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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

How are we to preach the Cross to-day? That is a question that faces every working minister. It might be put much more drastically in a way that involves not only preachers but all serious Christians: What are we to *believe* about the Cross to-day? The question is raised and discussed, strangely enough, simultaneously in several quarters this month, in the 'Hibbert Journal' by Dr. C. J. CADOUX, in the Report of the Cromer Conference by Dr. C. E. RAVEN, in 'God and the World through Christian Eyes' by Professor C. H. DODD, and at the Cambridge Congregational Conference by Dr. A. C. BOUQUET. It may be interesting and useful to give a summary of what these distinguished persons, of very different schools, have to say about the problem.

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No one seems prepared to support the traditional 'propitiation' or 'substitution' theory. As was to be expected, Dr. CADOUX is very emphatic in his repudiation of it. We have erred, he thinks, in hardening metaphor and poetry into doctrine. He frankly admits that St. Paul's 'difficult language' left no clear doctrine to his successors, but convinced them that the idea of a propitiatory sacrifice was an essential part of the Christian 'Message about the Cross.' It was natural, indeed inevitable, for a Jew to interpret the death of Christ in terms of the sacrosanct sacrificial system. But that point of view is impossible for us, and we should not base any doctrine on the language of an outworn sacrificial usage. The unwillingness

of Christian teachers to say this plainly, he feels, is largely responsible for the perplexity in which many Christians find themselves to-day.

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The right place to begin is the human goodness of Jesus. To prosecute His great appeal without fighting His enemies meant simply dying at their hands. This He resolved to do, and it is with the supreme moral nobility of this self-sacrifice that we have to start. It is in this we see God. And to see God here and thus is to be moved to self-contempt and to a longing for closer fellowship with God and a worthier life. In Shaw's play 'Saint Joan' the English chaplain confesses that what redeemed him was 'a young woman whom I saw actually burned to death. It was dreadful; oh, most dreadful. But it saved me. I have been a different man ever since . . .' Now this is salvation, and that man may find his way to such salvation by reverently contemplating the death of Jesus and teachably allowing himself to be mastered by it, is, Dr. CADOUX believes, the heart of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement.

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This is borne out by three facts. (1) By the teaching of Jesus Himself. Jesus always portrays God as forgiving men simply on the strength of that newer and truer attitude to life and to Himself which is commonly called repentance. God's forgiveness is a gracious personal act, springing from His fatherly love. This teaching is fatal to the view that Jesus' death was, in His own mind,

an objective propitiation for human sin. (2) By the great passage in Is 53 which we know Jesus regarded as fulfilled in Himself. The sin of many is removed by the Servant, because His sufferings have led them to repentance. And (3) by the typical evangelical experience of 'redemption through the blood,' which, when you pierce through the rich covering of descriptive metaphor, you find to be essentially the experience which has been just described. The metaphors used, propitiation and others, only obscure, but do not quite conceal, the real spiritual truth.

When we turn to Dr. RAVEN's address on 'The Cross and Redemption,' we find, as we expect, a fuller sympathy with the older ways of putting the truth. He says that our task is a double one, to insist on the redemptive efficacy of Calvary, and at the same time to interpret the Cross against a Christ-centred and Cross-centred view of the universe. The Cross is God's act, but it is an act in harmony with all His other activity, as Creator and Sanctifier as well as Redeemer. It is true that we are in a real difficulty about the traditional *language* about the Cross. To many it seems to imply almost moral laxity on the part of the Deity and to involve unworthy thoughts of God and man. And it must be admitted that the traditional doctrines called 'objective' are incomplete, grossly and gravely incomplete, unless there is the response in ourselves to the redemptive, sacrificial, substitutionary activity of God.

But what do these terms, redemption, propitiation, sacrifice, ransom, substitution, really mean? They are used by Paul as metaphors simply to convey to others the splendour of the experience that had come into his own life. Consequently we get, on the one side, this note of triumphant freshness, of victory, of redemption, of good news; and on the other we get a variety of symbols, images, flung down in the rapture of the fulness of his own life, to try and express here a little and there a little the magnificence of what God has done. If you isolate these particular phrases, and say, 'This is the Pauline doctrine of the Atonement,' and, 'This is the Pauline doctrine,' as has been

done, you create the hideous and artificial product of the theologians which we call Paulinism, a thing as remote from the Apostle as it could well be. What we have to do is to look at the central experience of the man, and then, in the light of this, regard the different metaphors which he uses and see how far they do justice to some facet or other of the truth which he is trying to express.

