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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

Who is the best interpreter of the Old Testament? The Jew claims the book as his, the Christian claims it as his, and each thinks that he holds in his own hands the key to it. To the Jew the Old Testament is the Bible, the whole Bible; to the Christian the Bible includes the later Testament towards which he believes the older book points, and in which he believes it finds its consummation. Who is to be umpire in this honourable rivalry?

If any man could conceivably have the right to decide such a question, that man would perhaps be Mr. C. G. MONTEFIORE. As a Jew, he understands the Old Testament thoroughly and from the inside, and he is conversant with the development within Judaism of Old Testament thought from the day when the Old Testament stood complete down to the present day. But more. He knows the New Testament; he is conversant with the development of Old Testament thought beyond and outside the domain of Judaism. Indeed, he knows the New Testament better than most Christians do. He has written on it not only with learning and insight, but with sympathy, and in such a way as to command not only the respect but the gratitude of Christian scholars.

But besides being a Jew, he has a mind of extraordinary fairness, and he exercises a discriminating judgment on that ancient literature which, taken as a whole, he passionately loves and which he has 'in divers portions and in divers manners' so

brilliantly expounded. How frank and critical of it he can be appears in phrase after phrase of an article contributed by him to the April number of *The Holborn Review*. 'The Old Testament is to me,' he says, 'as it is to Christian critics, imperfect.' In recognizing the different levels of Hebrew religious achievement, he can speak of the best God of the Old Testament. 'The Old Testament,' he admits, 'has many faults'—in particular he specifies 'its cruelty, its revengefulness, its imprecations.' Here is an almost bolder concession: 'Much can be said against Yahweh; if you look for blemishes, you can find them in plenty. He is jealous, He is partial, He is often all too human, and even human where man is not at his best.'

Here is a fine blend of the lover and the critic—a critic who has not suffered his devotion to blind him to the imperfections of the thing he loves. What, then, has he to say on the momentous question of the contribution of Israel to religion? That is to be found in the article to which we have referred. It is the substance of an address on 'The Achievement of the Old Testament' which he delivered, as President, on the last day of last year at the meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study.

There are words, he admits, in the New Testament which cannot possibly thrill the Jew as they thrill the Christian. Such a word is, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden.' But

it is equally true, he believes, that there are words in the Old Testament which move the Jew as they cannot move the Christian. Among these words stands, first and foremost, this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' And there are other words whose appeal, to the Jew, is only a little less moving. Such are, 'In that day shall the Lord be One and His name One'; or 'Ye are My witnesses'; or 'Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'; or 'Know therefore this day, and lay it to thine heart that the Lord He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.' This point may be readily conceded, that for good historical reasons such words are, as he puts it, 'more dear and precious and sacred to the Jew than to the Christian.'

The supreme achievement of the Old Testament, according to Mr. MONTEFIORE, is that it contains all the essentials of religious Theism in a highly provocative form. Its God is as remote as could be from the realm of abstraction. The Old Testament has an almost overwhelming sense of the Personality of God. He is 'the God who rules and cares; the God who is just and pitiful and loving; the God to whom man can pray, and who enters into relations with man; the God who is creator; the God who rewards goodness and punishes wickedness; the God who helps and aids; the one and only God.'

It is much more difficult for the men of a later day, who are the heirs to centuries of metaphysical speculation, and who wrestle with the problems raised by ontology and ethics, to hold this conception of the Personality of God with the simplicity and conviction with which it is presented in the Old Testament. But it is just there that the Old Testament can render us an inestimable service. Written by men whose convictions sprang from their experience of life, it comes as a tonic to other men whose minds are jaded by philosophical discussion; and Mr. MONTEFIORE's words will find an echo in many a heart when, uttering his own con-

fession of faith, he says, 'Its very simplicity and fearlessness are a perpetual consolation, a constant stimulus, an abiding refreshment of soul.'

Another point he makes is that the Theism of the Old Testament is a virile and a human Theism. This is just another way of saying that the Personality of God is taken seriously. In one sense the God of the Old Testament is—if we may reverently say so—fashioned like a man, like a manly man, 'a mean between the two bad extremes of pitilessness and good-naturedness.' In another sense, of course, there is a great gulf fixed between God and man; and taking us into his confidence Mr. MONTEFIORE tells us that, while he likes the Old Testament's insistence on the gulf between God and man, he likes hardly less the insistence on the bridge or bridges between them. Man can pray, God can hear; they are not inevitably and irrevocably apart. Man can say to God, 'Thou art with me.' But the disciples of Barth and Otto will welcome the admission that 'the immensity of the difference between them is still more fundamental to Old Testament religion' than the kinship between them.

