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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE is an extraordinarily interesting and timely article, entitled 'Religion as an "Attitude,"' in the latest *Hibbert Journal*. It is able, caustic, witty, and, as we said, very much to the point. Here is the promising beginning: 'The unhappy divorce between head and heart which so many to-day will persist in canonising as though ultimate and even attractive, taken along with the passion for breaking down wholes and retiring into corners with mere aspects torn from their living contexts, is probably *the* evil which is mother and nurse of the hundred lesser evils (social, personal, spiritual, artistic) on which criticism fruitlessly trains its guns . . . The danger of thought without feeling, and the perhaps worse danger (because more general) of feeling without thought—that is the mental tragedy of our interesting times, and may be its spiritual tragedy.'

The particular form of this tendency to which the writer directs his attention is a newly-fashionable kind of religious subjectivism, to which several literary men are lending their names for the time. He takes three examples. The first is from Mr. H. G. Wells. In his 'Open Conspiracy' Mr. Wells writes: 'If there is no sympathetic personal leader outside us there is at least in us the attitude we should adopt towards a sympathetic personal leader.' That is to say, the leader and king of the spiritual world being no longer operative, we are to continue this *attitude* after the Reality which alone explains any such attitude has been tacitly

banished. Another example is found in Mr. Middleton Murry (to whom we wish the writer had devoted more attention) with his eloquent and earnest plea for spirituality without a transcendent abiding God.

The most suggestive instance, however, is that of Mr. Laurence Housman, who was recently addressing a meeting of free thinkers, and making a plea for 'mixing with life a little romance.' He went on, 'we find something humanly to be desired, something satisfying to the emotions, which are a part of life, in a High Mass celebration, or a Cenotaph silence, which we don't find elsewhere. And that emotional appeal seems to be of real value to human life, even though I do not accept the doctrines which these celebrations imply.' And, further, the lecturer suggested that even if Christ and the factual veracity of the Gospels had to go, 'still the spiritual substance remains'—presumably for the fit few to whom a deception more or less does not morally or intellectually signify. Moreover, 'even if immortality has to go, still we will not let go love.'

The writer's answer to all this, which he calls variously a 'simmering in sentiment,' and a 'cultus of moods,' is a healthy plea for objectivity, for facing realities, for common honesty. He dislikes as much as Shaw the 'sentimental devil sneaking round the area rails of Heaven, looking in,' and as much as Nietzsche the 'noble weakling running

away from the reality behind appearances, luxuriating in his own emotions.' As a matter of plain honest fact, religion above all requires a central affirmation of a Reality other and deeper than the single soul, however rich. It is a sign of failure in some of the vital springs of our being when we begin to turn in on ourselves. 'Introversion is a herald of necrosis of the soul.'

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Humanity, educated and uneducated, has an eternal bias towards the objective. That has given man his science, art, crafts, and religion. But to-day we see an alien tendency widespread, the claim to have the emotions lulled and pleased, the temporary divorce of feeling from reasoned belief, the justifying of emotion as of 'value to human life.' This means the defeat of reason. Moreover, to haunt a cathedral on a Remembrance Day for certain sensuous-mystical excitations, withholding the only valuable and ethically worthwhile element in and behind these experiences, is the defeat of conscience as well as intellect. We go about in search of solaces and reactions instead of certitude and understanding.

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This subjective doctrine intimates that we may live on increment earned by our predecessors. Though Christ is no longer a Divine Reality, we have love still,—'love,' as Mr. Augustine Birrell caustically wrote, 'resting apparently on nothing.' The truth is, however, that a post-Christian society cannot indefinitely live on the memory or the momentum of its lost faith. We cannot continue in an 'attitude' that has been created and justified by a Divine Fact. It is well known that if any part of one's mental environment has been removed, one goes on making the movements appropriate to it, just as the stomach of a fasting man proceeds blandly with the processes of digestion. Something very analogous to these phenomena is observable in these subjectivist pleas intended for the æsthetic, though creedless, intelligentsia.

