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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

'INDIVIDUAL Christianity in the European nations there undoubtedly is—but to the Asiatic and African races the claim of the Western nations that their governments and that the majority of their peoples are guided by the doctrines of Christ—by the principles laid down in the Sermon on the Mount—must seem to be a mere idle pretence.' So writes Mr. H. C. THOMSON in *The Case for China* (Allen & Unwin; 10s. 6d. net), a powerful and informed statement of China's case by one who, as correspondent of the 'Manchester Guardian,' has long had an intimate knowledge of China.

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Outside the Christian Church, no part of the teaching of Jesus has attracted more attention than the Sermon on the Mount, and especially the part which deals with the Christian Law of Revenge. This teaching is frequently regarded as a beautiful but impracticable ideal. Throughout the book Mr. THOMSON'S attitude is thoroughly Christian; but, in a moment of bitterness, he allows himself to write: 'The world pays little heed to abstract justice. If a nation is to survive it must be able to defend itself, to resist force by force.'

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There are some, among both Christians and non-Christians, who honestly try to take the teaching seriously; but, as with other sayings of Jesus, it must be interpreted by the Christian mind before it becomes a maxim for the Christian conscience. The passage in question is frequently understood as inculcating non-resistance, or non-violence, or both.

Mr. Gandhi and his followers have made great play especially with the word 'non-violence,' and in so doing are believed by many who ought to know better to be showing the Sermon on the Mount in action.

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It cannot be too often reiterated that the burden of this part of the teaching of Jesus is not non-anything. In effect Jesus says: 'When any one assaults or robs you or attacks you with unwelcome demands, instead of resisting, instead of showing your teeth, see how far you can accommodate him. Make his welfare and the prevalence of peace and goodwill your main aims in all your negotiations with him.'

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'Non-resistance' and 'non-violence' are by no means synonymous terms. The belligerent tendencies of many pacifists have been a subject of general remark. It is not only in India that exponents of non-violence put up a stout resistance to men and measures that meet with their disapproval; but it is in India that this method of conducting political warfare has attracted most attention in recent times. Not only is the positive teaching of Jesus made negative and limited to 'non-violence,' but the further limitation is introduced that this 'non-violence' maxim prohibits only direct physical assault.

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One of the most deadly weapons of political warfare is the boycott which may cause the im-

poverishment, even the starvation, of tens of thousands; but since there is no direct and violent impact on the bodies of the victims, Indian advocates of non-violence consider it a legitimate weapon. Nor in this matter must we accuse them of conscious hypocrisy. It is one of the most deeply rooted convictions of the Hindu that to hit an animal on the head with a lethal weapon is callous cruelty, but to allow it to drag out a life of hunger and suffering is to exemplify the Hindu love of animals.

Christian teachers cannot too often reiterate the elementary point that no measure which has for its object or foreseen result the infliction of suffering or the increase of enmity is in accordance with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. In sections of the Church where this is well understood, and where it is fully realized that the tongue, for example, may inflict deeper wounds than the sword, applications of the Christian Law of Retaliation are being advocated, which even a few years ago would have seemed bizarre. Our Lord tells us that we must not follow the world's aims or use the world's weapons in our dealing with those who try to hurt us. The most recent exponents of His teaching urge that we must abstain from the very appearance of compulsion in our dealings with those we try to help, that in our zeal to speak a word for the Master we must take no unfair advantage of any position of privilege in which we find ourselves. When we compare with our valetudinarian modesty the robust assurance of the heroes of the New Testament that in the gospel of Jesus they had a pearl that outshone all other pearls, with our valetudinarian modesty we sometimes wonder whether there is not something morbid in our extreme sensitiveness to the rights of non-Christians to be protected from Christian teaching.

Mr. THOMSON asserts that the only legal justification for the claims of Western missionaries to proceed into, and erect churches and mission buildings in, the interior of China is based on an article fraudulently inserted in the French version of the Convention of Tientsin of 1860. He confesses that China owes a debt of gratitude to the missionaries, but urges that the position should be regularized

and that Western missionaries should work in China only with the willing consent and approval of the Chinese people.

The question has arisen in acute form in connexion with the missionary schools and colleges of India. Until lately, speaking generally, the missionary attitude was that no student should enter one of these institutions unless he entered of his own free will, but that every one who voluntarily chose to become a student should take the entire curriculum, including the Bible lesson. Many Christian leaders now find in this arrangement an element of unchristian compulsion. They demand that even students who enrol in these institutions of their own choice should retain the right to plead conscientious objections to receiving Christian instruction.