And what do we find? God doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. That is 'substitution,' and all that substitution means. And if we say, 'Christ did this for me,' we can also say that Christ opened up a fresh possibility of Communion with God, of life in God, and that is the heart of what is meant by 'propitiation.' And if propitiation is the bringing into a new relationship with God of His human child, this is a satisfaction of the full purpose of God, an achievement of that towards which the whole creation is moving. Is not that what 'satisfaction' means? And if this frees the soul from the old selfishness, the old rebellion, that is just 'ransom,' what Jesus meant by the word. Let us remember that these old words all sprang from the environment in which those who used them lived. We may use other images, but the truth we express is just the same truth as these older symbols embodied. The essential truth is that the Cross is an act of God, an act in which the whole creative process culminates, and in which is unveiled the essential and eternal nature of God.

There is nothing in the other essays already mentioned that goes beyond Dr. CADOUX and Dr. RAVEN. Professor DODD's view is that the Cross is God's way of dealing with sin, a way that will go any length to win men to goodness. God's love is without limit, but it needed the Cross to assure us of this. And in commemorating Christ's death, and associating ourselves with it, we are made partakers in a divine life which His death released for us. To this the other writers would agree. Indeed, as we read these four essays and look at them together, we gather these two conclusions. One is that the older traditional, isolated way of viewing the Cross is now abandoned by the thoughtful Christian. The other is that when we

pierce to the heart of these traditional theories we find the same reality of experience as we are trying to express to-day in other words. The Cross is God's act, not a revelation of Him only but a *deed*. And in this deed He stands beside us and lifts our burden, and lifts us into fellowship with His own life.

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The 'Westminster Books' form a series which is to be warmly welcomed for its timeliness and great practical utility. The most recent addition to the series is a quite remarkable little book by Principal GARVIE, *Can Christ Save Society?* (Hodder & Stoughton; 3s. net).

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Principal GARVIE writes with a rare combination of ripe Christian learning and competent knowledge of economic problems, together with passionate conviction and profound human sympathy. He touches on and illuminates a great number of the most pressing questions of the hour—War and Pacifism, Capital and Labour, Finance and Tariffs, Socialism, Marriage and Family Life. On these topics he has much to say that is clear, decisive, and arresting. We can only attempt to sketch briefly the bare outline of his argument.

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In criticising the present crisis he regards as misleading the tendency to ascribe all the ills from which the world is suffering to the Great War. No doubt it made the world situation incalculably worse, 'but to regard this as an adequate analysis of the world's crisis would be to betray ignorance and folly.' The War was but the harvest of what the world had been sowing. 'It was because the world was economically and politically a corrupt tree that it brought forth this corrupt fruit.'

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The situation may be described in a word, 'Poverty amid Plenty.' Whatever forces, political and economic, have brought about this situation, we shall never visualize it aright until it is stamped on our minds and hearts in living pictures of human life. 'Let us try to realise the tragedy of the home, the agony of the heart, when regular employment ceases, when the future holds no certainty of

recovery, when relief sometimes granted under humiliating conditions is altogether inadequate to maintain the former modest standard of living. The man's weary tramp, hour after hour, in search of work, the woman's denial of her own appetite that there may be more nourishment for her children . . . let us hold these pictures before our eyes, till our hearts are moved as they must be: and, surely, the present crisis will cease to be an outward evil, and become an inward experience, and we shall be driven by an accusing conscience to cry out: What can be done? What ought to be done? Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? This cry must not be wrung from solitary individual Christians only, it must come from the whole Christian community.'

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It is impossible for the Christian Church to be indifferent and to keep silence, especially if she believes, as she must, that Christ is the Saviour of the world as well as of the individual soul. There are those who say to the Church, 'Hands off,' and who think she is going beyond the scope of her commission when she ventures into the sphere of economics. But economics is 'concerned with human *conduct* in the widest sense, man's conscious voluntary action, and we cannot withdraw any of the processes from the authority of moral laws, for whatever a man does is right or wrong, and he is good or bad in the doing of it.' It may be conceded that here, as indeed in all spheres, there are difficulties in carrying out Christian principles, and special knowledge is needed to determine the right course to pursue. But the Christian Church is entitled and qualified to discern and proclaim that the accepted principle according to which material interests come first and are the sole determinants is wrong and must be challenged. 'The immediate task of the Christian Church is not to favour or promote this or that economic proposal: but to insist on the necessity of such reconsideration, to offer an interpretation of the principles of the Christian revelation, to indicate some of the ways of application, to use its influence to secure attention and acceptance for what it is thus offering, and so to bring about a moral recovery of men, without which no new economic system or political pro-

gramme can possess either right direction or adequate motive power.' \_\_\_\_\_

After a chapter in which Dr. GARVIE discusses the Christian ideal and the limitations of the Christian conscience in understanding and applying that ideal, he goes on in the concluding chapter, which is perhaps the most important in his book, to formulate and expound some of the demands which may legitimately be made in applying the Christian ideal to the needs and dangers of to-day.