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'One suggests then to our admittedly finely-tempered artists and æsthetes that they should not straightway take the line of least resistance, beat a full retreat from dogma, thought and form,

and consider religion as an "appeal" to the sensorium. A swifter way to the *real* satisfactions of religion—which are ethical, volitional, and intellectual—would be the ascetic vow of abstinence from these *mala mentis gaudia*, "evil pleasures of the soul" (which, Virgil says, lie in the vestibule of Orcus), until necessity and the nature of man's soul forced a decision. Such necessity might once again, in their case, be the mother of discovery. God might show Himself to the desperately seeking needy when it is not possible to the easily satisfied connoisseur.'

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The sixth volume of the *Hebrew Union College Annual*, which has just been published (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati), is marked, like all the previous volumes, by acute and learned discussion of topics which have a special interest for Jewish scholars, and some of which deal with problems arising on rather recondite fields. Here is the list, which will give some idea of the range and variety of the topics discussed. Morgenstern writes on 'The Gates of Righteousness,' Gavin on 'Rabbinic Parallels in Early Church Orders,' Lauterbach on 'The Pharisees and Their Teachings,' Marmorstein on 'The Background of the Haggadah,' Aptowitzer on 'Arabic-Jewish Theories of Creation,' Gandz on 'Studies in the History of Mathematics from Hebrew and Arabic Sources,' Gaster on 'Eliezer Crescas and his Bet Zebul, the Bible References in Talmud and Midrash,' Bettan on 'The Sermons of Judah Moscato,' Englander on 'Mendelssohn as Translator and Exegete,' while Gottheil contributes a supplement to his previous article on 'An Unknown Hebrew Version of the Sayings of Æsop.' All the essays are in English, except Aptowitzer's, which is in German, and Gaster follows his discussion of Crescas by ten pages of specimens of his Bet Zebul in Hebrew.

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We imagine, however, that the subject which will be of most interest to readers of this magazine is the discussion of 'The Fear and Love of God in the Old Testament,' by Bernard J. BAMBERGER. His conclusions rest upon a careful study of all the

relevant linguistic data, but they might perhaps need to be modified when other than linguistic considerations are taken into account.

The general conclusion is that fear does not play quite so prominent a part in OT religion as is generally assigned to it. OT writers, when they speak of the fear of God, are thinking neither of the crude emotion of terror on the one hand, nor of the more refined sentiment of reverence or awe on the other. In 90 per cent of the cases they are stressing 'the objective side of religion, as manifested either in moral conduct or ritual,' rather than any subjective mental or emotional state. In early times the actual fear of the Deity may have been present to a considerable degree; most passages, we are told, in which an element of terror is noticeable, are of comparatively early origin; but we must begin to revise the theory that fear plays an overshadowing rôle in the religion considered as a whole.

It cannot be denied that BAMBERGER argues his case suggestively. He calls our attention first of all to the well-known story in 2 K 17<sup>25-28</sup> of the Israelitish priest who was sent back from Assyria to teach the Samaritan settlers 'how to fear Jahweh,' and so to be delivered from the ravages of the lions. Clearly, here, the fear of Jahweh means nothing more or less than the Jahweh cult. Again, the writer of Ps 34 proposes to teach the fear of Jahweh (v.11), and this is at once defined in purely ethical terms: 'Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.' These instances prove, according to BAMBERGER, that, in at least some cases, fearing Jahweh does *not* imply being afraid of Him.

Of course he admits that in some passages, chiefly of pre-exilic origin, the primary sense of being afraid survives. Adam was afraid in the garden, Jacob was afraid on the hillside at Bethel, Moses was afraid to look upon God (Ex 3<sup>6</sup>), and fear of God in something like the primitive sense occurs 'in one lone instance' even in a psalm so late as the 119th (vv.120, 161); and not very far removed from this is the use of the word by Isaiah

when he says, 'Jahweh of hosts, let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread' (8<sup>12f.</sup>).

