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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

If the political situation in Germany is obscure, so that we find it difficult to understand the extravagant enthusiasm for Hitler and the Third Reich, no less obscure is the religious situation with its battle for a Reich's Bishop and an Aryan Church.

We, therefore, welcome as throwing light upon it, the publication in English of Karl Barth's big pamphlet, entitled *Theological Existence To-day!* (Hodder & Stoughton; 2s. net). The title is not altogether a happy one, and scarcely indicates with sufficient definiteness the contents and character of the book. It is a powerful plea for religious liberty. It gives in no uncertain tones an answer to the question, Where ought a Christian preacher to take his stand in the crisis through which the (German) Church is passing to-day?

It is a Luther-like utterance, strong, fearless, and pungent. In controversy Karl Barth wields 'a right Jerusalem blade' that can cut to the bone. He has not been in a hurry to utter his mind on the exciting problems of the hour, but now that he has uttered it he has lifted the whole subject to a high level and exposed it in all its nakedness to the pure and searching light of the Word. By so doing he has made a permanent contribution to theology, for in discussing the present crisis in his own profound and comprehensive way he has brought into prominence the great eternal principles which constitute the Church and ought to govern Christian thinking.

He begins by a powerful assertion of the supremacy of the Word of God, and of the ministry of the Word. 'There are some things about which there is unanimity within the Church. One is, that there is no more urgent demand in the whole world than that which the Word of God makes, viz. that the Word be preached and heard. At all costs this demand has to be discharged by the world and the Church itself, cost what it may.' Further, the Word of God will triumph over all opponents, and the Church must place her confidence in the Word alone. 'And, particularly as preachers and teachers of the Church, we are at one in fear and also in joy, that we are called to serve the Word of God within the Church and in the world by our preaching and our teaching. We agree, too, that with the fulfilment of our calling we not only see ourselves stand or fall, but we see everything that is important to us in the world, however precious or great it be, standing or falling. So that to us no concern can be more pressing, no hope more moving than the concern and hope of our ministry.'

This is no otiose declaration. 'For the mighty temptation of this age, which appears in every shape possible, is that we no longer appreciate the intensity and exclusiveness of the demand which the Divine Word makes . . . so that in our anxiety in face of existing dangers we no longer put our whole trust in the authority of God's Word, but we think we ought to come to its aid with all sorts of contrivances, and we thus throw quite aside

our confidence in the Word's power to triumph. That is to say, we think ourselves capable of facing, solving, and moulding definite problems better from some other source than from and by means of God's Word.' It is a temptation and a danger by no means peculiar to the Church in Germany.

From this standpoint, then, and in the light of this supreme guiding principle, BARTH proceeds to discuss the problems of the hour. He deals particularly with three, namely, the re-organization of the Church, the appointment of a Reich's Bishop, and the German Christian movement. His handling of these is a wonderful piece of massive Christian reasoning.

Following upon the political triumph of the Nazis an overwhelming demand arose that the German Evangelical Churches in the twenty-nine States should be consolidated after the pattern of the Nazi regime. Under political pressure reforms along these lines have been pushed through. Whence, BARTH asks, did this sudden and violent demand for reform arise? Did it arise within the bosom of the Church? Was it due to some compulsion and guidance of the Word of God? The answer is obvious. Had it been a reform under constraint of the Word of God it would have worn a different look. 'The real Church under the Cross is the Church of the Holy Ghost whose activities must still in themselves, amid all the feebleness and foolishness of men, possess something profoundly gladdening and peaceful, something Sabbatical, reverential. An invisible yet subduing light never really altogether departs from the spiritual decisions of the Church—the light of a good conscience and the promise of the forgiveness of sins amid the weakness of the flesh. This light has not been perceptible at all in the proceedings so far of Church Reform.'

