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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

TWENTY-ONE years ago the late Professor H. M. B. Reid, of the University of Glasgow, delivered an address to students who were about to be licensed to preach the gospel, on what he called 'The Supreme Importance of Preaching.' He stressed the point that, while there were many other activities —are there too many?—in which the preacher is expected, if not even bound, to engage, the place of preaching was paramount. There is much truth in this. Doubtless highly successful ministries have been conducted by men whose preaching gifts were of a very modest order, but who won their way to the hearts of their people by sheer beauty of character—by their unselfishness, their patent otherworldliness, their unobtrusive ways of doing good, above all by their sympathetic identification with the joys and sorrows of others. Still, there are many who seldom or never need the minister's individual counsel, and whose chief contact with him is through the sermon. The pulpit is his throne, and if he is to reign with any power or pleasure, he must be able to commend himself there.

Apart from the broad human interest of his work, the preacher—perhaps more than most professional men—has also a professional interest in it. He watches the methods of other men, in the hope of appropriating what is valuable in them, and of capturing, if possible, the secret of the great exponents of the art; and, though in the end he may find that their secret is their own and is not to be captured, he will be ready to admit that the quest has been worth while. Even from the poorest of sermons he may always learn something —if not something to imitate, at least something to avoid. A special interest attaches, too, to the preachers of other ages and other lands; for while every preacher has to preach to his own age and his own land, a survey of the preaching of other times and places can hardly fail to reveal things of universal and fundamental importance.

We turn hopefully, therefore, to a disquisition by Israel BETTAN on 'The Sermons of Azariah Figo,' which appears in volume vii. of the *Hebrew Union College Annual* (Cincinnati), reviewed elsewhere in this number. Figo was an Italian Jew (1579–1647) who had come under the influence of the Renaissance, but who had turned from the lure of its secular knowledge to the sources of inspiration that drew from Jewish learning, particularly from the Talmud; and the seventy-six sermons published after his death are described as 'a collection that forms a most precious contribution to Jewish homiletics'—a collection from which the Christian preacher may also derive profit.

One of those profitable things is a lesson that Figo learned from the Renaissance, from whose general spirit he had travelled far, namely, the importance of 'beauty of thought and perfection of form.' Perhaps the modern preacher is too little interested in perfection of form. In Parliament, in the Church, and on the platform, the stately type of

oratory has given place to a style that is almost deliberately colloquial. This undoubtedly has the advantage of being direct and intelligible, and, if it is nobly done, it has a charm of its own. But it carries with it the danger that the slovenliness as well as the naturalness of colloquial speech may be reproduced in the sermon. Now beauty of form is something which even the preacher has no right to ignore.

For we must not allow the ease and simplicity of the gospel story, and especially of the words of Jesus, to blind us to the care—may we reverently say the skill—which underlies them. They seem to imply long premeditation, in relation not only to the thought which they embody, but to the form in which that thought should clothe itself in order that the thought itself may be welcomed by the mind and retained in the memory. Beauty is no more to be despised than truth; it may indeed be one of the means by which truth is commended. When we consider how impressive is much of the poetry of the prophetic discourses—Isaiah's song of the vineyard, for example (5^{1-7}), with its striking exordium and its conclusion which the assonance shows to have been constructed with deliberate care—it is impossible to believe that they are the result of mere improvisation. It is certainly not to the Bible that the preacher who is indifferent to form can appeal.

But what is the function of the sermon? It was Figo's conviction that it was to help those who heard it to 'understand the times' and to enable them 'to know what Israel ought to do.' Or, as BETTAN puts it, 'this is the end for which the preacher must always labour, to guide others in the path of spiritual well-being. This should be the main burden of every sermon, no matter what the occasion on which it is preached, to stimulate in the hearer a passion for self-improvement and increased spiritual power.' Or again, the sermon is 'a criticism of life, with individual and social betterment as its main objective.'

This implies that sermons will sometimes strike a note of challenge. Sometimes, but not invariably; for there is nothing more wearisome or reprehensible, nor indeed is there anything easier, than to be critical and denunciatory. But courageous and especially constructive criticism will often be necessary, and Figo certainly did not lack the courage to challenge what he found to be amiss in the society he addressed. He lashed not only unchastity but the habit of staring at women, he castigated not only ingratitude but the omission to say grace both before and after meals; his challenge is not dissipated in harmless platitudes, it condescends upon particulars. But more important than the challenge was the fact that Figo had earned the right to challenge by first of all challenging himself. 'If I address myself to others,' he says, 'it is because I deem it the best way of impressing the truth of the lesson upon my own soul. Besides, after voicing my convictions in the hearing of others, as I do when I preach, I am no longer free to act in any but a consistent manner; I am thus constrained to practise what I preach.' Or as Dr. Dods, quoted by Professor Reid, put it, 'It is the *man* who preaches.'

