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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

It is sometimes said that the first disciples formed the greatest of all Theological Colleges, with the Master Teacher at the head. If so, we seem to have travelled a considerable distance from that conception of a Theological College. The Twelve were chosen, in the first place, 'that they might be with him.' They learned their lessons as they moved with Him from place to place, as they watched Him dealing with the sick, the suffering, the anxious, the careless, and the penitent. In a modern College, some of the students, some also of the teachers, are in frequent contact with working, struggling, sinning, and suffering men and women; but the College itself is a stationary, and, on the whole, a cloistered affair.

Another great difference is the importance that a modern College attaches to a library. Modern teaching about the meaning of the Christian religion is based largely on books. The disciple circle had no library, and we never hear of our Lord using a text-book except certain sections of the Old Testament. We are not suggesting that our modern Colleges should dispense with their libraries. We do suggest that it is possible for theology to become too bookish, and too divorced from the realities of life.

One of the obvious and welcome facts about *The Heart of Christ's Religion*, by the Rev. Canon C. E. Raven (Longmans; paper 4s. 6d. net, cloth 6s. net), is that it is not a bookish book. Canon Raven has read books and plenty of them; but this book is written out of his heart and out of his experience of life, especially of his practical work among men, first in Hoxton and later in Cambridge. He writes not as a scholar but as a working parson.

The Rev. E. Stanley Jones tells us of Hindus who will feel insulted if they are called Christians, but highly honoured if they are called Christ-like men. In our own country men of our day are moved like the men of old by the appeal of Christ; but they tell us they cannot find Him in organized religion. Canon Raven believes they would find Him if they could be made to see Him as He is. He takes for his text the words of 1 Jn 4^8: 'God is love.'

His thesis is that this is not *a* truth about God, but *the* truth, the only truth, even as it is the only truth about the world and about man; that any Christian theology to be worthy of the name, must be the elaboration of this central thesis. Love is the keynote of the process of evolution. The entry of love into the heart is conversion. The Atonement is love leading us in the path of the new life. The doctrine of the Trinity is a necessity of God's existence if God is love.

There is no more moving section in the book than that in which Canon Raven discusses the application of this thesis to suffering. In the

distress of his last illness, the late Professor Veitch of Glasgow used to exclaim: 'Why am I of all men called on to suffer thus?' It was the cry of the hero of the Old Testament drama. To Job, the suffering of a righteous man was a problem. 'Why should such a fine man as I am be singled out to bear the loss of my asses, my sheep, my camels, my servants, my house, my sons? Why should I be smitten with a loathsome disease and become an outcast?'

It has not always been recognized that certain sayings of Jesus seem almost to have had Job's problem in view. 'There is no man that hath left house . . . or children, or lands for my sake and the gospel's' but he shall find the world well lost. The very possessions the deprivation of which shook Job's faith in God, the followers of Jesus were called on voluntarily to surrender, or at least to be ready to surrender, for the Master's sake. The Satan was enjoined to spare Job's life: to the followers of Jesus the message was that to save their lives was to lose them.

Suffering is the way of love. In spite of Nature, red in tooth and claw, through suffering alone love reaches its true fulfilment. Yet not all suffering is the suffering of love. There is involuntary suffering, due to our own past folly, which we may receive only as a blow to our self-esteem, and so may lead only to irritation and bitterness. But even involuntary suffering of this kind may be accepted willingly and almost joyfully when we place ourselves on the side of love and make the suffering the occasion of a revolt against the domination of self.

Love finds its truest strength when it is voluntary suffering endured for the sake of others. Such love can never fail, for it means that self has once for all been conquered. Before such love death loses its terrors. For death finds its sting in sin which is the surrender to the self. When the self is swallowed up by love, death is but the gateway to a wider life of love. For all its suffering, love is essentially a thing of joy and happiness. If the first fruit of the Spirit is joy, the second is love.

Some people show a splendid fortitude in bearing other people's sufferings. But the temptation of the loving heart is to grow restive under the agonies of those we love. We feel so helpless; we fear that fate or the laws of Nature are too strong for us. But he that is saved is he that endures to the end, who believes to the end that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

The greatest tragedy of all is when our vicarious suffering finds no response, when the Father's arms are outstretched and the wayward son refuses to run to them, when the very knowledge of what the Father is suffering for his sake creates a tension that may turn to bitterness and hatred. Are we quite sure that our anxiety is altogether for the loved one and not in some measure for our own happiness and peace of mind? The love that seeks a return is no Christian love. True love can never fail. God's spirit embraces all, embraces not merely ourselves but the friend for whom our soul is in travail, and in drawing nearer to God we are drawing nearer to all God loves.