One of the most recent illustrations of this new development of the doctrine of the weak brother is contained in the report of the Commission appointed by the (American) Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry. Speaking of Medical Mission work they say: 'The use of medical or other professional service as a direct means of making converts, or public services in wards and dispensaries from which patients cannot escape, is subtly coercive and improper.' 'Cannot escape' is good, with its subtly improper suggestion of a misrepresentation of the whole situation.

Whatever may be the final attitude of the Church to these refinements of Christ's Law of Retaliation, they will receive the hearty support of many European business men. Mr. THOMSON quotes Lord Inchcape: 'My belief is that we have in large measure brought about the present condition of antagonism to us in China by sending missionaries there to endeavour to convert the people to Christianity—such efforts, in my opinion, do far more harm than good.' May it be that this position is the true logical development of our newly acquired sensitiveness? At all events our punctiliousness hardly seems to go far enough. Many of those who hear the missionary gladly may do so under a misapprehension of the nature of his teaching;

this happened to our Lord Himself. If it is unethical to take advantage of an Indian's desire for education or for healing to give him Christian teaching which he does not wish to hear, it is more unethical to take advantage of his ignorance, to give him, because he chooses to listen, a message which he would not willingly receive if he understood beforehand all that it involved. In fact, the new missionary Puritanism seems to land us in an impasse. A non-Christian is not in a position to judge whether he wants to hear the Christian message or not until he *has* heard it.

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In Christian Dogmatics eschatology is a wider and more inclusive term than apocalyptic. Eschatological ideas are ideas connected with the Last Things in general, whereas apocalyptic ideas are ideas connected with a final revelation through crisis and catastrophe, which is a special aspect of the doctrine of the Last Things.

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On the other hand, in the context of New Testament study the terms eschatology and apocalyptic are usually employed as equivalents. If we are of the school of Albert Schweitzer we tend to say that the mind of Jesus was dominated by the eschatological or apocalyptic outlook of His age, making no difference in usage between the two terms. But Professor Maurice GOGUËL would distinguish them in this context. In his *Vie de Jésus* (1932), recently translated into English as *The Life of Jesus*, he maintains that, while the thought of Jesus about the Kingdom of God was definitely eschatological, it was not apocalyptic.

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How does he distinguish between the terms? The idea of eschatology is that the present world shall be replaced by another, and that the transition to the new world is imminent. To this fundamental idea apocalyptic adds the conviction that the advent of the new world will take place according to a Divine plan which is known to the wise through the study of traditions and prophecies.

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When some Pharisees asked Jesus about the

advent of the Kingdom of God, He said that it would be impossible to foretell the precise moment when it would come (Lk 17<sup>20</sup>); while to His disciples He said that the day of the Son of Man would come as suddenly as a flash of lightning (Lk 17<sup>24</sup>). This shows that Jesus did not hold the apocalyptic conception.

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Another evidence of this is that apocalyptic, being in accordance with a fixed Divine plan, is only indirectly an appeal to men. To the faithful it is merely an appeal to perseverance. To the rest the authors of Apocalypses have nothing to say: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still' (Rev 22<sup>11</sup>). But in the eschatology of the gospel there is a direct appeal to men; and their response to it will decide their destiny at the appearing of the Son of Man.

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Yet another evidence of the non-apocalyptic character of the thought of Jesus is that He rejected, or at least ultimately rejected, the conception that the rôle of the Messiah was to be glorious, since His coming would be prepared by that of Elijah, who would establish order in the earth. 'How is it written of the Son of man that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought?' (Mk 9<sup>12</sup>). There was a contradiction between the necessity for the sufferings and the humiliation of the Son of Man and the idea of the re-establishment of order in the world through the ministry of Elijah, in preparation for the Parousia.

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Professor GOGUËL distinguishes three phases through which the eschatological thought of Jesus passed. When He sent forth His disciples on their mission He believed that the Parousia was very near (Mt 10<sup>23</sup>). A little later, after the Galilean crisis, He said that some among His hearers would not taste of death until they had seen the Parousia (Mk 9<sup>1</sup>). Finally, in the saying of Mk 13<sup>32</sup>, the statement of ignorance of the precise moment of the Parousia shows that the expectation was already becoming more distant.