On the question of the Reich's Bishop, BARTH is scathing. A sudden and almost unanimous cry arose for a Bishop, a leader of the Church to correspond to the leader of the State. Nobody thought it worth while to ask what sort of a bishop. Is it one who shall be a mere superintendent as in some Protestant Churches, or a full-blown autocratic prelate? Obviously, it is a leader after the pattern of Hitler. But this 'discloses something that all the waters of the Rhine cannot wash away. And that is, the active, strict, Roman Catholic Prelacy.' 'Has theological confusion reached such a pitch in Evangelical Germany, that, at length, without incurring any risk, a favourite new doctrine can be coolly proclaimed, not only without authority, but without the ghost of a theological proof, simply because, for the sake of a Revolution, it pleases, and in this way gets a footing?' The Reformed Church has vigorously protested against the innovation, but the Lutheran Church has kept silence. In all this wrangle, BARTH argues, it is being forgotten that in Christ the Church possesses her Leader for all time. 'When it is recognized that *He*, and *He alone* is the Leader, there is the possibility of religious life. And then, in all deference, even if one be but an ever-so-insignificant theologian, or the obscure village pastor, or even not a pastor or theologian at all, but "merely" somebody like a lay-elder, then one is *himself* the genuine Bishop, if he only knows his Bible and his Catechism: a "bishop" as foreseen in Holy Writ. . . . When men *call out* for the Church leader instead of themselves *being* leaders in their appointed ministries, then all this crying out for a leader is as vain as the howling of the priests of Baal on Carmel, "Baal, hear us!"'

To the claim of the German Christians that the Church must be purged and become an Aryan Church, BARTH offers the most resolute opposition. 'I say, absolutely and without reserve, No! to both the spirit and the letter of this doctrine.' The Church that maintains this doctrine ceases to be a Christian Church. Better that the Church should be thinned down to a tiny group and go again into the catacombs than yield a hairbreadth on this point. BARTH warns his various theological friends who have been 'doped' into saying Yes, that he feels himself 'utterly and finally divided from them, save in so far as, by a lucky inconsistency, there may be retained by them some yet solid core of what is Christian, churchly and theological, alongside of this heresy.'

It is evident that the buttons are off the foils in Germany. But BARTH is not out to fight against anybody, not even the German Christians, but explicitly to fight for them, that is, for their salvation, and the salvation of the whole Church and country. He returns to the point from which he started, that the prime need is for a spiritual centre of resistance, a rallying to and a fresh declaration of the Word of God. Let no one say that this is not enough. 'There are some theologians who ought to hang down their heads with shame for having preached such fine sermons on "God is our only Helper," and then snapping out, "It's no good now." They should let the word come home to themselves that the help of the Lord is really the only help.' Much that was counted precious has been taken away. 'All that was called Liberty, Justice, Spirit only a year ago and for a hundred years back, where has it all gone? Now these are all temporal, material, earthly goods! "All flesh is as grass——" No doubt! "But the Word of our God abideth for ever," and, consequently, it is true and indispensable every day, for every day hastens into Eternity.'

There is literature of knowledge and there is literature of power, and there is literature which is greater than either because it combines both knowledge and power. There are books—though there are not many—which are instructive in every line and which yet are pure literature. Such is the wholly admirable volume on *The Hebrew Literary Genius* (Milford; 11s. 6d. net), written by Emeritus Professor Duncan Black MACDONALD, M.A., D.D., of Hartford, one of the most distinguished Arabists in the world, and therefore more competent than most people to estimate the Hebrew genius, which in so many important respects is akin to that of Arabia.

Dr. MACDONALD offers many illuminating analogies between Hebrew and Arabic literature; for example, between David and Imr al-Qais. And he knows the modern East as well. In discussing the tendency of emotional prophetism to degenerate into professionalism, he tells us that in Cairo he once observed at a professional and public darwish performance, one of the actors pause in his supposed crisis of religious enthusiasm, to look at his watch! How much longer had he to keep this up?

Dr. MACDONALD has also a fine literary sense and a wide knowledge of literature, ancient and modern. He knows his Pindar and Plato, as well as his Byron and Keats, Moore and Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson, Burns and Stevenson; and there are not a few passages in his own book which rise to the level of literature. 'The mother of Sisera looked forth from her lattice and she still looks and listens—an abiding picture.' The story of Belshazzar in Dn 5 'belongs,' he says, 'to great literature.' Of the writing on the wall, 'it was the fingers only that came, but the writing remained —and remains. There is no other writing on any wall that has had such effect as this.'

It is no surprise that a man so appreciative of the Hebrew genius can carry us into its secret. Here, for example, is a flash of real intuition. Discussing the lyrical quality of the Hebrew temperament, he remarks that the 'Hebrew lyric artist has his eye on the object, but *he stands between us and it.*' And of those sharp eyes which the Hebrew had inherited from his Bedawi ancestors, eyes that were fixed on the horizon, looking to distant things, he learned to make good use from his position on the ridge of the Judean uplands. While Burns had 'the eyes of a peasant fixed on the glebe at his feet, the Hebrew mind, like the Hebrew eyes, looked to distant things and to a heavenly horizon.'

