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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

At the present moment many doubt as to whether psychology deserves to be reckoned as one of the sciences. Not a few are ready to exclaim, 'O Psychology, what follies are written in thy name!' On the other hand, there are some psychologists whose studies are not only genuinely scientific, but of great practical importance. Among such still living the name of William McDougall holds a very distinguished place. His interests are not limited to psychology. On such subjects as anthropology, Darwinism, or eugenics he speaks with that authority which full knowledge and sound judgment engender. \_\_\_\_\_

We welcome a volume of essays which gives us in convenient form a number of papers contributed to various journals and periodicals and in danger of being therein buried and forgotten. They are all well worth making available to a wider public. Those on the Ethics of Nationalism, the Responsibility of Science for World-chaos, Was Darwin Wrong? and Psychical Research are among the most valuable for general reading. \_\_\_\_\_

What interests us most, however, is the essay which gives its title to the whole volume—*Religion and the Sciences of Life* (Methuen; 8s. 6d. net). The opening is arresting. 'The sciences of life are widely reputed to be dangerous to religious belief in a higher degree than the physical sciences; of all the sciences of life, psychology is, perhaps, most open to this reproach. It may, therefore, be of

some general interest if I, who have devoted more than forty years to these sciences, testify, while still pre-senile, that these prolonged studies have led me to a position more favourable to religion than that from which I set out. They have, in fact, led me from agnosticism to religion.' \_\_\_\_\_

What were the stages of this spiritual pilgrimage? First 'an increasingly vivid realization that, in spite of all the splendid achievements of modern science, we still live surrounded on every hand by mysteries. On the frontiers of science we look out into infinite distances where there loom up questions with which we vainly struggle.' That led to caution and humility, and was reinforced by reflexion on the mutability of scientific theories. 'I have seen the answers of science which seemed satisfying and final to one generation thrown by the next to the scrap-heap of exploded fallacies.' Three striking examples are the theory of the strict determination of all events in the sense that excludes creativeness and volition; the theory of the adequacy of natural selection which denies all other agency than the mechanical; the principles of the great Newton, for generations accepted as the very foundations of all science, they also now belong to the past. \_\_\_\_\_

But scientific caution and humility while they keep open the road to religion do not of themselves lead to it. We must next do full justice to the truth that man is essentially a spiritual being. Our

author was helped here by his frequent intercourse with the late poet-laureate Robert Bridges. He came to see that 'it is the nature of man to recognize the true, the good, and the beautiful, to esteem highly all such things, to aspire towards them, to strive to preserve, augment, and create them.' That can be empirically established as certainly as any fact with which science is concerned. Another truth does not admit of scientific proof but is established by universal consent, namely, that these capacities are the highest part or aspect of man's nature. Such a judgment is intuitive. It has no place in the processes of scientific discovery, it belongs to a different sphere, and yet stands firmly established by the universal assent of mankind. 'Affirmations of supreme value are not only arrived at by processes entirely other than those which science employs; they are independent of science in the sense that no conceivable discoveries made by scientific methods can refute or shame them.'

Further, the poet suggested to Professor MCDUGALL that man's proper work is to bring the material aspects of the world into subjection to the spirit. In some degree, however slight, man has the power to subdue the material to subserviency to his spiritual values, and in some measure to remould his own nature, developing and enriching the spiritual side. This assertion or implication is essential to religion. And here emerges the possibility of conflict between religion and science. Science may deny, and often has denied, that the spiritual is of any effect in the life of man. 'Science cannot deny that man recognizes and acclaims truth, goodness, and beauty in all their forms; but it has denied that man's aspiration to conserve and to create these values is of any efficacy. And this is the most fundamental part of the attack of science upon religion. For, if this denial is well founded, religion is wholly illusory!'

Another great affirmation of religion is that man, so far as his spiritual nature is developed, can and does partake in the life of a realm of spirit infinitely surpassing his own small spiritual spark, another affirmation that science has seemed to deny. At

the present time the most hostile sciences seem to be biology and psychology. As a biologist and a psychologist Professor MCDUGALL discusses the questions, do these sciences truly afford ground for such denials? Do they not rather, when largely considered, afford positive support for those two fundamental affirmations of religion?

The denials, he points out, are founded on the allegation that man is a mechanistic product of a mechanistic evolution. But the mechanical theory of evolution has broken down. 'On all hands we hear biologists either accepting the significant expression "creative evolution," or speaking of orthogenesis, which means much the same thing, an evolution directed towards a goal.' And it is surely clear that if the human race is to make any further progress it can come only through the effective working of his spiritual ideals.