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The conclusion to which all this points is that the eschatological conception was merely a framework

for the thought of Jesus provided by the surroundings in which He lived. 'He thought in eschatological terms just as He spoke Aramaic, but that which is most intimate and essential in His thought may not be connected any more closely with eschatology than with the Aramaic tongue. This explains, to some extent, how it was that Christianity was able, as time went on, to free itself from the eschatological conception without hurt to itself.'

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The theology of Karl Barth has passed the stage of being merely an interesting topic of discussion among the experts. It is increasingly felt to be a primary and vital concern of the whole Protestant Church. At the moment when Protestantism is declared by so profound a thinker as Professor A. N. WHITEHEAD to be showing every sign of decay, Barth is confidently regarded by many as the herald of a great revival. In the circumstances the preacher must give to his work the most serious consideration.

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No better guide can be found than Dr. John McCONNACHIE in his recent work, *The Barthian Theology and the Man of To-day* (Hodder & Stoughton; 7s. 6d. net). The writer, a personal friend of Barth, is already acknowledged as perhaps the most competent interpreter in English of Barthianism, and in this new volume he gives the most complete survey of the whole field, indicating the practical implications of the doctrine, and dealing with the criticisms which have been urged against it.

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The Barthian theology does not profess to be a new doctrine, but a rediscovery of the Reformed Faith. It mediates between the opposing forces of Modernism and Fundamentalism, conceding on the one hand to criticism all that it may legitimately claim, but on the other hand holding fast with tremendous intensity to the kernel of Divine revelation, the Word of God, which is the treasure the Fundamentalist would guard. The Reformed Faith has been for some time under a cloud, but may the present sense of ineffectiveness in Christian life and

work not suggest that the best remedy for the religious flabbiness of to-day would be a strong infusion of bone-producing Calvinism?

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Dr. McCONNACHIE is a Calvinist, and this has helped him to understand Barth. He knows how Calvinism has been caricatured by critics who never took the trouble to understand it. He finds that Barth has been similarly criticised, and in dealing with the critics he is able to show that many of them have been, in Barth's own phrase, 'ringing at the door of the wrong house.' But perhaps the most valuable part of Dr. McCONNACHIE'S work is that in which he elucidates the meaning of the Barthian theology for the everyday life of the Church. The practical question for the preacher and for the plain Christian is, What bearing has all this upon the worship and work of the Church? In a most valuable chapter on 'The Word as Criterion,' Dr. McCONNACHIE gives the answer.

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First, the Word of God is the criterion of the Church's worship. 'It is contrary to the teaching of the Reformers to separate, as is sometimes done, the ministry of the Word and the ministry of worship. For the ministry of worship, including the Sacraments, is part of the ministry of the Word, and the two are not to be divorced. . . . Can we express in a sentence the essential difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant worship? In the centre of Roman Catholic worship stands the Altar, in the centre of Protestant worship stands the Word.' The proclamation of God's grace in Christ, as is done in the preaching of the Word, is the supreme act of worship. 'Of the divine service,' said Luther, 'the greatest and most important portion is the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.' Accordingly, to push the pulpit aside in order to make the communion table central is an act of questionable symbolism.

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The Word is a criterion of religious instruction. 'Barth holds that the Church must consider much more earnestly than it has hitherto done the question as to the *recte docere Evangelium*—the right teaching of the Gospel to the young.' He sharply criticises modern methods. As his friend Thurneysen says,

'I fear the dogmatising of the old school less than the God-forgetting psychologising of the new.' Typical modern religious education is based on a false anthropology which assumes that man in the core of his nature is good, and on a false principle of communicating the Christian revelation. 'A true evangelical pedagogics must start from God, and what He has done for man in Christ Jesus, that is, it must start from forgiveness. It must be an evangelical, and not a human, pedagogics, which declares to the child from the beginning the divine forgiveness, of which the teacher cannot begin too soon to speak. The child is not to be brought into a world of negatives, but of glorious positives, of God's glory and mercy, amid which the Holy Spirit will do His work on his soul.'