This is an illustration of the practical way in which the Old Testament, like life itself, reconciles theoretically unreconciled antinomies. Part of its charm lies in the generosity which finds a place for opposites, and which has no interest in forcing its truth into any Procrustean bed. Its God is both near and far; He is loving, but He is also just. Both types of statement are felt to be true, and the Old Testament allows them to lie quietly side by side; it feels under no obligation to attempt any theoretical reconciliation between them. This power of doing justice to seeming opposites appears in its recognition alike of man's free will and of his need of Divine grace. Here Mr. MONTEFIORE has some suggestive things to say.

He quotes with approval the words of Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar: 'If I do evil, I have no excuse; I do it because I will to do it; to ask him (*i.e.* God) to change my will is to ask him what he asks from me; it is to ask him that he should do my work,

and that I may receive the reward.' But he quotes with equal approval the words of a Jewish friend of his who said, 'In myself I am utterly rotten and feeble. Whatever goodness I may have done has been all the work of God.' Both these statements have their counterpart in the Old Testament. On the one hand it says, 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not,' and to its 'ought,' Mr. MONTEFIORE tells us he replies, not, 'I can't,' but 'I can': he feels ashamed when he has done wrong, just because he knows he could have done right, and his extenuations and explanations of sin are 'all stuff and nonsense.' On the other hand it says, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God,' and 'Teach me to do thy will.' Man is both able and unable; and 'if you like,' as the lecturer pleasantly says, 'to call the one a Jewish and Old Testament bit of reality, and the other a New Testament and Christian bit of reality, I am content, so long as it is conceded to me that both bits are valuable, and that neither bit is wholly false or expresses the full truth, the complete reality.'

These things, however, great as they are, do not exhaust the achievement of the Old Testament. Though Mr. MONTEFIORE'S spiritual affinities are decidedly with the prophet rather than the priest, he has an intense and reverent appreciation of the Law, that is, 'the Law as a whole'; to him it is the symbol of Law, and behind it is the majesty of God Himself. Like every good Jew he regards the Sabbath as vastly more than a 'grand social achievement, put under the ægis of religion'; it fills him with unspeakable joy, such as those who are alien to the commonwealth of Israel can only remotely understand.

But next to its vivid Theism, perhaps the supreme achievement of the Old Testament is its 'indissoluble intertwining of religion with morality.' Not only in the Prophets but in the Psalter and the Proverbs what God demands are justice, kindness, and humility. So intensely ethical is the Old Testament's conception that, as Mr. MONTEFIORE bluntly says, 'If we subtract God's moral qualities from Him, He simply collapses.' The God whom it invites us to worship is a God with a

character, as Sir George Adam Smith used to say.

Surely, then, a book which enshrines a religion so vital to human welfare as this address shows the Old Testament to be deserves from the religious public a respect and attention which in these days it all too seldom receives.

The more one reads the contributions made by Dr. N. P. WILLIAMS, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, to theological literature, the more one realizes that in him the Anglican Church possesses a scholar and thinker of eminent quality. In a book just published, *The Grace of God* (Longmans; 4s. net), he deals with some of the profoundest subjects of human thought. The essay is partly Biblical, partly historical, and (in its closing chapter) constructive and suggestive. The history of reflection on the relations of the Divine and the Human in salvation is pursued through the centuries, and we are shown the swing of minds between the conception of Grace as Power on the one hand, and what may be called Influence on the other. The one is Augustinian, and is characteristic of the 'twice-born,' the men of sudden conversion, leading to a stiff predestinarian creed. The other is Pelagian, characteristic of the 'once-born,' the moralists who refuse any faith in 'irresistible' grace. For this review the reader is referred to the book. We are at present concerned with the chapters on the New Testament and on the author's own construction.

The primary significance of grace in Greek is 'beauty,' 'charm,' 'attractiveness,' and from this comes the secondary sense of 'kindness,' 'good will,' or 'graciousness,' that is, of the mental or emotional quality lying behind an attractive appearance. In the Septuagint χάρις carries the same double significance, and thus the idea was already rough-hewn for its future position as the foundation stone of the Christian 'doctrine of grace' before the Apostle of the Gentiles began the work of chiselling it into exact lines and contours. The basic meaning, therefore, of the term 'grace,' which St. Paul found

in existence, is that of God's favour or kindness towards man, or certain men.