The Rev. Oliver C. QUICK, D.D., Canon of St. Paul's, is one of the brightest and most original of that band of theologians who are adorning the Church of England at the present time. In his new book, *The Gospel of Divine Action* (Nisbet; 5s. net), Dr. QUICK follows out a train of thought that is interesting as a speculation and valuable in its practical bearings. He points out that Reality contains two aspects—cause and reason. Things are both instruments and signs. The order of reason and the order of cause alike exist beyond me, and are not imposed on things either by my thought or by my action. Reality, therefore, reveals itself both to me and within me as rational thought and causative activity because these exist in the Being from whom any universal order proceeds. So in relation to God all things must be considered either as signs in which His truth is expressed to us, or as instruments wherewith He directs the course of events

through change towards the fulfilment of His purpose. Here, then, we have the starting-points for two lines of thought about God's relation to the world. You can look on the world as a series of successive events through which God is working out His will. Or else you can look on the world as a system of signs which manifest God as their meaning. That is the gist of the discussion with which Canon QUICK's book opens. Thenceforward it proceeds less metaphysically.

This distinction between instrumentalism and symbolism corresponds roughly to the distinction between the Hebraism of the Old Testament and the Hellenism of the Platonic tradition. The most obvious characteristic of Hebrew theology is the belief in God's guidance of history, a consequence of which is that all Hebrew religion is centred on a hope for the future. For Plato, on the other hand, salvation consists in the philosopher-saint's knowledge of eternal unchanging realities. For the Platonist the world is a system of symbols which are revealing signs, whereas for the Jew it is the scene of a great act of God. And the two systems give an altogether diverse value to conscious theoretic knowledge.

In the New Testament we see the wine of the Christian revelation beginning to burst the bottles of Judaism, and we can understand how it is that the theology of historic Christianity has combined and fused together both Judaic and Hellenic elements. Look at St. Paul. The whole of the Pauline theology is based upon the fundamental notion of God's great act of grace in Christ. But he transcends the mere notion of instrumentalism in his Christ-mysticism, which, if not Platonic, is certainly not characteristically Jewish. St. John, on the other hand, leans strongly to the other category of symbolism. While St. Paul's characteristic word is 'grace,' St. John's is 'truth.' And by truth St. John means spiritual reality. But while in every aspect of his thinking St. John is a symbolist, and it is truth and not fact which everywhere appears in his writings, yet because the truth is love, its glory is most truly revealed in outward action, and most of all when the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us.

This contrast and harmony between St. Paul's theology and St. John's are beautifully worked out by Canon QUICK. But our interest increases as the argument touches contemporary thought. In the New Testament the thought that God has acted in Jesus is the foundation of the whole doctrine of Christ's Person. The rest is superstructure or interpretation. Moreover, from first to last the Divine revelation in Jesus is conceived as dependent upon the Divine action through Jesus. But the Christology of modern humanitarianism inverts this order. The facts in the Gospel are represented as significant not because they are Divine acts, but because they reveal God. The Cross for humanitarian theology is the centre of Christianity because it is the essential part of the sign, because the truth is revealed supremely there. We are invited first to acknowledge the unique human goodness of Jesus, and then, with the help of a philosophy of values, to pass on to accept Him as the perfect symbol of Godhead upon earth. Harnack and Streeter are cited as the representatives of this modern interpretation.

It is small wonder that the obvious discrepancy of this theology from the New Testament has provoked a violent and extreme reaction in quite recent years. In Germany the reaction is headed by Barth. In England, Sir Edwyn Hoskyns and others give a totally different reading of the New Testament from that which is congenial to Streeter and others of his school. Barthianism can be understood best as a thoroughgoing attempt to break free from the Hellenistic tradition which has in one form or another dominated Christian theology for so long, and to start once more from radically Hebraic conceptions of the Godhead. Indeed, in its extreme utterances the Barthian theology strikes one as being more Biblical than that of the Bible, and more Hebraic than that of the Old Testament.

In any case, Barthians make it abundantly plain that what really matters in the whole Bible-story, on which Christian theology ought to be founded,

is not the revelation of any universal reality conveyed through symbols, but rather what God has done, is doing, and will do; and the greatest characteristic of the Divine acts is to confound the natural reason and conscience of mankind. It is idle for man to try to find God by seeking to understand His creation, for, according to Barth, the Biblical doctrine of the Creation is intended precisely to emphasize the impassable gulf between the Creator and the creature. It is idle for man to seek to know God through his moral ideals, for the ethics of the Bible are not the ethics of the moral philosopher. In short, the Bible is not concerned with the doings of man but with the doings of God. And the life of Christ reveals God only in being the crowning act of power, which once for all convicts all human ideals and ideas of their impotence and folly.