Also when the expression is used in reference to the Gentiles, something of its primitive quality remains. The passages quoted in this connexion (cf. 2 S 7<sup>23</sup> Ps 106<sup>22</sup>) are held to imply that the Gentiles should acquire a wholesome respect for His power. When it is said, *e.g.*, in Jon 1<sup>16</sup> that the foreign sailors 'feared Jahweh with a great fear and sacrificed to Jahweh and made vows,' Bamberger sees in this not their conversion to Judaism, but 'merely that they paid their respects to a plainly powerful Deity.' Incidentally we may remark that this interpretation seems open to criticism. Considering that Jonah follows the line of thought initiated by Deutero-Isaiah, it is surely just as natural to interpret the attitude of the sailors as the beginning of their conversion to the Jahweh religion.

In general, however, BAMBERGER maintains, the reference is to one aspect or another of the worship of Jahweh. As in 2 K 17, when Isaiah represents Jahweh as complaining, 'Their fear of me is a human commandment, learned by rote' (29<sup>13</sup>), the context shows that the reference is to the ceremonial, observed in a lifeless and mechanical fashion. 'Those who fear Jahweh' are simply His worshippers. To the fear of Jahweh Joshua opposes the putting away of strange gods (24<sup>14</sup>). Under the influence of the prophetic teaching, this fear becomes impregnated with the spirit of morality, so that the fear of Jahweh includes ethical conduct. The injunctions in the Holiness Code, which conclude with, 'Thou shalt fear thy God,' are practically all of a humanitarian order.

In line with this is the use of the phrase in the Wisdom Literature. The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and the woman who fears Jahweh in the famous chap. 31 of Proverbs is described in terms of 'homely household virtues and prudence: no word is said of her piety.' But surely BAMBERGER is not justified in concluding from this that 'the expression "fear of God" tends to lose its religious significance altogether.' Her piety is recognized

in the phrase 'a woman that feareth Jahweh' (31<sup>30</sup>), and that piety expresses itself in the homely virtues. It is the root of which they are the fruit. Nor can we at all agree with BAMBERGER when he goes on to say, 'This is an exact parallel to the English word "God-fearing," which in common usage signifies simply upright, honest, and decent.' However it may be in the American use of the English language, we in this country, when we say 'God-fearing,' mean it.

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We are inclined to think that, by a too exclusive attention to the context in which the word fear occurs, BAMBERGER has minimized the element of fear in Old Testament religion. It is true that 'the fear of Jahweh' often means little more than 'religion,' but religion has a very austere side, not unaptly represented by the word 'fear,' and this fear in the presence of Deity remains a feature in the religious experience of some of the greatest and maturest minds in Israel. That is the impression which inevitably and instinctively arises from the record of such experiences as we find in Is'6, Ezk 1, or Job 38 f. These men were overwhelmed as they stood, or knelt, in that dread presence; and modern science, with its sense of the vastness and the wonder of the universe, is bringing us back to the Old Testament appreciation of God as a Being whom those who love must also fear as Lord of hosts, Lord of all. The good life is the life that is lived in that presence, loving, yet august beyond imagination.

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A strong human interest attaches to the volume *Immortality* (Macmillan; 6s. 6d. net), by the Rev. S. D. McCONNELL, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L. The writer is eighty-five years old, and in this volume he offers us his matured conclusions on the great subject of the future life, a subject to which he has obviously given much thought. It is a frank, sincere, and able work, full of clear and incisive writing; and we regard it as well worthy of the attention of theologians and preachers, and indeed of thoughtful readers generally.

Why does the author choose 'immortality' as his title? Because the burden of the book is that men are not as such immortal; they are at the best only immortal. Immortality is not an inherent quality in mankind; it is only one possible, perhaps, of attainment. Yet the author inclines strongly to the possibility, and he claims support for his opinion not only from Christianity but also from biology and anthropology, quoting with apparent approval M. Guyon, who says that natural selection can 'produce species and types superior to humanity as we know it; it is not probable that we embody the highest achievement possible in life, thought, and love. Who knows indeed, but that evolution may be able to bring forth, nay has not already brought forth, immortals?'