It is possible to see too little in a text; most texts have implications which only reveal themselves to the serious student. But it is also possible to see too much. Figo seems to expose himself occasionally to this charge. When, for example, he tells us that the reason why the Lord did not accept Cain's offering was because it was not made at once but only 'in process of time,' 'after many days,' or that His unwillingness to permit man to 'become as one of us, to know good and evil,' was due to His desire that man's knowledge should be the result of personal achievement and not of the sudden transformation of his nature, we cannot help feeling that the points are over-subtle.

There are preachers, though not many, who tend this way to-day. It has been said of Dr. Maclaren that he was inclined to read almost too much into or out of particles and the tenses of verbs. Minutiæ of this kind are not likely to interest the average congregation, though sometimes even in these subtleties we come across suggestions of real value. Here is one, rising out of the well-known words,

'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea' (Is 11^9). 'The surface of the sea, though smooth and seemingly even, covers depths of varying degrees. Similarly the knowledge of God will fill more abundantly the lower levels, the humbler hearts, the deeper spirits. For the lower the bottom of a vessel, the more ample its capacity for freightage.'

But in the last analysis the power of a preacher, as indeed of the men to whom he preaches, will depend not on the subtlety of his intellect or the range of his scholarship, but on his personal character and the strength of his faith. Figo fully recognizes the importance of research and free investigation, but he maintains that, if this is to lead to anything worth while, it must be preceded by the fulfilment of God's will and the faithful observance of His laws; in this we almost hear an echo of the words, 'If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know.' And again, his life must be so rooted and grounded in God that he is sure beyond a peradventure that God is interested in all that concerns him, working all things together for his good, and that 'no experience is the accidental outcome of Nature but the deliberate act of an ever-watchful Providence.' Preachers thus 'pure at heart and sound in head' have an opportunity second to none of affecting the life of their generation.

In our time, chiefly owing to the labours of Bishop John Wordsworth, a new interest has been awakened among New Testament scholars in the question of the true text of the Vulgate Gospels, as St. Jerome's revised translation of the Vulgate is usually called. It was to meet a real need that Jerome undertook in 383 the Papal Commission of providing a new version of the Four Gospels for Latin readers. By his day Latin Christianity had penetrated deeply into literary and educated circles; and the Old Latin Version, now quite literal, now simply paraphrastic, was ceasing to satisfy the requirements of intelligent people. Accordingly, Jerome sought in his version to preserve a much closer correspondence to the Greek text; at the same time, as beyond most other men *utriusque linguae peritus*, he improved on the Latinity of the older versions.

Jerome's version was left to make its way unaided save by its intrinsic merits, and even two centuries after it was produced it had not superseded the old version. This was partly due to the fact that the original Greek still enjoyed the prerogative position, so that between translations it could only be a question of better or worse, not of one right and many wrong; and partly to the fact that the Latin Christian congregations were loth to forgo a well-known and well-loved form of Scripture. The result was that during the first generations after the publication of the Vulgate Gospels the Old Latin Version still exercised a vast influence to the detriment of the pure Hieronymian tradition. Every scribe who was busy over a copy of the new translation was himself better acquainted with some form of the Old Latin. At every point even the most careful of them was liable, for the most part no doubt unwittingly, to reproduce, it might be the spelling, or it might be the text, of the version familiar to him, in places where these were different in the Vulgate Version he was copying. It has been a task of subsequent scholarship, since the time of Cassiodorus (*c.* A.D. 550), in face of existing discrepancies between one Vulgate MS. and another, to determine the authentic Vulgate text and bring out a correct edition.

To this task, as already said, Bishop John Wordsworth has made a notable contribution. But in the opinion of the late Professor Cuthbert Hamilton TURNER the text which Wordsworth's edition gives us is not so much the text of Jerome as the text of Cassiodorus. For Dr. TURNER'S reasons we refer our readers to the posthumous volume, brought out by his friend Professor A. SOUTER of Aberdeen, entitled *The Oldest Manuscript of the Vulgate Gospels* (Milford; 21s. net). The volume was not quite completed at the time of the author's death, but fortunately Dr. SOUTER agreed to see it through the press, and we suspect that it owes to his scholarly care and competence much more than meets the eye.