Canon QUICK indicates the extent to which Barthianism is influencing the scholars and thinkers of our own country, and indulges in a little mild criticism of Barth. Surely, he says, the Bible cannot be quite so Biblical, and may be even more Christian than Barthians would have us believe. If God be really eternal love, then somehow the life of Jesus must be the symbol not only of God's constant purpose and universal operation among men, but also of that perfection in act and knowledge after which man's natural faculties have from his birth been blindly seeking. And so Canon QUICK comes back to the real New Testament, from which Barthianism is a partial departure, and sees in the Incarnate Life both act of God and revelation of God. It is an act of God because it is characteristic of God always and thus truly symbolic of His whole purpose in the world, and it is symbol only because here uniquely is the act of God.

The series of 'Westminster Books' edited by Archdeacon Storr and Principal Sydney Cave promises to be of great value, dealing as they do in untechnical language with those questions of religion and ethics which are arousing interest or causing perplexity to-day in the minds of many. Not the least useful is the volume now published, *What is Salvation?* by Professor E. S. WATERHOUSE, D.D. (Hodder & Stoughton; 3s. net).

We are accustomed to speak freely of Christ as Saviour, and of an experience of salvation, but what precisely do we mean? The question 'What is salvation?' is no simple one, but leads on to many others. 'From what are we saved? How are we saved? Who is, or who is not, saved? Is it faith that saves us, and, if so, what place must be given to goodness of life and character?' All these and other vital questions await our answer.

It may be best if we approach the question from the standpoint of experience and its psychological interpretation. The history of the Christian doctrine of salvation is very long and complicated, but behind it all there lies the fact that, before there was any formal theology connecting the forgiveness of sin with the death of Christ, Christians who had experienced the forgiveness of sin regarded the death of Christ as the ground of that experience. 'The matter, looked at from this viewpoint, resolves itself into a clear issue. Granted that theological explanations of the connexion between the death of Jesus and the Christian experience grew up, and one and all proved unsatisfactory, yet that is no reason for ignoring a fact that is abundantly witnessed by history, namely, that the death of Jesus was, from the earliest times, connected with the experience of salvation.'

How, to begin with, did this connexion arise? It undoubtedly grew out of the teaching of Jesus Himself, and His attitude to His own death. He spoke of His death as a 'ransom,' and He manifestly regarded it 'as a necessary part of the service He had come to earth to render, that is, to put men into a new and a right relation to God.' It was not simply a martyr's death, and was never so regarded. From the first it was taken to be a mighty saving act, the great means of freeing man from the power that holds him. Nothing less than this, no theological dogma unsupported by experience, can explain the fact that 'in some way

or other the death of Jesus has been connected with the sense of pardon in the lives of millions.'

What then, we may ask, has the death of Jesus done, and what influence has it had on human life? The first part of the answer is that it has opened men's eyes to the nature of sin. 'The story of the Best and Greatest being hounded to death by cruelty and treachery struck home in a way that no warning against sin in general could ever have done.' The Cross showed the world that sin is the mortal enemy of goodness. Calvary has for ever swept away the light and superficial view of sin which characterized the Greeks.

Further, it has spoken to man's heart appealingly in the language of suffering love, a *lingua franca* that is universally understood. 'I could die for you, is the lover's litany, and Calvary has been the fount of love, for it has shown that God's love is even unto death.' It has enabled men to love God in a way that would otherwise have been impossible. 'On the psychological side, therefore, the death of Christ serves actually to deliver man from the power of his own wrong-doing by awakening him to its nature, and by creating a sense of love towards God, whose love is revealed in the Cross. That the words "God so loved that He gave" are amongst the most well beloved in Scripture is proof enough of the connexion between redemptive love and the life and death of Jesus, for words that awoke no echoes in the experience of men could never have had the response that has been given to these.'

