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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

'TO-DAY, at least as conspicuously as orthodox theology, the accepted moral standard of Christian tradition is being assailed with contempt, with ridicule, with indignant argument—not only the morality of sex, but also the whole idea of self-denial and the service of the weak by the strong. The current popular literature is demanding above all things free individual self-expression, unshackled by parental or ecclesiastical authority or by considerations of humility or charity.' Until quite recently many of the severest critics of the Christian faith insisted that they were still zealous to maintain the Christian ethical standard, but what we have to face to-day is 'fundamentally a rebellion against the whole intellectual and ethical tradition, both of Christianity and of Platonism.' It cannot, therefore, be wondered at that many serious people, who are by no means Puritans, view this worship of self with the deepest dread.

As the attack has immensely and dangerously broadened its front, so must the defence. The attempt to undermine the very foundations of the moral world must be met and countered. To this task Dr. GORE set himself in his Gifford Lectures at St. Andrews, now published under the title of *The Philosophy of the Good Life* (Murray ; 10s. 6d. net). No one is better fitted for the work, and we need say no more than that this latest book fully maintains the reputation of its author. He builds from the foundation upward, and he has reared a truly noble structure. His thesis is that the good

life and that moral view of God and the world which finds its highest expression in the Christian revelation is most rational and worthy of acceptance.

His method involves first of all a careful historical examination of the conception of the good life as entertained and taught by the famous moral leaders of mankind—Zarathustra, the Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad, Socrates, Plato, and the Stoics, the Jewish prophets, and Jesus Christ. In these he finds an impressive unanimity in regard to the fundamental facts of the moral life. There is the recognition of 'a conscience in man which can distinguish good from evil, and which can recognize the claim of the good life, as self-evidencing and divine—as something different from the pursuit of the pleasure or profit of the individual.' There is an insistence that 'nothing avails to emancipate us from the fear of the world except the fear of God—the sense of His almightiness and goodness combined, which can quiet our hearts in an immovable courage even under the worst assaults and in the most unsupported solitude.' There is a belief that 'human life is a good and not an evil thing, though it involves often a fierce struggle,' and that man, though endowed with the perilous dignity of a conditioned freedom, is yet dependent, whether he likes it or not, on the Power which encompasses and controls him. 'This, therefore, is man's proper prayer—that, as he cannot exist without God, so he may live in accordance with God.' It should not be overlooked that these

moral leaders of mankind are unanimous in their utter refusal to put the moral question to the vote. 'They exhibit a contempt for majorities, and look to the faithful few to maintain the standard of the right with an assurance of final victory.' They have an invincible conviction of man's unique position in the world. 'Alone among visible creatures he appears as a responsible being engaged in a struggle for divine principles or purposes, the realization of which appears as precarious and as dependent upon his efforts.' To allege man's physical insignificance as a plea for refusing to acknowledge the prerogative place assigned to him in the religious and classical tradition is really irrational. So Dr. GORE concludes: 'I ask myself whether it is possible to pay careful attention to this great cloud of witnesses and to doubt that the various attempts to "account for" morality without the recognition of goodness, beauty, and truth as eternal values which do not admit of further analysis must be judged to be defeated.'

Following upon this historical survey we have a fine exposition of the Christian world-view, as being the noblest form in which ethical idealism has presented itself in history. The moral imperative implies God. 'If there inheres in the nature of things this absolute claim, this must mean that in the nature of things there subsists a righteous mind and will—that is, something not less than supreme personality.' If it be argued that this is anthropomorphism it must be pointed out that science itself cannot avoid anthropomorphism, and, indeed, that we cannot think at all except on the assumption that the mind of man corresponds to cosmic reality—to mind in the universe. This supreme personality cannot be rationally conceivable as anything less than a presiding purposeful mind present from the beginning. This must be held to exclude the view that there was no conscious purpose in the evolutionary process till man appeared on the scene. Again, any strictly unitarian conception of God appears to be rationally impossible. 'What is postulated is a *living* God independent of and prior to His creatures. But life, and especially personal life, involves relations. It appears to be essentially

relative and social. There can be no thought which is not thought of something other than the thinking subject. There can be no effective will without the production of some effect. Still more obviously there can be no love which is not the love of person for person.'