Insights like these abound throughout the book, which is written to encourage the idea that 'the Old Testament should be approached on the side of literature, pure and simple, under the guidance of folk-lore in general and in particular of the literatures, ideas, and institutions kindred to it. Placed thus in the midst of the human race and of the peoples sister to the Hebrews, it will show both its general humanity and its unique character.' The book is a plea for the literary and psychological,

as distinguished from the critical and historical study, of the Old Testament.

Both types of study, of course, are necessary, and Dr. MACDONALD admits this : he accepts the documents which the critics believe to lie, for example, behind the Book of Genesis. But, much as we admire his emphasis upon the things of permanent value, we cannot help feeling that he has been a little unduly severe on the critics and criticism. He thinks that there has been too much preoccupation with the documents, and that too little attention has been paid to æsthetic forms and to the attitude exhibited by the books, as they now lie before us, to the problems of the world. The critics are taken to task for leaving on the average reader the impression that the Old Testament is little more than a jumble of historical and critical problems, and that in the end it has neither meaning nor value for modern life.

This charge, however, is nothing like so relevant as it would have been a generation ago. The commentaries in the series edited by Sellin, for example, concentrate more deliberately upon the religious substance of the Old Testament than those in the two great series which preceded it, while interest in the literary form, or the philosophic substance, or both, is exemplified by the substantial contributions of Gunkel, Wünsche, Weiser, Morris Jastrow, and Kathleen E. Innes—to mention only a few of those who have written recently or are writing to-day. The critic who really knows his business is not content with documentary analysis ; he recognizes that this is but the portal which leads into the sanctuary, and the sanctuary cannot be explored by one who is content to tarry on the threshold.

Indeed, there are a few minor points where due attention even to external criticism might have led Dr. MACDONALD to modify some of his remarks. He regards Ps 18, for example, as 'undoubtedly' from David himself ; but he does not explain how the man who had been guilty of the black crimes of adultery and virtual murder could, at a late period of his life, 'when he had been delivered out of the hand of all his enemies,' have regarded his thus grievously stained past with the extraordinary complacency which characterizes vv.$^{20\text{-}24}$, the writer of which verses confesses that he has kept the ways of Jehovah and guarded himself from iniquity. Nor again would Dr. MACDONALD have allowed the 'ships' to come into the picture in his translation of Ps 104^{26} : *they* could hardly be said to wait on Jehovah and to receive from Him their meat in due season ; a very easy and highly probable emendation, by reading 'sea-monsters' for 'ships,' delivers us from this irrelevance.

Besides, Dr. MACDONALD himself offers some first-rate criticism on points that affect literary analysis. Very striking, for example, are the reasons he gives for assigning the great speech of Jehovah in Job 38 f. to another writer than the poet of the Colloquies. He argues that the latter takes the view, which was also taken by the writer of Gn 1, that man was the head and end of creation, and that all things should work together for his good ; while to the former the world did not exist for man but solely for the pleasure of God, and the point of the speech is that 'Job thought a great deal too much about himself ; that he and all mankind were a quite insignificant part of the great world, and that God had a perfect right to do with him what He pleased. So an elaborate picture of that great world is painted and held up to Job. How small must Job feel as he himself looks at it ; how incapable of taking a part in directing it and in reforming its abuses !' This, whether we accept it or not, is subtle criticism, strikingly put.

In this book there is considerable challenge, much of it piquant and stimulating, of contemporary opinion. The prophets, we are told, were rather foretellers than forthtellers, and the modern emphasis on their importance has been considerably overdone ; they are not by any means the only great men in the Old Testament. Apocalyptic is 'that ghastly and mechanical travesty of foreseeing.' There is no Fall : by what we call the Fall man acquired a new power of moral discrimination, and the Fall, when conscience emerges which

makes the essential difference between man and all other animals, was really a step up. Paul's 'perverted exegesis of the Garden Story in Genesis' has had an unhappy effect on Christian theology. 'The Book of Ecclesiastes is easily the greatest surviving product of Hebrew philosophic thought,' though, on the other hand, its writer would have been 'infinitely tickled,' could he have foreseen that one day his book would be Scripture, both for Synagogue and Church. Lively criticisms like these enhance the interest of a book in which, even without them, there is not a dull line.

Here are one or two more. The discussion of the four curious verses which open Gn 6 tempts the writer to a reference to 'the reveries of half-baked theologians.' Again, we are told that it was the weakness of the Hebrew mind to be ridden by ideas —some of the teaching of the Book of Proverbs, for example, flies in the face of facts. The Book of Judges, as is well known, is controlled by the Deuteronomic scheme: in this connexion Dr. MACDONALD remarks that 'we can be thankful to the compiler of Judges that, *in spite of his ideas*, he saved for us so much excellent old material.' And there is much truth in his contention that 'the Hebrews never reached that history which is unbiased investigation; when they wrote of the past with consciousness they were always dominated by some guiding or misleading hypothesis.'