Theological difficulties which have been raised in the endeavour to find a logical connexion between the death of Christ and the salvation of man have sometimes rather tended to obscure what is obvious in experience. To ask whether Christ's death was necessary, and whether another way might not have been found, is an inadmissible question, since it requires for an answer a knowledge of the Divine will such as no one can hope to possess. 'One might as well ask why God created a world at all, and allowed evil therein.' Nor is it relevant to urge that the death of Christ, the innocent for the guilty, was unjust. 'If so, life is unjust from beginning to end. . . . It is not "just" that a man should lose his life in a vain attempt to pull some wretched suicide from the river, it is something *more* than just. Justice holds the scales of reckoning in her hands, but the finest things of life pass all reckoning. Admit, if you will, that if Jesus died for sins not His own it was "unjust." It yet remains that there is that which is far more than justice.'

Now, further, what do we mean when we say that a man is saved? Salvation is something wider than the forgiveness of sins. By common consent it is demanded that those who are saved, or profess to be so, must show the quality of their salvation in their daily life. Why should there be this expectation? Religion and morality, now so firmly united in our thought, are in their origin distinct. Religion springs out of a sense of the numinous, a sense of awe in the presence of God, which had not necessarily anything moral in it. Morality, on the other hand, when traced back is found to have its roots chiefly in social custom. The distinction still persists, and so it is that we find, on the one hand the moral man with little of the religious sense, and on the other hand the religious man whose moral sense is defective. But, now, we expect a unity. Religion without morality is a dead thing, but on the other hand morality without religion lacks something vital. What is that something?

In other words, what is the differentia of the saved man? 'Its essence is this. All of us are egoists born. Self is the first natural centre of existence. Yet the key saying of Jesus, indeed the only one found in all four Gospels, and five times in the four, declares that those who find their lives lose them. "If any man come after me, let him deny himself." How poorly are those words interpreted if they are taken to refer to some small self-denial! They surely imply that the natural centre of life, self, must be rejected, and that the centre must be thrown outside into something wider. That is the essence of salvation.' And the chief means of breaking away from

the old centre and leading to a new one has been the life and death of Jesus.

Salvation, then, is the taking up of a man's life into the life of Christ, and this works a transformation so profound that such a man, in St. Paul's words which reflect his own experience, is a 'new creation.' The re-centring of the life works a progressive change in thought and habit and character. 'Normally, this involves a conscious acceptance of the leadership and Lordship of Christ. Yet there are lives that make no such acknowledgment, that even reject the claim of Christ, yet indirectly, but none the less solely, owing to His influence, are transformed from self to service. Are they not saved? May they not be the other sheep, not of this fold? May we not find salvation is something far wider than our thought of it?'

Jesus by His life and death of love has so profoundly influenced the thought of the world that He has altered our whole conception of goodness. The 'high-minded' man of Aristotle's ideal, ever conscious of his own superiority, conferring benefits but receiving none, would to-day be universally rejected as a contemptible bounder. 'If Aristotle could return to life, one imagines that a certain word in our tongue would puzzle him more than any other, the word gentleman. That the high-minded man could be gentle would pass Aristotle's understanding. The ideal of the gentle man testifies, as the world itself shows, to Galilee, not Greece. It is just one more indication of the way in which Jesus has turned the thought of the world upside down.'

There is a saying, attributed to Jesus but not recorded in the Bible, which reads, 'Let not him who seeks cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished, and astonished he shall reach the kingdom.' It appears obviously to be based on the gospel saying, 'Seek, and ye shall find,' and it serves to emphasize the truth that the quest of God is the deepest quest of human life. For it is the quest of life's supreme value and highest meaning, of the eternal ground and source of life's purpose and power.

Let us not think that we must pursue the quest unaided. It is not of ourselves that we may attain the great mystic certainty. When in obedience to the voice, 'Seek, and ye shall find,' we set out upon the pilgrim way, we but fulfil the human part in the religious life. There is also a Divine part. Man's knowledge of God would be as nothing apart from God's revelation of Himself. We cannot, as it were, wrest God's secrets from Him. In the religious life two spirits co-operate, each seeking to find the other. Human discovery and Divine epiphany go hand in hand.

Yet it should not be forgotten that in the deepest religious experience—such as that of a St. Paul or a St. Augustine, a Luther or a Newman—the sense of being found of God is often so great and overwhelming that one might almost think there had been no seeking or finding of God at all. The deepest religious consciousness is often content to bear wondering witness to the truth that God appears suddenly to lay hold on a man—in the word of our English Bible, to 'apprehend' him. This is the experience to which the poet Francis Thompson gave such eloquent expression in 'The Hound of Heaven,' in which the soul is overtaken and 'apprehended' by the Heavenly Pursuer.

Although it is the testimony of the profounder consciousness of religion that man is found of rather than finds God, we may still say that human discovery and Divine revelation both enter as factors into the religious life. We must seek if we are to find, or even if we are to be found.