Passing on to consider the nature of man we find that the moral idea, the idea of what *ought to be*, is essentially characteristic of mankind. It is what Henry Sidgwick called an 'irreducible datum of moral consciousness.' But the idea and reality of moral obligation is essentially bound up with the idea and reality of freedom. 'There can be no meaning in penitence and the sense of shame on account of having done or omitted to do this or that; there can be no meaning in ascribing to a person responsibility for any particular occurrence, except on the assumption of contingency—that he need not have done what he did—that its occurrence under the circumstances was not inevitable.' Doubtless this freedom is limited, by the laws of Nature, the strength of habit, the latent forces of heredity and so on; but within limits freedom really exists. Physical science, which was so confidently supposed to exclude the idea of freedom, has in these days lifted the ban. Professor Eddington expressly says: 'science withdraws its opposition to free-will. Those who maintain a deterministic theory of mental activity must do so as the outcome of the study of the mind itself, and not with the idea of making it more conformable with an experimental knowledge of the laws of inorganic nature.' In these circumstances no one need now hesitate to accept the verdict of consciousness on the ground that science declares it must be an illusion.

The reality of freedom involves the possibility of sin. 'The creation of free beings capable of voluntary co-operation, by a necessity lying in the nature of things, from which God Himself could not be exempt, involved the possibility of a refusal of service.' Here we meet the Christian solution of the mighty problem of evil. God is good and the author only of good, but the world as it is is not the world of God's intention. 'Clear thinking will

show us how vast a proportion of all human disease, misery, and degradation is due to the way men have treated themselves and one another. God still abides in the world and sustains its being; but over the human world He stands also as its accuser and its judge.' As accuser and judge—but Christianity reveals the just judge as also the saviour. 'As He sees His work marred under His eyes, the creator becomes the re-creator and the redeemer; and this work of redemption pursues a course as gradual as the work of creation, and has its culmination in Christ, and His divine society of the redeemed.'

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This brings us to the question of revelation. The highest convictions concerning God and His will for mankind which have appeared in history have been unhesitatingly ascribed by those through whom they came, not to their own thought or discovery, but to the direct action of God. 'Let us have this fact, then, clearly in our minds, that of what we esteem most valuable in our human heritage a great part comes from those prophetic souls, who would have repudiated altogether having invented or discovered what they announce, and with the deepest conviction would have ascribed it to the self-revelation of God in their souls—the word of God.' The real question is, not whether man has a religious faculty, but whether his soul is accessible to God, and whether God has spoken. 'It is exactly this *question* which many of our contemporary philosophers or theologians seem to me not to be willing to put to themselves. And I ask, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you" that God should so disclose Himself to man?' It has been proposed to explain away these impressions of immediate contact with God as 'uprushes from the sub-conscious.' But the sub-conscious, while it may be the depository of a vast amount of instincts, memories, and experiences, has provided no evidence worthy of the name that it can be the source of new knowledge or fresh disclosures such as have advanced and ennobled mankind. It must be admitted that in the modern mind there is a stubborn antipathy to the very idea of revelation. But the era of hard rationalism is passing away. It is recognized that reason may

make excessive demands for demonstrative proofs. Science itself rests on a basis of faith. It is faith by which we grasp an order in Nature. It is faith by which we welcome the absolute validity of moral values. It is the same faith by which we recognize God and accept His self-revelation. Man can never reach the absolute or Divine point of view. 'The world is a dark place in many respects, and life remains a perplexing experience; but man has quite enough light to live by, even gloriously and thankfully, if he will walk by reason, recognizing that faith is a primary and constant constituent of reason; and that faith in a divine helper and friend, if it never ceases to be faith, and therefore a venture and an experiment, is an experiment which, for the best of mankind, has become, and for each of us may become, also an experience and a practical certitude as sure as the evidence of the senses, and destined to pass into open vision.'

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Professor Edgar Sheffield BRIGHTMAN of Boston University is a stout apologist for theism, and he writes out of knowledge of contemporary theistic and antitheistic movements, as well as of the history of the subject. Indeed, part of the value of his new book *The Problem of God* (Abingdon Press; \$2.00) is its informative references to contemporary writers, whether theistic like Brentano, or antitheistic like Lippmann or Perry. Many of these he does little more than label or pigeon-hole; but sometimes we are presented with useful analyses of their thought.

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But while he defends theistic belief, he is not an apologist for traditional theism. In some respects he shares its conception of God, but there is one doctrine which he emphatically cannot share. It is the doctrine of the infinitude of God. The most characteristic feature of his book is its insistence on the notion of a finite or limited Deity. This notion alone, he maintains, can relieve the problem of evil, which presses so insistently on the theistic thinker. For the pantheist or the polytheist evil constitutes no problem; for the theist it is the problem of problems.

The doctrine of a finite or limited God has been held in recent times in various forms. What is Professor BRIGHTMAN's form of it? It depends on what he calls 'The Given.' Now 'The Given' is a limitation within the Divine nature, and it constitutes a problem for the Divine will and reason. 'It may be conceived as a conscious datum or perception, analogous to human sense experience, yet not produced by any stimulus or cause external to God.' 'It is irrational, not in the sense of containing logical contradictions or immoral purposes, but in the sense of being given to reason as a datum and not derived from rational premises or purposes.'