Of the many striking chapters, which include a discussion of the Weird in Hebrew Literature, perhaps the most arresting are those which are devoted to Genesis and Ecclesiastes. It has long been the custom to say that the Hebrews were not philosophers. This Dr. MACDONALD regards as a baseless prejudice, and he sets out to shatter it. Not only were they literary artists—that, too, is often denied—but they, and especially the writers of the books just mentioned, were profound thinkers —acute psychologists, with, of course, predominantly ethical interests; indeed, he goes so far as to say that the thinker who created our Genesis in its present form was not only 'artist and philosopher' in one, but 'one of the great philosophers of the world.' And the arguments by which he defends this thesis can hardly fail to carry conviction.

Extraordinarily sympathetic, too, is his treatment of the writer of Ecclesiastes, who, for all his ingrained scepticism, 'faced life with gallant courage.' There is much light in the suggestion that for Wisdom in such a passage as Pr 8 we should substitute Reason. When we do this we can see that the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel is in the direct line of descent from one of the dominant ideas of the Old Testament: it requires for its explanation—and some scholars need this reminder —neither the Logos of Philo nor the later Jewish Memra.

It would be impossible to speak too highly of this profound and stimulating book. It emphasizes aspects of the Old Testament which, while they have not indeed been neglected by recent scholars, will assuredly come more and more to the front; and then we shall be more convinced than ever that the greater men of the Old Testament were anything but little nationalists. While Hebrews in every fibre of their being, they were also men, with interests and a vision as broad as humanity itself.

The aim of the 'Library of Constructive Theology' (Nisbet; 10s. 6d. net each volume) is not to record the past history of beliefs, but rather to set forth the living issues of religion in the light of the modern appeal to experience. In the most recent addition to the series, Professor L. W. GRENSTED's *The Person of Christ*, that aim is amply fulfilled. Indeed, many will think that the discussion of Christologies ancient and modern is here far too meagre, and that the writer should have laid a broader foundation in history before essaying the task of construction.

It is not that Dr. GRENSTED has given insufficient space to preparatory considerations. His pen has travelled four-fifths of its way before he is ready to ask, 'What, then, of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, as defined at Chalcedon?' But he

might well have asked this earlier. An examination of the ground traversed up to this point shows that he has interpreted the scope of the preparatory considerations very generously. Even so, it must be allowed that his book, if tending towards prolixity in style, contains many fresh and helpful expositions, theological and psychological, shaped by a conservatism at once open-eyed and tenacious.

Dr. GRENSTED recognizes the limitations of the orthodox dogma of the Person of Christ, as expressed in the formulas of Nicæa and Chalcedon. The early Christians had transformed the conception of God. For the first time it was a living and real conception. Hitherto, 'no man had seen God at any time.' Now the Son had 'declared Him.' But in working out this new conception the Church made the mistake of caring overmuch for the fantasies and formulations of the world that had not known Christ, and Greek philosophy clarified controversy at the price of the confusing of faith. Theology was secured, but none could say what it meant.

Yet, despite his attitude here outlined to the Nicene and Chalcedonian orthodoxy, Dr. GRENSTED can say that he accepts the doctrine of Jesus Christ as one Person in two Natures, not only as the traditional faith of the Church, but also as true, 'so far as any brief formula can contain the truth.' It is further taken by him as true that this Person is the Divine Person of the Son, the Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity. He goes on to say, however, that when we have accepted the formula as true, we are still left with the task of interpretation.

In turning to the interpretative task, the first point he asks us to note is that the doctrine of the two Natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ is primarily a practical maxim of Christian life. To say so is not to deny the truth of the doctrine and still less to assert that its truth is merely approximate, or probable, or symbolic. It is rather to say that it is a truth deeply imbedded, and truly expressed, in Christian experience. Accordingly it is in the realm of experience that its interpretation lies. We can have no direct knowledge of its meaning as a description of the inner being of Jesus or of the Second Person of the Trinity. But the experience from which the doctrine sprang, and in the light of which it is to be interpreted, has a finality and absoluteness of character which seems incapable of further development in principle. Equally unchangeable and irreversible stands the plain historical fact of Jesus of Nazareth.

