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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR ALBERT C. KNUDSON, Dean of the Boston University School of Theology, belongs to that small band of theologians who can be described as accurate Biblical scholars and profound philosophical thinkers. Unfortunately the exegete is often far enough from being a theologian, and the theologian from being an exegete: the scholar is by no means always a thinker, or the thinker a scholar. The combination is a rare one, and we should welcome it when we meet it. We met it in the late Principal Denney, we meet it in Professor Wheeler Robinson, and we meet it in Professor KNUDSON, whose earlier reputation was won on the field of the Old Testament, though in recent years he has devoted his strength to systematic theology.

His latest book, on *The Doctrine of Redemption* (Abingdon Press; \$3.50), though in a sense a companion volume to his 'Doctrine of God,' published three years ago, is really an independent work, complete in itself. In the First Part, which deals with the World, Man, and Sin, it discusses the physical world, freedom, and suffering; in the Second Part, entitled Christ and Redemption, it deals with the Person and Work of Christ, the Christian Life, the Christian Church, and the Christian Hope. The author is well aware that theology is under a cloud at the moment and that no defence of it will be listened to which depends merely upon traditional or conventional arguments. It is refreshing, therefore, to find the book char-

acterized throughout by a spirit of courage and unconventionality. Dean KNUDSON is conversant with the history of Christian thought, and he knows what use to make of the lessons it teaches; but he also knows the difference between facts and fancies. He does not build up his case by the evasion of difficulties. He frankly faces them, and, in particular, he does not shirk the metaphysical problems involved in theology.

As an illustration of his unconventional attitude to theological problems we may take his discussion of the sinlessness of Jesus. He quotes and criticises two characteristic statements of well-known Scottish theologians. Professor Mackintosh had written, 'Had Jesus yielded to temptation even once, the divine redeeming plan would have been frustrated.' Similarly the late Dr. D. W. Forrest: 'A single moral fault committed by a hitherto stainless soul, if we can imagine that, alters its entire relation to God.' That, says Dr. KNUDSON, is the traditional view, and from the standpoint of traditional modes of thought he admits that it may perhaps be justified. But he himself is not satisfied with it. He goes on to state that to the modern mind it seems overstrained and untrue to the facts of the moral life. Sin is not all of the same magnitude: the important thing, he argues, is not the avoidance of every conceivable departure from an abstract standard of right, but positive and absolute devotion to the Kingdom of God. That is the essential element in the sinlessness of

Jesus. 'Whether he met all the demands of an abstract moral perfection does not matter much, but that he was unswervingly faithful to his divine vocation is of vital concern.' There are sure to be many whom this attitude will not satisfy, but at any rate it is the attitude of a thinker who is at once reverent and fearless, and it is characteristic of the 'modern' spirit in which the book is written, and which should render its discussions peculiarly acceptable to that elusive person whom we describe as the 'modern' man.

But we should like more particularly to call attention to Dr. KNUDSON's well-balanced discussion of the doctrine of immortality. Ever since the monumental work of Dr. S. D. F. Salmond on 'The Christian Doctrine of Immortality,' published nearly forty years ago, there has been a steady stream of books on this topic issuing both from Europe and America: to name only English-speaking writers, there are R. H. Charles, J. G. Frazer, Pringle-Pattison, J. H. Leckie, S. H. Mellone, J. Y. Simpson, J. H. Snowden, R. A. Tsanoff, G. Galloway, J. H. Leuba, H. F. Rall, and many others. In 1899, when Professor George Adam Smith delivered his lectures on preaching before Yale University, he could say that 'in the thinking of civilised men there has been for years a steady ebb from the shores of another life.' It is just possible that the widespread interest in the theme, attested by the extensive literature to which we have referred, has been created, in part at least, by the Great War, and the problem raised by the incalculable waste of human life which it involved: it may also be due in part simply to the spirit of speculation and challenge that has prevailed since the War. In any case it is a vital question for those who hold the Christian faith—at any rate for most of them.

For there are many unbelievers, and apparently some few believers, to whom the future life does not seem greatly to matter. Nor are these necessarily men of ignoble mind. They may be men who are so sure that virtue is indeed its own reward that they do not look to a future life for any other or more adequate reward. But probably lurking in

some corner of most minds is the belief, or the fear, or the hope, of a future life. Dean KNUDSON illustrates this by some words of Huxley addressed to John Morley exactly fifty years ago: 'It flashes across me at all sorts of times,' he wrote, 'with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more of what is going on than I did in 1800. I would sooner be in hell a good deal, at any rate in one of the upper circles where the climate and company are not too trying.'