If there is such a Given within God, it would not only explain why He should be moved to activity, but would also explain, or at least help to explain, the slow and painful methods of evolution and the miseries and accidents of human life. The Given would take over many of the functions belonging in various philosophies to matter, potentiality, or the devil. 'Yet there would be no dualism either of stuff or of ultimate principle in the universe; there would only be a dualism of process within the Supreme Person.'

'The creation of the world would be no more than certain phases of the divine activity in controlling and shaping The Given by rational law. The so-called "mistakes" of evolution would be due to its recalcitrance. There would be a definite surrender of the omnipotence of the divine will and probably of omniscience, at least as far as foreknowledge is concerned. God would remain personal, ethical, and rational, but the temporal process would be more significant for him than it was on the older view. God would not dwell in an eternal separateness from the world, but would enter more intimately into the ongoing of things.'

Such is Professor BRIGHTMAN's speculative solution of the problem of evil. It has obvious affinities with certain idealistic solutions that have already made their appearance in the history of thought. As obviously too, it is liable to objections from the standpoint of traditional theism.

To the objection that the hypothesis of The Given renders the goal of the universe precarious and irrational, our author would reply that while The Given would cause tactical difficulties, it would not cause difficulties in major strategy. To the objection that a God thus limited by The Given is not worthy of being worshipped, he would reply that the worshipful attitude is not contingent on a belief in omnipotence. To the objection that the problem occasioned by the presence of Given factors in human experience receives only a mock solution from the hypothesis of The Given in God, he would reply that this hypothesis is not an evasion but a real solution, being the insight that only from the celestial point of view can the problem be faced with hope. 'We face real problems which we cannot solve; God also faces real problems, but he can solve them all.'

Inasmuch as any proposed idea of God must be tested not merely by its ability to meet the needs of religious experience or to explain the evils of life, but also by its adequacy to explain experience as a whole, Professor BRIGHTMAN invites us to consider some of the wider implications of the hypothesis of The Given in God. In particular, he would urge that his hypothesis—a God limited within His own nature, yet wresting meaning from the irrational factor by the achievements of His rational will—seems to account more adequately than other ideas of God for the paradoxical assertion of religious experience that its object is both a Mighty God and a Suffering Servant. 'It places the Cross in the eternal nature of God.'

It is difficult to follow Professor BRIGHTMAN in his final contention that The Given, by providing for the mysterious and irrational along with the moral and the rational in the Divine Nature, makes God a more worthy object of worship, even though it be 'numinous' worship; but we are grateful to him for a book which, apart from its characteristic hypothesis, is suggestive and helpful. Particularly to be named in this connexion are its chapters on The Expansion of God, The Contraction of God, and The Evidence for God.

In his book, *The Parables of Jesus, their Art and Use*, just published, Dr. A. T. CADOUX makes two points that are both novel and suggestive. The first is the apologetic value of the Parables. The art of the parable is rare, and the supremacy of Jesus' achievement in it makes His parables valuable as documents, especially in view of those who contend that of Jesus Himself we have no sure knowledge, but that He was merely a centre round which gathered legends and sayings embodying the beliefs and ideals of the Early Church.

Against this we observe that, setting the Gospels aside for the moment, we have in the New Testament what the Early Church thought most worth preserving in the writings of its best minds, but, though occasions are many in which a parable would be helpful, not a single writer shows the least ability to create one. Not one is attributed to any speaker in the Book of Acts. Yet we are asked to believe that these people who could not create parables for themselves did for another this much more difficult thing of creating not only parables but imaginary historical situations into which to fit them.

The parables attributed to Jesus are thus evidence that the Church took its rise from a personality immeasurably greater than any who followed Him in its ranks, and the parables of Jesus are evidence not only that such a one existed, but of much that was most important in His endeavour. And this is confirmed by another fact, the obvious inability of the Evangelists to understand many of the parables. If they were preserved when their preservers did not understand them, then they were preserved because they embodied genuine memories of the inspired teacher.

That point is well taken, and has its own place in sound apologetic. The other point, to which Dr. CADOUX devotes much more attention, is that the Parables are instruments of controversy. One of the reasons why the parable is so rare is that it not only requires a considerable degree of art, but that this art is exercised under hard conditions. This may be affirmed generally of the parables in

Scripture. In the three typical parables of the Bible the speaker takes his life in his hands. Jothan spoke his Parable of the trees to the men of Shechem and then fled for his life. Nathan with the Parable of the ewe lamb told an oriental despot of his sin. And Jesus in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen used His own death sentence as a weapon for His cause.