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The first is 'that an adequate provision be made in any society that lays claim to be Christian in motive and conduct to meet all the physical necessities of all its members.' This must be interpreted as involving support of the young, the sick, and the aged. 'School till the age of fifteen at least, and pensions at the age of sixty, is not impracticable idealism.' It will include, also, a larger proportion of wealth going to the worker in the shape of a really 'living wage' and adequate provision for the unemployed.

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The second demand is 'that man shall be treated as infinitely more valuable than things.' Even Christian men unconsciously become conformed in motives and habits to the acquisitive and competitive character of the society in which they find their worldly success. Jesus warned the rich of the spiritual dangers which accrue from riches, but we are confronted to-day, in addition, with a type of poverty which is unblessed and which shows its effects in the deterioration of the unemployed. In all social legislation and remedial effort the preservation and development of true manhood must be supreme.

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The third demand of Christian conscience is 'that in the provision of bodily wants, and in the preservation of the worth of human personality, the differences of sex, class, culture, nation, and race shall be transcended.' Class-distinctions, based on inequalities of wealth or differences of industrial function, are distinctly non-Christian, and their maintenance is provocative of class-war, destructive of social solidarity. 'The outlook for

humanity is dark indeed when, in a world becoming daily in all interests more interdependent, these ever-closer contacts are provocative of hate, strife, war, and not, as they are surely in any reasonable or righteous view of life intended to be, the conditions of understanding, appreciation, and co-operation.'

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The fourth demand is 'that only self-denial and self-sacrifice can meet the challenge.' Allied to that is the last demand 'that the Christian motive of equal love to self and neighbour, rooted in, growing out of, and kept alive by, absolute love to God, be insisted on as alone efficient and sufficient to secure and sustain Christian conduct as it has been so far described.' How great is the change of heart that is implied in this! St. Paul speaks of his experience as being crucified with Christ and raised from the dead. Such an experience is needed, not by the world only, but first and foremost by the Church. 'This Crucifixion seems to me to be necessary if the Church is to rise into newness of life, into the power of the Resurrection of Christ. . . . I do not deceive myself into supposing that even the majority of Christian men will be easily persuaded (if at all) that the way of the teaching of Jesus is the way in which they must walk. A renewed and revived Church would, however, bear her witness, whether the world heeded or not; and yet by the wonder of God's grace it may be that to-day as of old the witness might not be altogether vain, and so God's judgment (*Krisis*) might prove a channel opened for His love, mercy, and grace.'

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Part of the work of Jesus was to open the eyes of the blind. Throughout the Christian centuries it has been part of the work of the spirit of Jesus to open the eyes of the blind. We have already recognized many claims upon us of which our forefathers were unconscious, surprisingly unconscious as it seems to us; but the process still goes on.

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It seems only the other day since we first heard the word 'sharing' used in its technical Christian

sense. Now it is in such habitual use by all sorts of bodies from the Burmese Singers to the Oxford Groupers that it has already become trite. But in our zeal to share our experiences and our sins we are apt to overlook the more elementary duty of sharing our material goods.

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Many of us are vaguely uneasy because we are comparatively comfortable in a world where there is so much poverty. We hope that some day the State may be able to do something about it. We adopt a more or less friendly attitude to some of the political or economic nostrums proposed. Yet we do not see that there is very much that we as individuals can do; and we are confirmed in this static attitude, partly by the weight of tradition, partly by inertia, partly by the fact that the existing state of things suits us well enough.

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But if the walls of our houses were pulled down, if we had to eat our full meals in presence of the starving multitudes, we would not enjoy them very much. We would feel that something *must* be done, and done at once. Is it not one of the chief offices of the spirit of Christ to give us a Christian imagination, to make real to us the existence of the myriads of the needy, it may be thousands of miles away, even if we cannot see them, and, what is more pertinent, even if they cannot see us?

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In *Ventures in Simpler Living*, by Dr. D. J. FLEMING, Professor of Missions, Union Theological Seminary, New York (Edinburgh House Press; 5s. net), the 'offset' process has been used and the right-hand margins have been left unrectified. This measure of simplicity and economy has been deliberately adopted, at the expense of æsthetic considerations; for simplicity and economy in living are the theme of the book. Dr. FLEMING has in view, in the first place, the foreign missionary. Judged by the standard of the European in the East, the missionary is a poor man; yet his poverty is often luxury when contrasted with the social condition of the 'nationals' among whom he works. Is this contrast a definite hindrance to the acceptance of the Christian message? If so, is it possible

by further self-sacrifice to diminish or remove this hindrance?

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Dr. FLEMING invites the missionary fairly to face this question. Objections will at once rise to the mind. Let it be said that there is hardly one of these objections with which Dr. FLEMING does not himself deal. He is no more anxious than we are to see Mission lands overrun with begging friars. He knows that ill-judged experiments in simplicity have already resulted in much ill-health, sometimes in death. He realizes that the number of servants in an Indian bungalow is largely illusory, and that there are rich people as well as poor even in the East, so that the levelling process would sometimes be levelling up instead of levelling down.

