. We are living in the twentieth century, and it is to the thought and the movements of our own century that we have to relate our religious thinking, if we hope to commend our Christian faith to the men who are saturated with that thought and immersed in those movements.

Real help towards this much needed reconciliation will be found in Archbishop Charles F. D'ARCY's book on *The Christian Outlook in the Modern World* (Hodder & Stoughton ; 6s. net). Its sub-title is 'The Amazing Pageant of Creation and History as

understood by Faith and Science,' and it may be fairly described as a sane, courageous, and not unsuccessful attempt to defend the Christian faith, or at least the Christian outlook, in view of the staggering immensity and complexity of the world into which we are introduced by the representatives of the modern sciences. Indeed, it is much more than this, for it discusses such questions as the problem of evil, immortality, the Trinity, prayer, and sacrament.

The Archbishop would of course be the last to expect that every one will accept without challenge all the conclusions to which he has come : he is too well aware of the difficulties which beset the discussion on the right hand and on the left. He knows that there are many good Christians who do not entirely share his own generous faith that 'the all-embracing love of God will finally break down all opposing barriers of hardened evil.' The human will has the sombre and mysterious power of resisting and rejecting what it knows to be good, and who can say for certain that in the end it will inevitably suffer itself to be won even by the coercion of the Divine love? But, after all, Dr. D'ARCY's book is concerned rather with an 'outlook' than with dogmatic affirmations, and he will doubtless be content if he can persuade others to share his own attractive outlook.

Among other things he offers some incidental remarks, which are steadying and refreshing, on the ever-present subject of miracles. What place can there be for them within a system instinct with law and order, a system which seems to present inexorable sequences of cause and effect? He points out that man himself, assuming the fundamental reliability of the universe, can produce effects which would once have been called miraculous, by his increasing knowledge of and consequent control of natural forces ; and he suggests that, while man's control of these forces is on the surface of things, God's is from the centre : He is 'the inner life of all' ; and therefore 'at great turning-points of human history, when the mind of man has need to be awakened to the reality of the spiritual,' it is not unreasonable to suppose that unusual

events occur. There are minds to which this solution of the problem will not be entirely satisfactory, but even for them it may have its own element of suggestiveness.

For it is hardly to be supposed that the universe is without a purpose ; and if behind it there is a Mind, as there surely must be, of inconceivable Majesty, is there any absurdity in supposing that that Mind, with its infinite resources, may direct, as man himself can, the forces at its disposal and make them contributory to its purpose ? With the purpose, as such, science has nothing to do ; science has to do with the links in the chain, religion with the meaning of the whole. The universe is a great adventure ; man, as all literature testifies, is the immemorial adventurer, and God is happily characterized by Dr. D'ARCY as the Supreme Adventurer. If we think of Him thus, ' we must regard Him as one who, permitting the physical forces of the world to work themselves out to the full, and entrusting His creatures of higher order with moral attributes, so as to fit them to share with Himself the vast adventure of the ages, relies solely upon moral forces to gain the victory.'

The book teaches us to look with wonder and gratitude upon the inconceivably magnificent pageant which has been unfolding throughout the millions of years before the dawn of human history, and moving through historic time with an even more impressive majesty, as the meaning and drift of that purpose come to ever clearer expression. Dr. D'ARCY is not only not afraid of evolution, he rejoices in it ; so far is he from fearing that the account of human origins as given by science detracts from the dignity of man that he ' confesses that the sense of kinship with all creation, the realization that every living thing is a blood-relation, has been to him a source of intense joy.'

This leads him to find good and adumbrations of the end in the most primitive forms of religious expression. The African animist, with his belief in unseen spiritual powers, possesses the first essential element of a true faith, and is already on his way to a faith in One Supreme Good and Holy God ;

and the man who offered his beast in sacrifice was making a real sacrifice, and was a true forerunner of those who, with deeper appreciation of the spirituality of God, offered to Him the more acceptable sacrifice of the broken spirit and the contrite heart. To a generous outlook of this kind intolerance is alien : in whatever land the missionary may cast his lot, he finds that God has been there before him, preparing the way.

The discussion fittingly concludes with a chapter, which treats a familiar subject in a striking way, on *The Lord's Prayer and Modern Thought*. In commenting on the petition, ' Give us our bread for the coming day,' Dr. D'ARCY emphasizes what he boldly calls ' the Divine common sense of Jesus ' in frankly recognizing that man must have the means of life before he can rise to other and higher things. This courageous recognition of indubitable fact is no less a feature of Dr. D'ARCY's long argument, and the greatest of all facts he finds in the saying, ' God is love.' Here, he says, ' we find the only clue to the final mystery of things.'

In the recent discussions of the Epistle to the Galatians the main points of difference have been concerning the geographical question of the district intended by ' Galatia,' the probable place and date at which the Epistle was written, and the relation of the facts mentioned by Paul to the narratives of the Book of Acts. There has been general agreement as to the nature of the Galatian movement which Paul is trying to check and the character of the opponents who have stirred his resentment.