While Dr. TURNER handsomely acknowledges the

benefit which Wordsworth has conferred upon Western Christianity by his book, he ventures on the criticism that the book would have been an even greater contribution to gospel study had it given less consideration to the history of the Vulgate, and more to the effort to get behind the history to the original. In particular he desiderates greater attention than has hitherto been paid to the St. Gall fragments of the Vulgate Gospels. These do not contain more than about half the whole matter of the Gospels. In questions of orthography they often show a tendency to replace the Hieronymian standard by a reaction to Old Latin practice. But on all questions of text their witness is of the highest value. Indeed, there are not wanting occasions where the St. Gall MS. is right against the combined testimony of all our other MSS, and throughout it we are presented with a North-Italian tradition, which is an invaluable check upon an exclusive reliance on the South-Italian or Cassiodorian tradition, in substance reproduced by Wordsworth. This opinion Dr. TURNER follows up by transcribing and editing the St. Gall fragments for us, with informative footnotes, and in the volume above named he has published the results of his pains-taking labours. The work remains a monument to his scholarship and skill.

The story of the St. Gall fragments is of romantic quality. Written in Italy about the year A.D. 500, this oldest MS. of the Vulgate Gospels became at some early date the property of the monastery founded about the year A.D. 600 by St. Gall near the southern shore of the Lake of Constance. It was still copied, or at any rate read, in the eighth century. But some time in the Middle Ages a reforming librarian used it up, or part of it, in providing guard-leaves for new bindings. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the dismembered MS. was resuscitated. The credit of this is due to the librarian Eldefons von Arx, who, noticing that many of the MSS under his charge had guard-leaves of the same ancient and beautiful semi-uncial type, detached and mounted them, and arranged them in their original order. Many of the pages, says Dr. TURNER, are as easily legible now as on the day they were written ; but of those that had the ill-fortune to be on the under side when the leaves were pasted in to the binding of this or that volume, few have survived the work of detachment without any injury, and the condition of others is deplorable.

Some of the missing pages may still be examined, but not at the monastery of St. Gall. In the centuries that intervened between the medieval dismemberment and the reconstruction by von Arx one of the volumes in which guard-leaves from our MS. were incorporated found its way into the Town Library ; another has found a remoter home, the Benedictine house of St. Paul in Carinthia ; and a third was carried off to Zürich as fruit of a campaign by the canton of Zürich against its neighbours of St. Gall.

Dr. TURNER describes in the Introduction the appearance of the St. Gall MS. He also discusses its palæography, comments upon many of its singular and sub-singular readings, and collates it with the Vulgate text of Wordsworth and White. A few notes from the chapter on ' The Orthography of the Vulgate ' may be of interest.

We should expect that Jerome, who was so proud of his scholarship, would not neglect to improve upon the spelling of the Old Latin text. More especially he would give particular care to the representation of the Greek form of proper names and other words transliterated from the Greek. The original translators rendered Greek and Hebrew names and words freely, according to their sense of the idiom of the Latin language. Two consecutive vowels, especially the repetition of the same vowel, were to them intolerable. Ἀαρών, Ἰσαάκ, Ἀβραάμ, Βηθλεέμ, were Latinized either by dropping one of the repeated vowels, or by the insertion of ' h ' between them. Thus the standard Old Latin forms from St. Cyprian's Bible onwards were Aron and Isac. Bethlem and Bethlehem both occur, but in the end Bethlehem ousted its rival. Abram was impossible, for it would have invalidated the distinction between Ἀβραάμ and Ἀβράμ, and therefore Abraham was the necessary alternative. But Jerome wrote with the Greek Aaron and Isaac, and Western usage

has obediently followed the Vulgate ever since. He also wrote Bethleem, but here was a case where tradition was too strong even for Jerome.

Only one of these names gives us opportunity for testing the faithfulness of the St. Gall MS. to the orthography of the Vulgate, and that is Isaac. In Lk $1^{3^{28}}$, 20^{37} we find Isac with the Old Latin. But the St. Gall MS. gives Nathanael in the form that Jerome according to his principles ought to have given, yet Wordsworth prints each time Nathanahel with the majority of good MSS. Did Jerome here desert his own principles? Or should we rather with the St. Gall MS. restore Nathanael to his text?