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When the missionary has done his best in the way of getting rid of superfluous possessions, there will still be multitudes at a level far below his. The missionary has responsibilities that the nationals around him have not. The discharge of these obligations requires apparatus, and apparatus costs money. The refusal to spend money means unemployment; and may mean starvation for those we would naturally employ. It is not easy to look with patience on the spectacle of educated men and women spending precious time in the discharge of household tasks that servants would be only too glad to perform for payment. Moreover, the motive for our asceticism may be completely misunderstood. Samuel Stokes, the head of the short-lived Brotherhood of the Imitation of Jesus, wandered barefoot through the villages of the Punjab, with the result that the Punjabis thought he was a self-seeker anxious about his own spiritual advancement. The result on the missionary himself cannot always be foretold with certainty. One missionary in India confesses that every time he joins with Indians in a meal, using his fingers as a knife and fork, instead of feeling like an Indian he feels like a pig.

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Even in India, some of the missionary's Indian colleagues already have salaries which, judged by any test except a purely arithmetical and misleading one, exceed his own. 'Certain Siamese

once even took up a collection to buy a better dress for a missionary who, they thought, was not living according to her class.' A group of Japanese Christians, when consulted on the subject, showed no interest in it; and expressed a doubt whether the missionaries would not lose influence if they failed to live in houses of a better grade than the average Japanese.

It is possible to exaggerate the importance of the subject. People of all colours and of all social classes know those who respect them and those who do not, those who are thinking mostly of themselves and those who are thinking mostly of others. But when we have said all that can be said, the question raised by Dr. FLEMING remains, puzzling us, disconcerting us, demanding an answer. This book gives us all the help that knowledge and Christian thought can give us. Our own consciences must do the rest. Will Dr. FLEMING not now consider addressing his question to a wider Christian public? No one could do it more effectively.

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'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.' In these words Isaiah expresses a national policy. It was his conviction that the nation's security in the time of the dominance of Assyria lay not in alliances with Egypt or Babylon, but in calmly resting within the national borders and in quietly trusting in the Lord their God. So his motto was, 'Quietness and confidence.'

The wisdom of Isaiah's counsel appears to have been justified by events, and his motto might well be adopted by our own nation, as a guide to personal conduct at any rate, in this time of economic stress and industrial strain. But we cite it here not for such an application, but because in this centenary year of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement we recall its association with John Keble.

The text from Isaiah above quoted was prefixed by John Keble to his famous volume of poems, *The Christian Year*. And we may regard the phrase, 'quietness and confidence,' as expressive not only of the spirit of those poems, but also of the secret of the author's own great influence upon his times.

Newman assures us that Keble was the true and primary author of the Oxford Movement, tracing

the beginning of it from July 14th, 1833, which was the Sunday on which Keble preached the Assize Sermon in the University pulpit of St. Mary's on the subject of National Apostasy. And what was the secret of Keble's influence?

It was not his intellectual brilliance, great as that was. As a lad of eighteen he took his degree with double first-class honours, a distinction which had been gained only once before, and at the age of nineteen he was elected a Fellow of Oriel College, said to be a still greater distinction. Nor was it for any ecclesiastical eminence that his name was influential. He had turned from the admiration, and even reverence, that haunted his steps at Oxford, to simple pastoral work as his father's curate, seeking—as Newman phrases it—a better and holier satisfaction. His influence upon the religious life of his time was chiefly due to nothing else than his rare and saintly character. It was his purity and loftiness of character that aroused the new feeling for religion to action and embodied it in a definite movement. And the springs of his character undoubtedly lay in his personal devoutness, in what might be named his 'quietness and confidence.'

The volume of *The Christian Year* truly reflects his 'quietness and confidence.' Keble's poetry is indeed an image of the man himself. In the outward expression of his feeling, as the late Principal Shairp remarked, everything in Keble is chastened and subdued. There is no gorgeousness of colouring, no stunning sound, no highly spiced phrase or metaphor. From what have been the chief attractions of much modern poetry popular since his day—scarlet hues and blare of trumpets, staring metaphors and metaphysical enigmas—he turned instinctively. And to the outward expression of his feeling its inward tone corresponds.

Here, for example, are some characteristic lines, written in the autumn season, in which the calm, reflective mood of the poet received a peculiarly delicate expression:

How quiet shows the woodland scene!  
 Each flower and tree, its duty done,  
 Reposing in decay serene,  
 Like weary men when age is won,  
 Such calm old age as conscience pure  
 And self-commanding hearts ensure,  
 Waiting their summons to the sky,  
 Content to live, but not afraid to die.