The current view of the Galatian movement is far from being a recent view. It has been presented (with various differences in detail) by nearly all the books on the subject, and was substantially that of the ancient commentators—Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Jerome, Ambrosiaster. Something much like it seems to be stated in the neat second-century prologue to the Epistle commonly attributed to a Marcionite origin : ' Galatae sunt Graeci. Hi verbum veritatis primum ab apostolo acceperunt

sed post discessum ejus temptati sunt a falsis apostolis ut in legem et circumcisionem verterentur. Hos apostolus revocat ad fidem veritatis, scribens eis ab Epheso.'

The common assumption is a gratuitous one that the false teachers who 'bewitched' the Galatians were emissaries from the Judaizing party at Jerusalem, but the common assumption that the false teachers were Judaizers can hardly be regarded as gratuitous; indeed, it has remained practically unchallenged till within very recent years. It was challenged by Professor Wilhelm Lütgert, now of Berlin, in 1919, but in the disturbed period immediately following the war his views received little attention and seem generally to have escaped notice since that time. They have now been revived by Dr. James Hardy ROPES of Harvard.

Dr. ROPES is well known to students of the New Testament for his scholarly labours on the text of the Acts, which he edited in Jackson and Lake's 'The Beginnings of Christianity.' He appears to have been a pupil of Lütgert's, and the essay which he now publishes rests largely on the suggestions and instruction he has received from Lütgert, though the form of treatment is obviously Dr. ROPES' own. The essay is entitled *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians*, and is issued as an extra number of the 'Harvard Theological Review' (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.).

The theory which an endeavour is here made to substantiate is that the most troublesome party in Galatia were not Judaizers at all. They were opposed to the Judaizers even more strongly than they were to the Apostle. They were 'pneumatici,' 'spiritual persons,' 'radicals,' 'perfectionists,' who, insisting upon the completely new status into which the gift of the Holy Spirit introduces believers, tended to cut off Christianity altogether from its roots in the Jewish religion, and to exempt themselves even from distinctions of right and wrong and from moral discipline. It would appear from recent studies of the Corinthian Epistles that they, and not the Judaizers, were

Paul's most dangerous opponents in the Gentile world.

We cannot here analyse the able argument advanced by Dr. ROPES, working with Lütgert's original conception, in support of this theory, which greatly diminishes, as he claims, the chief difficulties of the Epistle. But it is a theory which can hardly fail to win the attention of the critics, sponsored as it is by two such recognized authorities in New Testament scholarship, and it provides, not improbably we think, a valuable clue to the interpretation of the situation in Galatia. It should be noted that it depends primarily upon the admission that the above-named type of opponents of Paul existed in the Gentile churches.

We should like, however, to show at least the bearing of the theory on the elucidation of the Epistle, granted that the 'radicals' were a party of opposition to Paul, and that they were active among the Galatians. The main positive teaching of the Epistle is that (1) faith in Christ is the only way of salvation, and a Gentile believer must not subject himself to the Jewish Law; (2) the believer in Christ, though a Gentile, is in full reality brought by faith into direct relation to Abraham and to the promises made to Abraham. But why should Paul elaborate, as he does, the second contention? It seems to be somewhat lacking in point if Paul is only meeting the arguments of Jewish Christians who are working on the minds of Gentile believers. It is not easy to see why these last should be particularly interested in their relationship to Abraham.

It is suggested that the second contention would have at least more point if Paul, besides sharply reproving the tendency to adopt Jewish rites, is regarded as repelling charges against himself on the part of the spiritually radical, the 'pneumatici,' who would have him sever the connexion of Christianity with Judaism altogether. This Paul would never do. And we may well imagine him explaining in defence of his essential faithfulness to the Jewish inheritance that Christians, even Gentile Christians, are 'sons of Abraham' through

the freewoman, the Jews being 'sons of Abraham' merely through the bondwoman.

Dr. ROPES has tabulated some of the other difficulties under the current theory, and with a note of the chief of these we must conclude. (1) The supposed appeal of the Judaizers to the Jerusalem apostles is odd, since precisely the main contention of the Judaizers, that circumcision was necessary, was not shared by the Jerusalem apostles. (2) That he preaches circumcision is a singular ground for an attack on Paul by those who also preach it. (3) Extensive ethical instruction is introduced which, *if merely pastoral*, is hardly in place in this letter, and distinctly weakens Paul's main contention in behalf of freedom.

Our readers should consider whether the interpretation becomes easier on the alternative theory here suggested, that there was a sharp conflict in Galatia between two extreme parties, each of which exaggerated one side of Paul's teaching, and that the chief bitterness against Paul was on the part of some of those who insisted, as he declares that he too does, on the independence of the Christian faith from the Jewish Law and on the sufficiency of the Spirit.