But this 'favour' is not conceived merely as an abstract quality or state of His Being: it is a quality manifested in operation, of a twofold kind; there is, first, the pre-mundane act whereby He foreknows certain individuals and fore-ordains them to membership of the Church, so that the small body of Christian Jews can be described as a 'remnant constituted by an act of selection based on "grace"'; and there is, secondly, the temporal act of 'calling' and 'justifying' (or pardoning) the individual so foreknown, which, though *ex parte hominis* to be considered as contingent upon the individual's 'faith,' *ex parte Dei* is so spontaneous an ebullition of omnipotent and sovereign power that all Christians must think of themselves as 'acquitted freely, undeservedly, [solely] by an exercise of His royal grace.'

'Grace,' in Pauline thought, is thus primarily the grace of election and justification, rather than of sanctification. It has to do with the beginnings of the Christian life, its ideal beginning in God's pre-mundane counsels and its concrete beginning in time, rather than with its continuance and progress. The concept which the word connotes is regal, governmental, and judicial in character: it presupposes a way of thinking about God which regards Him as acting upon men, and shaping their destinies from without. The 'twice-born' element in St. Paul's temperament, which made his own instantaneous conversion appear to him simply as a catastrophic irruption of the Divine Will into his life, neither caused nor even prepared for by his pre-conversion training or experiences (Gal 1²⁴), leads him to insist again and again upon the completely unmerited and gratuitous character of the Divine favour, and to inveigh against the idea that it can be earned by 'works,' or human effort of any kind.

What is true of the 'grace' which makes men members of the redeemed community is true equally of the narrower and more specialized 'grace' which appoints individuals to particular functions

in the community—apostleship, or the office of prophet or teacher—or assigns specific *charismata* to them (Ro 12⁸): all 'grace,' whether general or particular in its bearing, represents the spontaneous self-caused kindness of God towards His chosen, a kindness which no efforts of theirs could have evoked if He had not willed to feel it. Obviously the tendency of this line of thought is to exhibit the idea of the grace of election and justification as set in a context of adamantine predestinarianism. And the idea of 'grace' inevitably generates the correlative idea of reprobation, the 'vessels of mercy' standing out in clear distinction from the 'vessels of wrath,' but both alike being moulded by the Almighty Potter out of the same common clay of human kind (Ro 9¹⁰⁻²⁴).

This conception of the grace of election and justification, which tends to represent God as moving His human creatures from without, like pawns on a chess-board, stands quite apart from the thought of God's subtle operations within the soul, penetrating, healing, and building up, to which the name of 'sanctifying grace' has been given by later theology. It must not be supposed, however, that this is absent from St. Paul; on the contrary, he affirms emphatically that the essence of the gospel is Divine power, sweeping on to the goal of salvation every one that believeth. But the Pauline name for this supernatural energy or power is *pneuma*, 'spirit,' and not 'grace.'

It might seem as though this omnipotent influence which penetrates the citadel of the soul was as little to be reconciled with human freedom as a sovereign Divine will compelling from without. But St. Paul refuses to admit this. In his thought, the viewless tides of 'Spirit,' or of 'the Spirit,' insensibly flood the springs of human volition in such a way that the Spirit-possessed individual does what is right because he spontaneously desires to do what is right, not because of any external sanction or coercion; the virtues which are the 'fruit of the Spirit' are also the products of his own self-determining effort. The contrasts of 'Law' and 'grace,' and of 'letter' and 'spirit' are just the contrast between the Old

Dispensation and the New, and, taken together, contain the potentiality of a unification of the ideas of 'grace' and 'spirit'; for the possession of 'spirit' is the corollary and the sure proof of the enjoyment of 'grace.'

This hint is followed up by Dr. WILLIAMS in his concluding chapter, in which he asks whether it is not possible to effect a synthesis between the two extremes exhibited in the history of human reflection on grace and freedom. He thinks the mistake of the past has been in approaching the problem from above. A more hopeful way is to regard it as belonging to the sphere of psychology, and to study the experiences and not the metaphysics of the saints. There are two great types of religious experience, that of the 'twice-born' and that of the 'once-born.' Can we strike the balance between them? Briefly, the answer is found by identifying grace with the Holy Spirit. Grace is not an impersonal something, but the influence of a Person on a person. It is 'God's presence and His very Self, and Essence all Divine.'