Dean KNUDSON carefully discusses the arguments both for and against the immortal hope. The seeming insignificance of man as revealed by modern astronomy, the seeming dependence of the mind on the body, the agnosticism which almost inevitably arises even in a devout mind at the contemplation of our mysterious universe—all these things would appear to put dogmatic assurance out of court. And this assurance is not reinstated by alleged communications from departed spirits, which the Dean thinks can be more satisfactorily explained by the theory of telepathy; nor can it even be re-established by any historical argument based on the resurrection of Jesus, for too much uncertainty surrounds the narrative of the Resurrection—so the argument runs—for it to be regarded as purely objective evidence: it is rather the worth of Jesus' personality that predisposes the critic to accept its historicity, if he does eventually accept it.

Driven from these defences, the doctrine has sought support in other arguments, for example, in the moral demand that the wrongs of this world be righted in some future world, or in the argument that the frustrated lives and undeveloped powers of men in this world must find their completion elsewhere, unless the universe is to be regarded as an idle comedy or even a cruel farce. But though the traditional eschatology may need revision, it still remains true that for Christian men the religious argument will be the most decisive of all. As Dr. KNUDSON puts it, 'If God is the kind of Being that Jesus revealed to us, a holy, loving, omnipotent Father, there would seem to be no reason for doubt with reference to the life hereafter. So

natural, so inevitable did the fact of eternal life seem to Jesus that He said, "If it were not so, I would have told you." The character of God was for him the guarantee of immortality.'

Even so, many questions remain which it is impossible to answer. Universalism? Conditional immortality? How shall we decide? If any souls are to be annihilated, does that not imply the failure of the divine love? On the other hand, if human freedom is as truly a fact as divine love, and if divine love will respect and not coerce that freedom, is it not at least theoretically possible that this freedom could resist the uttermost pleading of that love?

Passages can be adduced from the New Testament which seem to point to three conflicting conclusions with regard to the ultimate fate of the wicked—eternal punishment, universal restoration, and annihilation. 'This variety of teaching,' the Dean wisely adds, 'is itself evidence that the question under consideration is one to which faith has no positive answer.'

It is a feature of his book that he 'thinks things through'—that is a favourite phrase of his. The discussions are refreshingly penetrating and thorough; but there are points to which the cautious thinker, for lack of evidence, cannot penetrate—and this is one of them.

Mr. C. Delisle BURNS offers a study of the 'modern mind' in a recent volume happily entitled *The Horizon of Experience* (Allen & Unwin; 12s. 6d. net). He argues that the 'modern' attitude towards the world is mainly a sense that on the horizon of our present experience are new forms of truth and beauty. We are conscious of the defects of our inheritance, and we wonder whether we shall carry forward what our Western tradition has achieved, into a new form of civilized life.

In religion the modern sense of the horizon is very strong. Traditional forms, which have ex-

pressed and sustained religious experience through many generations, no longer seem to be adequate to many of those who need some expression and sustenance for their own contact with spiritual values. Their revolt against tradition is not a mere iconoclasm of the ignorant, but an impatience of the enlightened.

Each way of religion is an attempt to embody or express in the art of life a value which may be called 'the divine' or 'deity,' regarded as a reality of the same kind as beauty or goodness. The sense of deity is of the essence of religion. This sense is what is called 'the religious consciousness,' but it is more conative than cognitive. The 'pull' of the divine is towards a sort of unity with it, as Plato and some mystics have explained, or a sort of entry into it—into the person—as Plotinus and Eckhart say.

Clearly the sense of deity is not universal. At any rate, some men and some groups of men seem to have very little of it. The acuteness of the sense varies from the vague feeling that something strange is near, which may exist in conventional churchgoers, to the insight of religious genius. Christ and Buddha, Moses and Muhammad are the outstanding examples of those who have had the sense of deity in an exceptional degree.

Now if there is a breakaway from tradition in religion, in the direction of a horizon on which deity is to be perceived more clearly, what indications are there that religion anywhere is making progress? The chief obstacle to the increase of the sense of deity to-day is the very brilliance of that earlier sense whose results we have inherited. It would not be fantastic, however, to look for the new sense of deity wherever there is 'enthusiasm.' The enthusiastic, passionate, and active impulse towards deepening our contacts with the whole of Nature and with all men—an impulse which is very marked in our day—may be fairly called 'religious.'

There is a sort of 'return to Nature,' which is almost a form of worship in small groups. There

is a disregard for external possessions and for success in the nineteenth-century sense. A fineness in character and personal contact is attained without any reference whatever to fear of hell or hope of heaven, or indeed to anything after death. This 'movement,' continues Mr. Delisle BURNS, is to be found more commonly in Germany and France than in English-speaking countries; but in religion, as in the fine arts, the English-speaking countries have been later than others to be affected by new attitudes in the past, and this may be the case again to-day.