An exception to Jerome's general rule of assimilation of Latin forms to their Greek originals is provided by Hebrew proper names. Inordinately proud of his knowledge of Hebrew, he has allowed it to influence in certain cases his translation of the Greek. Beelzebub is the most salient of these cases. Βεεζεβούλ is the reading of Westcott and Hort and Gospels; and the final λ at any rate is beyond on every occasion where the word occurs in the question. But Jerome knew that in the Hebrew of the Old Testament the form is Beelzebub, and he consistently corrected the Greek of the New Testament, represented also by the Old Latin, into agreement with the Hebrew. And it should be observed that the St. Gall MS. reproduces correctly Jerome's Beelzebub.

As an Appendix to Dr. TURNER'S volume an 'early Durham fragment' is printed. It is supposed to be a portion of the Italian original from which the Lindisfarne Gospels, of the Cassiodorian group, were copied.

In the remarkable book, *God and the Universe*, there is a rewarding essay on 'The Experimental Approach to Religion,' by Professor Bertram Lee WOOLF, of Hackney and New College. He starts with a section on 'Science and Truth.' Science is not only a body of truths with some statement of the principles underlying them. It is also, and specially, a method of approach to truth. It is always provisional and tentative. Its facts are always being revised in the light of larger knowledge. Its theories are always being reviewed, superseded and replaced. The nature of atoms is one example of this. The nature of light is another. But the point to observe is that science is above all a method of inquiry. On this Dr. WOOLF makes two observations. One, that science does not include all truth. The other, that there are other ways of reaching truth besides the scientific method.

As to the first, it is obvious that there are matters of great importance to the historian, the poet, and even the family man of which science takes no account. Science is selective. Certain facts are chosen for observation, others are chosen to be ignored. But these other facts are *there* all the time, and may be momentous for those who are not scientists. Science sacrifices, or neglects, our immediate and intimate personal experiences as not only unnecessary but inimical to its purposes. The joy of home, the pensive beauty of the moorland, the wistful melancholy of the Moonlight Sonata are real things essential to fulness of life, but science passes them over. Science is a net, and a net is characterized as much by its holes as by the cord that makes them. Nor is science concerned necessarily with the features most valuable and essential for life as a whole, but only with those most suitable for its own purpose.

Also, there are other ways of reaching truth besides the scientific method. Indeed, there are truths which science is incompetent to deal with or to express. A young man may wish to make the closer acquaintance of a certain person of the opposite sex. But if he uses the wrong method he may fail in his objective. He may use the scientific method. He may begin by collecting scientific facts, such as her weight, height, and so forth. He ought certainly to go on and obtain a psychoanalyst's report about her. But probably by this time the young lady would have made it clear to him that he was using the wrong method. The truth is, of course, that for this and other matters essential to the happiness of life another method must be

used. An evening in her company, a day on the hills, will tell him more than science could ever discover. The point is that the method of personal contact or of direct intuition is perfectly sound in itself as a method of approaching the truth, and is sometimes the only method. And there are other ways, pursued in the arts, in music or poetry.

> Life is not an idle ore,
> But iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And bathed in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use.

Religious experience is one of these ways. Religious truth can never be reached by a mere examination of the external facts of history or life. Personal experience is necessary. Worship is more than merely adoration of the Deity. It is a way of approach to religious truth. The man who neither worships nor prays is outside the sphere of religious experience and has no acquaintance with the subject-matter in point. We cannot know Jesus merely by examining the records of His life. We are only in the position to estimate the value of Christian experience when we know it from inside. And so the value of any method of approaching truth depends on no inherent superiority, but simply on what we wish to know. If our objective is to gain knowledge of beauty or spiritual ideals or moral values, the scientific method is not appropriate. The ultimate test of truth is neither that it is 'scientific' nor 'revealed' nor 'instinctive,' but that it is harmonious with other known truth.

What science can do, then, is to insist that religious truth must be consistent with the great body of tested and criticised knowledge. This would exclude certain beliefs which were once popular. But it confirms much that is essential to religious belief. Take some examples of this. Begin with astronomy. This science has investigated the universe, weighed the stars, measured their distances, and has pronounced space and time to be finite. What does all that mean? It means, for one thing, that the universe can be grasped by the human mind, and that the mind is not a non-essential in the universe. Rather the universe is bedded in mind. Science cannot take us beyond the confines of space and time. There must be a beyond, but science is inadequate to the task of discovering it. Another method is needed for that. Now, nothing of this points away from belief in God. Rather it suggests that God must be conceived in terms of mind. There is much in scientific conclusions which harmonizes with the larger faith.