The Word is, also, the criterion of Christian Missions. The call and motive and method of the missionary are the same as those of the preacher to whom is committed the ministry of the Word. He is not to preach Christianity as the highest of the ethnic religions, nor to carry abroad the benefits of so-called Christian civilization. 'The missionary goes to the mission field not to build upon the old religions, but to witness to a Revelation which must ultimately undermine and destroy them. This message means combat and *skandalon* in the world of heathenism, for Jesus Christ becomes thus the judgement on, and the end of all the religions.' Barth in a series of searching questions asks, 'Does Christianity see and understand that it is confronted with a whole series of alien religions, not only the old religions of Hinduism, etc., but by the much more virile new religions of Communism, Fascism, and Humanism, which are capturing the youth of East and West? Does Christianity see that it has nothing to look for from these alien religions except conflict, which may become acute, even deadly? Does Christianity know how near the temptation lies to avoid this threatened conflict by a small betrayal? Finally, does Christianity understand that its proclamation, in contrast to other proclamations, is the Word of God?'

Further, the Word is the criterion of the Social Gospel. The social problem has received the most

anxious and sympathetic study from the Barthian theologians, some of whom, including Barth himself, began as Christian Socialists. 'With much that Karl Marx has said about the dehumanising of the proletariat through capitalism and its consequent evils, they agree. They have no sympathy with any blind hatred of Communism.' But they do not think that the Social Gospel is the right response of the Church. 'She must give another answer; an answer which does not merely reveal the symptoms of the disease, but lays bare the root of the trouble, and removes the poison. She must deal with the sin of man, without the cure of which there can be no real remedy for those evils in the body politic, which we describe as the social problem.'

Finally, the Word is a criterion of evangelism. 'A true theology of the Word must issue in a militant evangelism. As the Evangelism of the Word, it must have its origin in the Revelation of God in Christ, and must break in upon the soul as a Word from beyond.' It must be a sovereign Word, as the Word of One who is Lord of our lives, a personal Word directed to the individual, a Word whose spearhead is aimed at sin, as the source of all the world's evil, but also a Word of new life, of revival to the Church and through the Church to the world. It is Barth's most serious charge against the Protestant Church of to-day that she has not such a message which she can proclaim with conviction and power, and that for want of it her work in every field is paralysed. 'How catastrophically must the Church misunderstand itself,' he says, 'when, under whatever pretext, it imagines that it can undertake or carry out any serious work on what are certainly important fields, such as the reform of Church worship, or social work, or Christian pedagogics, or the ordering of its relations to the State and to Society, without at the same time doing what is necessary and possible with regard to the obvious centre of its life.'

Paul *versus* Jesus—that is the intolerable antithesis to which, not so very long ago, we were being asked by some New Testament scholars to reconcile ourselves. The simplicity of Jesus and His gospel,

we were assured, had been obscured, if not positively distorted, by the Church's first great theologian; and, unhappily for the subsequent history of Christianity, it was not to the life and work of Jesus, but to Paul's interpretation of that work, that the attention of the Church had for ages been systematically directed. Thus the cry 'Back to Christ' really meant 'Away from Paul,' from the Paul whose interpretation had little justification in the words of Christ Himself and made little effective appeal to the modern mind.

A better day has dawned. Discerning scholars now see clearly that, while there is a very obvious, and indeed inevitable, difference of atmosphere between the Gospels, especially the Synoptic Gospels, and the Epistles of Paul, there is no real antithesis between him and the Master who loved him and gave Himself for him. The great Wellhausen could even say that no man understood Jesus so fully and so thoroughly as Paul. It is to help to obliterate this unfortunate and untrue antithesis and to reinstate Paul as one of our major authorities for the contents of the gospel of Jesus that Dr. C. A. Anderson Scott has written his *Living Issues in the New Testament* (Cambridge University Press; 6s. net). At least that is one of his objects—he has others—and in this he has been very successful.

No one who reads the evidence which Dr. SCOTT marshals in his first chapter on 'Jesus and Paul' can seriously doubt that Paul was fully justified in his emphatic claim to 'have the mind of Christ.' He sees no reason to doubt that the Apostle was living in Jerusalem at the time of the death and the crucifixion of our Lord, and he thinks it probable that he may even have been a witness of the Crucifixion. From his Epistles not a little can be learned about the earthly career, and especially the character, of Jesus, and there is clear proof that he had direct acquaintance with His teaching. The fact that there is so little quotation shows how completely the mind of Jesus had been assimilated by His first and, with the possible exception of John, His greatest interpreter.