Professor James Alex. ROBERTSON of the Church of Scotland College, Aberdeen, maintains in the midst of his academic labours and technical studies in theology, and despite them, that habit of attractive, popular utterance which helped in no small measure to give him distinction as a preacher. In his most recent work, *Who was Jesus of Nazareth?* (James Clarke; 5s. net), he has published eight lectures and papers gathered together from various directions. In the first of these, which gives the book its title, he inquires as to the meaning of Jesus for our human life. He concludes that Jesus' consciousness of standing in a unique relation to God and to men is an undeniable part of His mind, and absolutely demanded by His character. 'By His perfect response to the pressure and solicitation of the Spiritual World, that

Spiritual World was finding, and even now finds, perfect access to the life of Humanity through Him.'

The second study is of Jesus as the 'Master Teacher.' His knowledge of the Old Testament and genius in selection are dwelt upon, then the lessons He taught and the method of His teaching. 'His one great principle as a Teacher—and it is the true ideal of all religious teaching—was just to let sanctified personality do its perfect work.' But His voice, His face, His mannerisms, His unobtrusiveness, His opportunism, His humour, were all part of His personality, and enter into our estimate of His teaching method.

'Surely there is humour in the idea of trying to fatten one's pig for market with a bucket of pearls; in the fantastic picture of a camel trying to shove itself through the eye of a needle; in the picture of a man complacently handing a stone to the child who had asked for bread; of the family sitting solemnly round an inverted tub from beneath which a feeble gleam or two of lamp-light is struggling; . . . of the Pharisee with a trumpeter heralding his progress down the street while he distributes his little doles, tremendously in love with himself; of another Pharisee straining out the daddy-long-legs from his wine, yet swallowing a camel, monstrous daddy-long-legs, hump, and pads, and sardonic smile as well.'

The third and fourth studies, 'The Tragic Schism: Can it be Healed?' are in the Atonement, and catch up the teaching both of Anselm and of McLeod Campbell. 'While Christ's Passion is the Holy God pronouncing judgment on, by bearing, sin, Christ's Passion is at the same time the sorrow of the sinner's confession, the perfect Amen . . . out of the heart of humanity to the reproach that speaks in God's injured Holy Love. Even so the hot tears of a mother over her wayward child, while they are a symbol of the cost she had to pay in the act of reconciliation, are a pathetic confession also . . . of *his* sin.'

In the fifth study it is claimed that the Christian

Church began its career in the 'Conversion of Peter.' It is well to be reminded of this in these days, in view of the claim so often made that it was Paul who actually founded the Christian Church. That bold resounding sentence to which Peter gave utterance on the Day of Pentecost—'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ'—is the veritable foundation-rock on which the Christian Church was built.

'The Mind of the Master on Immortality' is the next study. It is a study characteristic of the author, and perhaps we find him here at his best. He offers us a very suggestive exposition of the Synoptic passage in which Jesus apparently touches upon the religious argument for immortality ('I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'), and adumbrates briefly, but also suggestively, his views on the moral conditions and implications of the fact of immortality.

The penultimate study is in the 'Authority of Scripture.' A rapid historical survey of this subject is followed by a constructive view of it, starting from the two principles, that the Word of God is not the letter of Scripture, but is contained in Scripture, and that the judge of what constitutes

the Word of God in Scripture is, as the Reformers expressed it, 'the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit.' Here is how Dr. ROBERTSON expresses the dependence of the Christian revelation upon the revelation of God in the Israelitish and Jewish religion: 'Without the mountain-mass of Old Testament monotheism, could the stainless peak of New Testament revelation have risen up into the full blaze of God's sunlight?'

The concluding study of 'The Spirit of God, and the New Testament Experience,' was the inaugural lecture delivered by Dr. ROBERTSON on assuming the duties of his chair. Here he would recall us to the New Testament experience if we would revitalize our theology. For the New Testament experience was 'the most vitalising moment of history.' Upon it, as he has recaptured it for himself, he would base his confession of the Faith.

'I believe in God, through Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. I give myself to God, who was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. I share the assurance that the living Christ is present now and always in the fellowship of the faithful, labouring for the coming of His Kingdom among men. And, finally, I am persuaded that all the redeemed shall live for ever with Him and reign with Him in a perfected and unshakable Kingdom.'

The Words from the Cross.

II. The Penitent Thief (Lk. xxiii. 39-43).

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

THIS episode is not even hinted at by Mark, nor by Matthew, who, at this point, closely follows him; on the contrary, they bluntly record that both the brigands joined in the general reviling of Jesus. So it is not surprising that many serious students should treat it as not belonging to the earliest tradition; it is, says Montefiore, 'a special Lucan embroidery,' 'a dramatic incident which can lay no claim to be historical.' According to Holtz-

mann's view, the penitent thief is designed to represent the Gentile in his appeal and the welcome which Jesus is ready to give. The story is not history, it is argued: it is midrash or edifying teaching. But however plausibly such a view may be presented it must be pronounced hasty and precarious. Luke's account of the Passion is rich in independent material; his account of the night following the arrest in Gethsemane is far