Some of the enthusiasm of our time is plainly going into attempts at social and political change, and underlying it may be discerned now and then a 'way of life' which is more than a political programme. It is not implied that the enthusiasm for fundamental social changes, the finer quality of universal sympathy and the new delicacy of perception actually constitute a new religion. But they are affirmed by Mr. Delisle BURNS to be the first traces of a new religion and of a clearer vision of those aspects of deity which are now on our horizon. They may imply the need of a new formulation. It is too soon to say they certainly indicate that the formulations we have inherited are not final.

We shall not follow our author in his further discussion of the nature of deity, and of its place in the real world. Enough has been said to indicate his views on 'the horizon in religion,' and their divergence from the views usually expounded by interpreters of the religious and, more especially, the Christian consciousness. It should be added that the volume before us treats of science, art, and morality as well as of religion in its exposition of the philosophy of 'the horizon.'

Dr. ORCHARD's passage 'From Faith to Faith' has aroused a great deal more interest and speculation than any similar event has done for a very long time. This is due to the convert's previous repute in the ecclesiastical and theological worlds.

He has, indeed, been a bird of passage in these regions. Beginning in the Anglican Church, he continued in the Presbyterian and finally, or sub-finally, landed in the Congregational, where he occupied a very detached and independent position. Interiorly, he was at first an ardent evangelical of the evangelistic type, became a broad churchman, and has for some time shown 'Catholic' tendencies in worship and even in creed. He used to bow when he was passing his own communion table, though (as he would now realize) there was nothing there to receive his salute!

All this might seem to indicate an unstable nature. But on the other hand are his manifest intellectual ability and his claim that all this passing from creed to creed has been a progress towards a definite goal. In any case, everybody is interested, and Dr. ORCHARD's 'submission' must be arousing in many minds questions as to why a man like him should go over, and how a man like him could possibly go over, and what it all means. The editor of *The Hibbert Journal* has done his best to satisfy this natural curiosity, and has asked three representative men, occupying quite different standpoints, to say what it means to them. One, Father D'Arcy, is a Romanist, a second, Dr. F. L. Cross, is an Anglo-Catholic, and the third, Dr. Henry Gow, is a Nonconformist.

The three articles are quite good, and 'quite good' means that they might have been much better. The most illuminating is the Anglo-Catholic, and curiously enough, it is the most searching and the most unfavourable to Dr. ORCHARD's action. Father D'Arcy purrs over Dr. ORCHARD, naturally; but his essay is not very impressive as a contribution to Roman apologetic. What remains in the mind from it is the statement of two things: first, that the real issue in religion is in the end between Romanism and Agnosticism; and second, that faith, in the Roman meaning of the term, does not close the eyes of the intellect, but opens them. With regard to the other essays, it may be most interesting and useful to summarize the criticisms of Rome on which they lay stress instead of going over each in detail.

The main issue for Dr. Cross is raised by what may be called Rome's intolerance. By this is meant her insistence on submission to her teaching, on the surrender of the intellect to her guidance and to her pronouncements. In 1902 Pope Leo XIII. appointed a Biblical Commission which should examine and decide questions raised by the Higher Criticism. Among the official decisions pronounced by the Commission are the following. There are no adequate reasons for disputing the unity of *Isaiah*; David was the author of the psalms attributed to him in the New Testament, for example Pss 2 and 110; the critical arguments against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch are insufficient; St. Matthew's Gospel was the first written; and St. Mark was the author of the last twelve verses of his Gospel. In 1907 Pope Pius X. made an official pronouncement on the Commission's authority. All members of the Church were bound, he proclaimed, to the moral duty of submitting themselves to its decisions.

Now it is as certain as anything human can be that all the above propositions are untrue. In point of fact, Dr. ORCHARD would accept none of them, and in his book hints very definitely that his views on these subjects are unchanged. What then is Dr. ORCHARD's present position? It is this. A Roman Catholic is required to *teach* nothing contrary to the decisions of the Biblical Commission, but he is not required to *believe* its pronouncements. His own *beliefs* are contrary to the pronouncements of the Commission, but he no longer feels himself free to *teach* them. The comment on this made by Dr. Cross is: 'A position such as this is subversive of all principles of intellectual honesty.' And he adds: 'In the present writer's judgement, the existence of this Commission is a final criterion against the specific claims of the Roman Catholic Church.'