We shall not take time to summarize Dr. GRENSTED'S exposition of the Christian experience. But let us see what he means when he speaks of Jesus Christ as one Person existent in two Natures. Starting from this unity of Jesus Christ, he points out that there is no separation or confusion in the sphere of the practical reason when we follow the Jesus of Christian faith as an Example, listen to Him as our Teacher, read with vivid sympathy the story of His Passion, and with the deepest awe and veneration accept Him as Redeemer and worship Him as God. Whatever the speculative reason may make of the facts the practical one is perfectly plain. As the Creed declares, we believe in 'one Lord Jesus Christ.'

Further, it is directly necessary to this unity that Jesus was and is a man. To say that Jesus was Man without being individual man would be a contradiction in terms, for the very idea of manhood includes the idea of its expression in individual men. He knew and knows all that can be meant by restriction to a particular time and place. He had and has, as man, His own Mother and His own friends, even though we may not say what such relationships have come to mean in the life to which He passed from the empty tomb.

What is included in the belief that Jesus is man, having the 'whole and perfect nature' of manhood? The individuality to which reference has been made above is obviously involved. But in Jesus individual manhood is fully revealed as the basis of human relationship. It is as perfect man that He enters into assured communion with the Father, unbroken save for that mysterious moment of darkness upon the Cross. It is as perfect man that

He shows what the relationship of man with man may be. His natural sympathy which yet seeks men's higher good, His teaching as that of a Rabbi which yet takes on a curiously absolute quality, and His religion in which He was and is still and for ever the way between God and man, the Mediator—these carry us beyond the limits and imperfection of such manhood as we know in ourselves, and enable us to understand the impulse which led the Church to declare that Jesus has the Nature of God.

Finally, since Christianity endorses man's quest for God, and in Christ sees God made manifest, it follows that the initiative in the drama of salvation is of God and not of man. It gives neither rational coherence nor any assurance to conceive Jesus as the pioneer who had led man upwards and onwards, nearer to the ideal. On such a view God becomes a system of thought, or of values, or of standards of action. But it is wholly different if we can say that within the personal being of God Himself there is that which comes into human life with all the creative energy of the divine love. Thus as man Jesus is perfectly the expression of God. That which the created universe sets forth dimly, since we do not know how to read it aright, is set forth plainly in Jesus.

Local Colour in Proto-Luke.[1]

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If the hypothesis of Proto-Luke be true, the implication is that St. Luke had at his disposal for his book about the life of Jesus matter that has as real a claim to being an early authority as is the case with either Mark or 'Q.' It is therefore worth asking whether there are indications of a Palestinian background in this document as in the other two. 'There are reasons,' writes Dr. Cadbury, 'for believing that Luke tries to makes himself at home in all parts of his narrative, even in Palestine where his style has a more Semitic flavouring.'[2] May he not, however, have been more naturally 'at home' in his collation of those incidents and stories which he gathered on the spot, and which form the basis for his subsequent work? Dr. Cadbury writes a little later: 'It is hard for us to say where Luke's local colour is most abundant and most accurate.'[3] Is it not possible, even probable, that this is most abundant, where it is also most accurate? Should not this be chiefly in the material which came first to his notice and which he incorporated with 'Q,' rather than in the material which he later took over from Mark, when his concern would be with the essence of the particular story rather than with details or trappings? Not but what his additions to or changes in Mark at times do have the flavour of a Palestinian background, but they are matters of obviously secondary importance in this connexion.

Is not Canon Streeter right in stating that, in reference to the hypothesis of Proto-Luke, 'the special tastes, sympathies, and characteristics of the author are equally conspicuous in Proto-Luke[4] and those parts of the Gospel which must be attributed to the editor of the whole

That there are evidences in Mark of a Palestinian background is incontrovertible, whether it reveals special knowledge of the Sea of Galilee or interprets the Aramaic expressions. We want to ask whether there are not equally incontrovertible evidences of local colour scattered about Proto-Luke.

These should be found both in the Logia that come from Jesus and in the stories told by Him, or by others about Him. Canon Streeter[5] has already called attention to the three parables of the 'Lost Sheep,' 'The Marriage Feast,' and 'The Pounds' as illustrating the difference between two versions of a parable which yet do retain key words. Of course it may be questioned, as Dr. Vincent Taylor does, whether these three parables

[1] Vincent Taylor, *The First Draft of St. Luke's Gospel.*

[2] *The Making of Luke-Acts*, 242.

[3] *Op. cit.* 243.

[4] *The Four Gospels*, 219.

[5] *Op. cit.* 245.