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What, according to our author, are the conditions of immortality? 'The place of escape from out the closed ring which we call nature is not the body or the mind, but the moral endowment.' In other words, he suggests that goodness, and goodness alone, can arrest and turn back the physical law of growth, vigour, decline, and decay. This holds for the race, and it does not seem too much to believe that it holds also for the individual man. This is eternal life to know God, and God is apprehended only through the gate of the moral sense, which thus points to the way of eternal life. 'If that gate be not there, or if it be too narrow for egress, there cannot in the nature of the case be any thoroughfare.' Thus our author allies himself, substantially if not formally, with the advocates of the theory of conditional immortality.

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His position may be made clearer through the following quotation: 'The latest human faculty to be evolved is Conscience. When it does appear it dominates all the others. Its evolution has been slow. Between the point where moral sensibility begins in the beast and the point where it is regnant in the highest type of man, æons lie. Until it is developed, there is no avenue leading out from the closed ring of matter. Bergson has well shown that the intellect at its highest can only deal with matter or material images. It is Euclidean, not

celestial. The gateway to the spiritual universe is Conscience.'

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It is one thing to believe in the possibility of immortal life, another thing to form a conception of the future state. In the old Greek and Oriental view, with its dualistic conception of the relation of soul and body, the soul passes at death into a disembodied state, its frail tenement being dissolved and returning to the earth from which it came. But the notion of a disembodied human spirit, says Dr. McCONNELL, is unthinkable. No such phenomenon has ever come within the experience of humanity. All that humanity knows or ever has known of spirit has been in connexion with organized matter. 'So far as we can know, there has never in all time been a single communication between one human intelligence and another, except through a material medium.' Accordingly, if we are to think of the future state at all, we must think of it in terms of soul and body.

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In the old Hebrew view, with its unitary conception of the relation of soul and body, the possibility of the future life is bound up with the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. According to this doctrine, soul and body shall yet meet again, and thus the complete or entire person be reconstituted. But this must have been always a difficult doctrine for thoughtful people to maintain, and the advance of physical and chemical science has made it now unbelievable. It was in view of St. Paul's teaching concerning a spiritual resurrection-body that in the English Prayer Book version of the Apostles' Creed the phrase, 'I believe . . . in the resurrection of the flesh,' was changed into the less materialistic phrase, 'I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body.'

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But Dr. McCONNELL, who with most modern thinkers cannot accept the phrase 'the resurrection of the flesh' in the meaning it possessed when formulated, regards it as capable of a wide and more reasonable connotation than the words would seem to imply. Indeed, the most characteristic part of his theory is his virtual endorsement of the Pauline doctrine of the spiritual body, interpreting

it in terms of modern science. While he regards the Greek and Oriental doctrine of disembodied spirits and the Hebrew doctrine (which has entered into the Christian tradition) of the reassembling of the material particles of the body as equally unthinkable, he seeks to show that there is something in a soul which may become stable enough to survive the disintegration of the body, so that in Pauline phrase mortality is swallowed up in life. Is it not conceivable that the soul may clothe itself in eternal matter? Is there anything in the stuff of the cosmos which could serve it for a body after the present one has dropped away?

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The affinity of such questions with Pauline thought is very evident. But St. Paul knew nothing about the amazing substance—'ether,' 'electric flux,' 'the fourth estate of matter'—which fills all space, interpenetrates all matter, is the medium through which light, heat, electricity, and radio emanations travel. This substance, says Dr. McCONNELL, has, by breaking up the accepted definition of matter, opened the way to possibilities of the future life against which the physical sciences have nothing to say. Indeed, 'the observed interdependence of body and soul which has so weighed down the hope of immortality may prove the rescue of that hope.'