In the light of such facts what are we to make of the claim that faith, in the Roman sense, opens the eyes of the intellect, not closes them? One of the most amazing instances of the contrary is found in Mr. Hilaire Belloc's essay in the book

'Why I am a Catholic.' At the outset of his essay he prostrates himself before the Roman authority, and says that if anything in his essay is disapproved of by that authority he withdraws it. And Mr. Belloc is the real Romanist, born and dyed in the purple. It is very difficult to maintain this attitude of intolerance, however, in face of the facts of life. As an example Dr. Cross cites 'Nulla salus extra ecclesiam.' This is a definite Roman dogma. Nobody outside the Roman Church can be saved. But nobody believes that, not even Rome. How then does a Romanist square the dogma with the manifest fact that good Christians exist outside Rome? The answer is that they are 'invincibly ignorant,' and may be forgiven on that account, and that, though they do not belong to the Body of the Church, they may belong to the Soul of the Church. Upon which no comment is necessary.

Another fact that is cited in these essays which must take a lot of getting over is what unfriendly critics call the 'corruption' of the Roman Church. Briefly put, it is the immense and fundamental contrast between the Church of the New Testament and the Roman imperium with its Pope and Cardinals, its confessional, its incense and ceremonial, its elaborate and miraculous change of the elements of the Supper, its Seven Sacraments, its exaltation of spiritual authority, its glorification of the simple peasant Mother of Jesus, its indulgences, and finally its whole scholastic theology. Set all this alongside the Gospels, or even alongside the Church of the apostolic period, and they appear to belong to different religions. The unfriendly critics referred to above would say that the one is Christian, the other largely pagan. At any rate it takes a skilful advocate of 'development' to justify the change from the one to the other.

The final point is dealt with drastically by Dr. Gow. One of Dr. ORCHARD's main positions is that a central religious authority is the one hope for humanity. There must be one visible concrete all-embracing Church if, in the present evil conditions, the world is to be saved. Dr. Gow's answer to this is that the Roman Church has had

many opportunities in history of showing what it could do for the peace of the world when the authority of the Church was unchallenged. 'But it needs little knowledge of history to realize that the suffering of the poor, the cruelty of the oppressor, the violence of faction, the horrors of war were not abolished when the Roman Church was the

sole and undisputed representative of religion in the Christian world.' There are countries where Romanism has been supreme, Spain for example. Has Romanism freed them from the troubles that afflict the world? The verdict of history is against the idea that a merely unified Church would bring salvation to the world.

The Message of the Epistles.

Romans.

BY THE REVEREND N. P. WILLIAMS, D.D., LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

THE Preface to the second edition of Karl Barth's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans contains the following ingenuous admission—'I know that I have laid myself open to the charge of imposing a meaning upon the text rather than extracting its meaning from it.' Barth's doctrine of the Word of God, of a transcendental, objectively proclaimed Divine message lying behind, rather than in, the sacred text—a message of which the human author of the text may not have been fully conscious, or indeed conscious at all—has obvious affinities with the allegorism of the Alexandrine Fathers, and, like it, may easily be used as the instrument of a purely arbitrary exegesis which takes no account at all of what the human author really meant to say. Yet those of us who in the study of Holy Scripture are guided by the canons of Antioch rather than of Alexandria—that is, who regard the determination of the meaning which was consciously present to the author's mind as the primary task of the exegete, and as alone containing the clue to the further significance, if any there be, which, though not realized by the human author, was nevertheless intended by the overruling Divine Mind to be conveyed through the sacred text—find ourselves almost inevitably liable to the same reproach. For it is now generally admitted that the undisputed Pauline Epistles were real and personal letters, dictated to meet some pressing emergency, and to encourage, instruct, warn, or admonish given individuals, known personally or at any rate by trustworthy report to the Apostle; with the partial exception of the Epistle with which

we shall be concerned, they were not written as deliberately planned dogmatic treatises. The exegetical canon which results from the recognition of this fact has been expressed by Professor Kirsopp Lake in the following well-known words: 'Treat the Epistles as letters; recognize that in letters the subjects discussed are not those on which all parties are agreed, but those on which there is difference of opinion, so that the really central points are not those which are supported by argument, but those which are assumed as generally believed.'¹ The real message, accordingly, of such Epistles as those to the Galatians, Thessalonians, and Corinthians lies not so much in their explicit *dicta* as in their tacit assumptions, which have to be reconstructed by a process of induction, hypothesis, and verification such as must always be open to the charge of arbitrary speculativeness. The Epistle to the Romans, indeed, partakes much more than those which we have just mentioned, of the nature of a piece of conscious doctrinal exposition; for it was written to provide a Church to which its author was personally unknown, but which he designed to use as a base of operations for his missionary campaign in the West, with an authoritative summary of his whole characteristic presentation of Christianity as a new and unprecedented scheme of salvation centring in union with Christ and indwelling by the Spirit. Yet, even here, the impatience, vehemence, and polemical keenness of the Apostle's temperament are such that thoughts crowd quick and fast upon one another's heels;

¹ *Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (1911), p. 424.