Dr. WILLIAMS adopts the suggestion (made years ago by Dr. Sanday and received at the time unsympathetically) that the subconscious region is the part most accessible to the Divine influence. He takes as a parallel the work of the psycho-therapist, who communicates, both by suggestion and personal influence, the healing power the patient needs. Similarly, God penetrates the subconscious selves of His people through the power of His Spirit, and assists, without impairing, their free will, by a 'grace' which is real without being strictly irresistible. In this way we are able to recover the Pauline point of view concerning *pneuma* without jettisoning the familiar terminology of 'grace' consecrated by the usage of seventeen centuries.

'The haunting problem of miracles,' as Dr. Sanday called it, is always with us. A discussion of it brings us into contact with many of the most important problems in philosophy and theology, such as the personality of God, Divine providence,

the Person of Christ, the historicity of the Gospels, and the whole question of revelation. To quote Dr. Sanday again, 'This is the one crucial question which brings to a head, and includes all the rest.' We therefore give a cordial welcome to a very excellent book on the subject, *Miracle in History and in Modern Thought*, by the Rev. C. J. WRIGHT, B.D. (Constable; 18s. net), which is fitted to exercise a powerful and wholesome influence on Christian thought. It is a fine product of wide reading and clear thinking, in which the whole contentious problem of miracle is reviewed in the light of modern historical, scientific, psychological, and philosophical investigation.

Our age has witnessed a marked change of view in regard to miracles. Instead of being gloried in, as in the Apostolic Church, they are apologized for and explained away. Instead of being offered as among the chief of Christian evidences, they are felt to be an encumbrance, and an endeavour is made to prove that they may be given up without detriment to the Christian faith. Harnack says: 'The question of miracles is of relative indifference . . . the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience.' To this the traditionalist school would reply that miracles have vital importance as the chief evidence of a God who really governs. Evidently the two sides have a different conception of miracle and of the mode of God's government.

'Deep is the significance of miracles,' says Carlyle; 'meantime the question of questions is, What specially is a miracle?' To this question the most diverse and confusing answers have been given. Miracles have been defined as violations or suspensions of natural law, as events happening without physical antecedents or by direct Divine power. On the other hand there are those, like Lord Kelvin and the Earl of Balfour, who give the term 'miraculous' to any and every normal intervention of mind in material nature. While this confusion of terms continues, it is useless to attempt to carry

forward the argument. We must agree as to what we mean by Nature and the supernatural, by law and the violation of law. In short, we must go to the root of the matter and clarify our ideas of God in His relation to the world.

But first let us consider what history and science have to say. The question which history has to answer is simply, 'What has happened in the past?' It is not whether *miracles* have happened, but whether the *events* recorded have happened. Whether any event should be designated a miracle is a question outside the scope of history. '*Event*, not *interpretative idea of event*, is the domain of historical science.' It is quite illegitimate to argue, as Hume does, that certain events cannot possibly have happened because they are designated miracles. Whether an event really happened is a totally different question from any interpretation put upon it. Similarly the question for natural science is simply, 'What are the facts?' and all the facts must be treated without bias. It is not permissible to begin by ruling out the possibility of certain facts because they are labelled as supernatural.

'It can hardly be doubted that the present condition of uncertainty in regard to miracle has been chiefly brought about by the progress of natural science,' and it has been said that science cannot admit miracle. This is really to be understood as the scientist's declaration of faith in the rationality of Nature, together with his confession that the ultimate explanation of phenomena lies beyond the realm of science. On the one hand, 'science rightly makes the postulate that there are no miracles—which is no more than saying that science goes at her task in a courageous spirit, and with a sense of responsibility. She means to puzzle over every problem to the very end, instead of giving up weakly at the first difficulty and saying, 'This is doubtless a miracle and hence insoluble.' On the other hand, 'whatever notion the term "miracle" carries with it, at any rate, it *does* carry that of an ultimate interpretation. Since that is so, science can never say of any event or fact that it is miraculous. To say that would be

for her to go beyond her province and enter the domain of ultimate considerations, where religion and philosophy have their home.'