Go now in the opposite direction to the infinitesimal. The revelations of science about electrons and nuclear protons and germs are as wonderful as anything in astronomy. Nothing is too small to operate within an intelligible and orderly system. And nothing is too small to be alive. Such facts, again, do not point away from belief in God. If, on the ground of religious experience, the belief is held that God is a God with an all-seeing eye and with a concern for the meanest and smallest of His creatures, science cannot deny the validity of that belief. Rather must it admit that there is much which it has observed within its own sphere that seems to bear out that belief, and to give it a firmer and a broader foundation. Indeed, science must demand that God, if there be a God, must be conceived in terms which include carefulness and concern to the utmost limits. Thus a faith, which claims that no prayer, or fear, or life, or event, is too small for Him to notice, can assert its right to be heard and evaluated on the basis of its own evidence.

Again, let us take the 'advancing tide of law' of which Huxley spoke and which, according to him, was sooner or later to engulf the entire universe of human experience. His prediction has been amply fulfilled. There is a majestic reign of law recognized to-day which knows of no exceptions. The idea of law as law is now universally admitted. Everywhere Nature can be relied upon to act in certain ways in certain circumstances. Caprice seems to be unknown and indeed inconceivable. At one time this fact of universal law was thought inevitably to lead to the conception of a mechanical universe with no room for the play of mind or personal will, and hence with no room for the idea of God. But that is no longer the conclusion. No

machine makes or works itself. Moreover, the laws themselves give no impression of being chance laws, but intelligent. Everywhere there are order, system, and reliability. But all these terms lead beyond themselves. They are indeed ethical terms and lead to ethical meanings and values. Certainly they rule out the idea of chance, and when chance is ruled out, the idea of a moral universe is the next claimant for consideration. Then, when religious experience leads to a faith in a promise-keeping God, a God who makes things work together for good, there seems to be nothing in science which can deny the validity of such a faith. Rather there is much that is clearly harmonious with it and lends it direct support.

Nor is this all. Consider how in the world we all build upon the labours of others. Everywhere the intelligent toil of others has been preparing the way for us to live our lives. And not only so, we ourselves are often doing just a little bit of the work of the world, not in the least knowing what it is going to lead to. Alexander welded together an empire to satisfy a vaulting ambition, but his work became the foundation of all our modern civilization. Columbus dreamed of a way to India by sailing west, but he never dreamed, when he sighted land across the Atlantic, of the mighty nations that were to be founded there. There seems to be a mind that takes over the partial plans and labours of humanity, and weaves them into a nobler pattern than human minds conceive.

The more we consider these things, and others, the less does it seem likely that the universe is a soulless mechanism, and the more does it seem likely that it expresses a personal will both in detail and in the wide sweep of its majestic movement. If on the grounds of religious experience we reach a faith in a God 'in whom we live and move and have our being,' a faith which affirms that 'our times are in His hands,' science must admit that this is quite harmonious with much that has come under its own observation. And so science offers a broader basis for a profounder belief than was possible before its own advent.

National Contributions to Biblical Science.

XIII. Great Britain's Contribution to Systematic Theology.

By the Reverend Sydney Cave, M.A., D.D., President of Cheshunt College, Cambridge.

In his significant article on Theology in the current number of the *Church Quarterly Review*, the Bishop of Gloucester writes: 'Our greatest book on theology is *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* by Richard Hooker. . . . The only modern English work which approaches the subject with any intelligence is *A Manual of Theology* by Dr. Strong, the present Bishop of Oxford.' Our greatest book on theology is a seventeenth-century work which judiciously combines the traditions of the early Church; 'the only modern work which approaches the subject with any intelligence' is one written by an Oxford man who has since become a bishop—it is a strange statement, but one that explains the distinctive limitation of much English theology.

It is easier to discern the meaning of the past than of the present, and the peculiar characteristics of British theology can most clearly be seen as we compare the contribution made to systematic theology in the nineteenth century by Great Britain and by Germany. In Germany, theology had a history. Its leaders worked not as individuals but as members of schools of thought, inspired by a common principle, and owing much to contemporary philosophy. Thus we can trace the influence of Hegelianism, both on the Radical School of theology and on the Mediating School of Dorner in which the Hegelian confidence in speculation led to the construction of massive and subtle systems. Then, in reaction against Hegelianism, there was the rise of the Ritschlian School, which, although professing to free Christian