Undoubtedly one of the factors that has militated

against the modern appreciation of Paul has been his supposed interpretation of the death of Jesus. Anything like a substitutionary, penal, or expiatory interpretation of that wonderful sacrifice does not readily find a lodgment in the modern mind. It is one of the merits of Dr. SCOTT's book that he shows conclusively the untenableness, not, of course, of Paul's interpretation, but of the prevalent explanation of that interpretation. He argues that it is idle to associate the Levitical sacrifices with the sacrifice of Jesus or to regard them as types and foreshadowings, and he effectively quotes Dr. Köhler's word that 'the great prophets had recognized that the entire sacrificial system was out of harmony with the true spirit of Judaism.' This statement, of course, would be, and has been, disputed by other competent scholars; but, quite apart from this pronouncement, Dr. SCOTT gives good reasons for the faith that is in him and for his rendering of the crucial word in Ro 3<sup>25</sup>, not by 'whom God set forth to be a *propitiation*,' but 'whom God set forth *with reconciling power*,' treating the word as masculine rather than neuter, and so eliminating the 'monstrous misrepresentation of Christian doctrine' that the death of Christ was intended to placate an angry Deity.

There is an excellent discussion on 'The Mystical Factor in Salvation,' in which the writer carefully distinguishes between New Testament mysticism and mysticism of the mediæval type. The latter stands for an experience of God which is sought by elaborate methods, the former for an experience of God which is given, an experience which is the result of the response of the soul to the approach of God in Christ, an experience which respects and preserves the believer's individuality, and is wide as the poles asunder from that absorption which we are accustomed to associate with mysticism. 'The fact that the *Unio Mystica* is conceived of as entered into with a being who has been known in history and that it is expected to have ethical results differentiates the mysticism of the New Testament from every other form.'

There is also a long, well-balanced, and really

valuable discussion of the Fourth Gospel, in which the differences, no less than the correspondences, between that Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels on the one hand, and the Pauline Epistles on the other, are frankly and carefully stated, the general conclusion being that, in spite of differences of emphasis, there is a fundamental agreement in essential points and that the later writers are expressing, each in his own way, the mind of Jesus as revealed in the Synoptic Gospels, though in the Fourth Gospel that mind is interpreted in relation to the problems which confronted the Church towards the end of the first century. While scrupulously fair to the variety of thought that characterizes the writers of the New Testament, Dr. SCOTT, like the late Principal Denney in 'Jesus and the Gospel,' leaves upon the mind the impression of its substantial unity.

Not the least interesting feature of the book is the discussion of the epithets applied to Jesus, and of His relation to God. Paul, for all his adoration of Jesus, never calls Him God, though in a real sense He had for him the value of God. Again, in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, it is argued that 'the Word was divine' is a truer rendering than 'the Word was God,' and that when Thomas addresses Christ as 'my God' what he meant is probably best represented by 'God for me.' 'The conclusion to which an examination of the New Testament documents brings us is that Christ is

nowhere referred to or addressed as  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  or  $\delta\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  in the sense of absolute God.'

This leads Dr. SCOTT to raise a practical question. In view of the fact that in that early period the dynamic of Christian life sprang from the acknowledgment with mind and heart and will that Christ was Lord, 'have we the right,' he asks, 'to insist, or even to allow the impression to continue, that assent to the proposition "Christ is God" is an essential part of vital Christianity?'

Pertinent, also, in view of present-day movements, is Dr. SCOTT's comment upon a text which has been often adduced as the scriptural warrant for the union of the Churches. It is this: 'The union which John reports Jesus as praying that His followers may have and show is just anything but a visible or institutional union. Its nature is clearly indicated as moral and spiritual. It is to be "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." That is to say, the form and standard of oneness which Christ sets before His followers is a union which is precisely *not* one visible to sight, it is visible only to faith. This passage has, therefore, nothing directly to do with "Reunion."'

The book, it will be seen, is more than an exhibition of sound New Testament scholarship. It deals, as it professes to deal, with 'living issues,' and it deals with them wisely.

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## The Five Year Movement in China.

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THERE are many reasons for the birth of the Five Year Movement. Since 1922, all religions, especially Christianity, have been under the relentless fire of different classes of people—the Nationalists, the Communists, the Rationalists, and their followers. The manifesto of the Anti-Religious League which was started in 1922 declared that, while all religion

was poisonous to the development of humanity, Christianity was especially to be attacked and uprooted from China's soil. In the minds of not a few intelligent leaders, Christianity has invariably been associated with Chinese humiliation at the hands of the powerfully organized modern nations of the West and with what have been known in