The question of miracle is essentially a religious question whose solution brings into view the whole field of God's relation to the world. If the question be asked, 'What is the truth latent in the idea of miracle?' the answer is that it stands for the belief in a God who reveals Himself in us and to us, a God who is immanent in us and transcendent over us. It stands for the denial that the universe of scientific phenomena is the ground of itself, maintaining that behind event there are thought and will and love, with which man in his religious experience may have direct knowledge.' Too often has God been conceived as almost exclusively transcendent, dwelling in the realm of the supernatural, and only on rare occasions giving special evidence of His power by breaking in upon the orderly realm of Nature. This conception is not only unchristian but profoundly irreligious, inasmuch as it practically in effect excludes God from the world of Nature, or at least regards His working there as in some sense less Divine.

'The truth is that Nature's ways are God's ways; that, in other words, the natural is the supernatural mode of working. When God acts He does not "interfere" with a Nature external to Himself. We may only speak of His "interference" (ambiguous word) if He is "interfering" all the time. What we call Nature is a manifestation of His activities. Immanence stands for the refusal to "grudge God His own universe"—a view which, as Romanes so well said, is involved in the belief "that there must be something inexplicable or miraculous about a phenomenon in order to its being divine."' Yet there is a danger of passing from one extreme to the opposite. Divine transcendence must still be firmly held. The distinction between the natural and the supernatural cannot be given up. Otherwise 'we have left for ourselves no term to conserve the truth of the noumenal ground and cause of this Nature. If God be regarded as "just a synonym for Nature," then theism has gone, deism likewise,

and the sacred word *God* must be banished to the limbo of discredited anthropomorphisms.'

The discussion of miracle, however, is never conducted *in vacuo*. It is the gospel miracles that keep it a living and a burning question. In regard to these, historical criticism must have perfectly free scope to inquire what in each case actually happened; a sane science will warn us not prematurely to close the question of what is possible in such a mysterious world as this; modern physics has new and strange things to tell us of the potencies of matter, and of its secret kinship with spirit; while psychical science reveals a world of unexplored possibilities in human personality. Beyond these studies and considerations there are the religious questions. 'Christianity's supreme assertion always has been, and always must be, that the personal God has acted, has manifested Himself in a more essential way than before or since, in the

person of Christ. . . . What is written in our hearts is proclaimed in time by Him who came out of eternity to reveal to us the Father. The "miracle" of His acts is not that they were interpositions of omnipotent power, but that they were manifestations of omnipotent love. It is because most of them are such that we cannot regard them as "stumbling-blocks" to be extirpated wholesale from the Gospels. While the attitude of those, who regard miracles as "proofs" of the truth as it is in Jesus, is to be, and must be, increasingly repudiated, so also is that of those who regard the gospel "miracles" as obstacles to the recognition of that truth. These latter seem to feel with Rousseau that if we could only get rid of the "miracles" the whole world would fall at the feet of Jesus. If we regard the Gospels more closely, however, we shall see that most of these "miracles" are not "stumbling-blocks" that keep men from Him, but steps that lead men to Him.'

Adolf von Harnack.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. G. D. HENDERSON, B.D., UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

I REMEMBER Dr. Spiecker describing to some of us a visit which, during the short peace mission to the Churches of England at the beginning of 1911, he had paid to Westminster Abbey, in company with Harnack. The visit proved by no means the cursory and formal inspection for which the authorities were prepared, for Harnack manifested intense interest in those documents of stone, was very particular in his inquiries, and insisted upon discussing numerous points with his guides.

This seems a typical revelation of the man, always intent, quick to observe, marvellously informed, and after all the study which had brought him to a position of supremacy in his own department still not only willing but profoundly eager to learn.

Never was any one more alert than Harnack. He moved rapidly and spoke quickly and fluently, sputtering somewhat at times from excitement, always very much awake and alive. Even his spectacles and his shock of upright hair contributed to the general impression of alertness.

He combined to an extent rarely achieved the

qualities of a scholar and of a teacher. In Germany more than anywhere one comes across learned men who have almost specialized away their personality. On the other hand, one knows of most effective teachers who have left no printed contribution to their subject. Harnack, however, was as great as any one of our time in both particulars, and it is doubtless for this reason that his name is so familiar to all who have any interest in either Church or University.

As a lecturer I have not known his equal. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff had a delightful geniality and an enticing voice which rendered him more popular. Rudolf Eucken had an impassioned eloquence which made him singularly attractive to the general public. But for effective teaching Harnack would be difficult to match.

He was a clear and ready speaker, never much hampered by his notes, and using intelligible German—as he also did when he wrote. His command of material enabled him to produce interesting illustrations of his points, and to make pertinent applications of lessons of early times to