Almost all the parables of Jesus, of whose occasion we are fairly sure, were spoken in attack or defence. Beside that of the wicked husbandmen we must place those of the two sons, the house divided, the strong man, the two debtors, the real defilement, the patch and the wine-skin, the sons of the bridechamber, the good Samaritan, the lost coin, and the prodigal. In its most characteristic use, therefore, the parable is a weapon of controversy, not shaped like a sonnet in undisturbed concentration, but improvised in conflict to meet an unpremeditated situation. And yet, so great is the Teacher, that, while the Parables show the resourcefulness of the protagonist and the courage that is unimpeded by the turmoil and danger of mortal combat, they also show the imagination and sensitiveness of the poet.

This controversial origin and purpose of the Parables frequently enables us to understand their point more clearly. Take, for example, 'the most beautiful of all His parables,' the story of the prodigal. Apart from its controversial use, we should expect the story to end with the prodigal's return, and it would have done so if it had been merely a story illustrating the love of God for His children. But actually it was spoken in reply to the taunt, 'this man receiveth sinners,' and in vindication of His own attitude to the 'lost' in contrast to the Pharisaic attitude. Hence the elder brother. The story has three chapters, the prodigal, the father, and the brother, and the last chapter has 'the fighting point.' It claims from us a judgment on the criticism of Scribe and Pharisee.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus illustrates the same point. At first sight it seems to

be aimed at the callous rich, or perhaps was told to depict the retribution that follows sin. But if that were the case, why the last words, 'if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead'? Obviously the purpose of the parable is to be read in these words. And Dr. CADOUX thinks that the historical situation that gave rise to the story was

the Pharisees' demand for a 'sign from heaven' to prove the credentials of Jesus. This demand was probably a standing one, and the parable was told to show that such signs would not be of any use. There was enough before men's eyes and minds to satisfy them if they were sincere. And to enforce this a parable was far more effective than argument.

A Retrospect of Forty Years.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN, D.D., NEW YORK.

WHEN, some months ago, I was asked to contribute an article on recent developments in American theology to *THE EXPOSITORY TIMES*, the request brought vividly before me the contrast between the intellectual environment in which theology must do its work to-day, and that which met the students of my generation. This contrast had been accentuated in my own mind by the news of the death of Professor Adolf Harnack of Berlin, the outstanding theological teacher of the Germany of my student days, and it occurred to me that I might use his passing as a convenient text by which to introduce and to illustrate the contrast I had in mind.

In a preceding article in this journal, Professor G. D. Henderson has given an appreciation of Harnack's significance as a scholar. In what follows I shall not repeat what he has there so well said. It will be my attempt rather to interpret the spirit of the man and of the school of thought of which he was in many respects the most distinguished representative.

It will be forty years this October since I first entered Adolf Harnack's lecture room. As a graduate of the Union Theological Seminary, who had been exposed for three years to the critical theology of which he was at that time the most distinguished German exponent, there was little in the points of view which he represented which was unfamiliar to me. But I had not listened to him for five minutes before I fell under the spell of his magnetic personality. For the next two years I was a constant attendant at his lectures; during my second year a member of his Seminar; and when, during my last term, I felt obliged to cut off all superfluous duties in order to concentrate on my own research,

Harnack's two morning hours were the only part of my formal academic work which I could not afford to let go. I still remember how, starting from my lodgings at half-past six a.m. for a half-hour's walk through the Thiergarten in order to be on time for the early seven o'clock lecture, I used to wonder what new insight or inspiration the hour would bring. During the forty years that have intervened it has been my privilege to know many great thinkers and to hear many eloquent speakers. I cannot recall having met any one else whom I could have heard for ten hours a week for two successive years without a single sensation of fatigue.

What Harnack's teaching meant to me it has meant to many another student, and the impressions to which I am here giving utterance could be duplicated in literally hundreds of lives.

It was not simply his personal gifts which accounted for Harnack's extraordinary influence and made his death a landmark in theological history. He represented an epoch and a type of thought that has played a great rôle in religious thinking. What he taught, still more what he typified, marked to many an anxious spirit in my generation the opening of a door into a life of security, enthusiasm, and peace.

It will not be merely serving an antiquarian interest then, nor even paying a tribute of gratitude long overdue, if I try to interpret to some of my younger contemporaries what Harnack and the things for which he stood meant to the men of my own day.

To begin with the more intimate and personal aspects of his influence, Harnack had an extraordinary sense for the concrete and individual