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Here is in brief a statement of our author's theory in his own words: 'Each thought we think, each emotion we feel, is accompanied by certain molecular movements and rearrangements in the brain. The psychical activity actually builds up a physical fabric for itself. But the material fabric is every moment disintegrating and at death falls into ruin. Now, suppose that before that ruin befalls, the soul shall have been able to build up, as it were, a brain within the brain, a body within the body. Then, when the body of flesh shall crumble away, there would be left a body, material to be sure, but compacted of a kind of matter which behaves quite differently from that which our sense perceptions deal with. Such ethereal bodies compacted with living souls would of necessity inhabit a universe of their own, even though that universe should occupy the same space

that this one does. Neither earth nor fire nor water could in the least impede their movement. In frost and flame they would be equally at home. With the swiftness of light or gravitation they could speed from where old Bootes leads his leash to where Sagittarius draws his bow in the south.'

Dr. McCONNELL is of opinion that the gospel stories of the resurrection of Jesus fit strangely

into such a conception as that set forth above. He is also of opinion that the essential theory he supports, with its emphasis upon the survival-value of moral goodness, is corroborated by the teaching of Jesus and the early Christian writers. But into his further positions we cannot enter; enough has been said to show how fresh and suggestive a treatment is presented to us here of the high theme of 'immortality.'

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## Theology and the Preacher's Task.

BY THE REVEREND SYDNEY CAVE, M.A., D.D., PRESIDENT OF CHESHUNT COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THE days have long since gone when theology was regarded as the Queen of Sciences, and the theologian held in high esteem. In part, the modern dislike of theology is natural and inevitable. Christian theology has for its sphere the exploration of that revelation which, as we believe, has come to us in Christ. Unless in some sense the fact of that revelation be accepted, there can be no such thing as a Christian theology. Its place would then be taken by philosophy, for the Christian world-view would be but one among the many world-views which philosophy provides. Christian theology can only be the concern of the Christian Church. It exists solely because of the Church's faith that God has spoken to the world in Christ, and has in Him given us a revelation of Himself which we could not otherwise have gained. The theologian, like the preacher, has thus to learn to be 'a fool for Christ's sake,' and to be regarded by many as a useless vendor of unrealities. If the theologian has any distinctive sphere, it is within the Christian Church. He is put aside to explore Christian truth, not for theoretical purposes chiefly, but with the practical object that the truth which he explores may be used by the preacher for the instruction of his people, and the evangelization of the world.

What is strange is not the contempt for theology shown by many outside the Church, but its dislike by many within the Church. Most strange of all is the breach which exists to-day between the theologian and the preacher. We do not hear general practitioners jeering at the work done by the medical faculties of our universities in the way we hear some preachers jeering at the work of those

who are trying humbly and faithfully to understand and to express the Christian revelation. Some of us are getting rather tired of the minister who tells his people that all he learnt at college was patience, and to shave with cold water. Of course, what he says may be perfectly true. He may have learnt little in college, and forgotten the little that he learnt. What is surprising is that he should be so proud of this. We do not find medical men thus boasting of their ignorance. They would be afraid if they did of being accused of idleness and incompetency.

But the dislike of theology is not restricted to the mentally indolent. Throughout Europe the tragedy of the War and of the Peace has led many to turn from the present to the past, and to seek a way of safety, either by the repristination of Protestant orthodoxy, or by the attempt to imitate the medievalism of what some like to think was the golden age of Christian faith and piety. We think of the widespread influence in Germany of Karl Barth's *Commentary on Romans*, with its five hundred pages of violent paradox. It is a deeply moving book. But if its standpoint be right there can be no theology, no real attempt to understand the meaning of the gospel. All that is possible for us is the dumb expression of God's awful yet gracious act in sending Christ to die for men, revealing thus His mercy in His judgment, His grace in His unapproachable and unutterable holiness. And this Barth not only admitted but emphasized. 'Do we speak,' he says, 'of the redeeming message of Christ, of the Word of God as teaching, or of theology as science? Then hear Kierkegaard's words, "Pro-