Turning to psychology it is still clearer that the mechanical psychology of the nineteenth century is bankrupt. It is clear that the higher activities of man conform to laws quite other than the laws of physics. Man's characteristic activities are purposive and creative. It is simply ridiculous to assert that they are not. But is religion illusory? Freud has claimed to show that it is. But what is his argument? It is no more than this—the nature of man is such that the race inevitably acquires religious beliefs, therefore religion being inevitable is all illusory. A strange argument, indeed, against all common sense.

The sciences of biology and psychology, therefore, do not render untenable the fundamental postulates of religion. It is a more difficult question, do they lend them any support? Well, at least they do show that 'the living being is more than a concatenation of physical forces,' they do support the affirmation of spiritual potency. They show mind active all along the scale of life, until in man spiritual ideals promise transformation of the world.

Further, every purposive action points beyond itself to a larger purpose of which it, itself, is but

a momentary expression. And we experience a certain congruity between our logical activities and the world in which or to which we apply them. Has that congruity arisen because man's nature has been moulded to cope with the physical world? That view is held, but is it tenable? What biological necessity led to Shakespeare? Did a mere struggle for survival produce his genius? So it is strongly suggested that 'the congruity of the laws of reason and the laws of the physical world can only be interpreted as meaning that the physical world has been shaped by and is an expression of spirit—a momentous conclusion, but one to which leading physicists are themselves inclining.'

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The late Archbishop SÖDERBLOM's work on *The Nature of Revelation*, which has recently appeared in an English translation, contains a section entitled 'The Portals of Revelation.'

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The first of the portals is the intellect or understanding. The sphere of the intellect as a source of knowledge of reality is limited, as witness the great thinkers and religious men of all times, Plato and Plotinus, St. Paul and St. Augustine, Luther and Pascal, and Hindu thinkers as well. They teach us that the subject of faith is not the intellect but the whole spiritual being of man, which Pascal calls the heart. But it does not follow that the intellect plays only an insignificant part in the sphere of revelation. Its task is as important as it is extensive. It has to control, to criticise, and to systematize.

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The channels through which revelation comes to meet faith are mainly two, the consciousness of infinity and the urge to the ideal. The consciousness of infinity, with its emphasis on feeling, is regarded by many modern thinkers, such as Tiele and Von Hügel, as the very basis of religion in man. It is a perception which cannot be explained by what the eyes see and the ears hear, and it has brought forth types of religion which have gained significance in world-history. In the West Plotinus is the great systematizer and mystic of the con-

sciousness of infinity. He is the perfecter of Orphism and was himself more or less normative of the mystical currents in Christianity and in the Islam of Persia.

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The urge to the ideal, or conscience, is concerned with a different kind of contrast between man and God than that which is involved in the consciousness of infinity. The decisive thing here is not the distance of the finite from the Infinite, but rather the difference between what is and what ought to be. At four junctures in the history of religion the urge to ideals has brought forth or liberated significant formations, predominating over the consciousness of infinity—Laotse in China, Zoroaster in Iran, Socrates in Greece, and Moses in Israel.

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'In these two, the consciousness of infinity and the urge to the ideal, the wellsprings of religion flow forth upon the earth out of the innermost depths of the Divine being. God reveals Himself to us. Faith receives this revelation. In both these there is a movement from the merely subjective to the objective, from the religious structure of the mind to the faith which is called forth by revelation.'

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Observe a peculiar difference between the religion which perceives the Divine under the aspect of infinity and that in which the reality of conscience predominates. The religion of infinity is indifferent toward personality and history. It flees from the concrete to the mystery of the eternal world. But that religion which is born of and nurtured by the longing for the ideal must concentrate in the personal life. For only in the personal life can the imperative ideal recognize God and His revelation.

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To-day more than half of Europe is under dictatorships—Germany, Italy, Russia. The ominous Blackshirt has appeared even on our own democratic shores. And we are very willing to hear any one who will tell us the meaning of this phenomenon. Mr. Carl HEATH essays to do this in the first chapter of his book *Religion and Dictatorship* (Allenson; 2s. 6d. net). Not long ago

a prominent Italian statesman of the older régime discussed the European dictatorships from a purely political standpoint. But Mr. HEATH goes much deeper, and his sweep is wider. We want to know : *why* these dictatorships, and whether they are bad or good, and what is the cure if they are bad. And this involves religion.

Mr. HEATH startles us with a radical statement. The War has left us with nothing stable at all, he says. Many of us have been disturbed by the abnormalities of the time. We have been distressed that it has taken so long to get back to the normal—*our* normal. We have had to recognize many unpleasant facts—the weakness of the Church, the wide recrudescence of violence, the world-wide industrial and financial depression, vast unemployment, revolutions in Russia, Italy, Germany, acute nationalizing, racial antagonism. And we have failed to realize the significance of these facts, which is that the accepted structure of life has been overthrown. The foundations for a social edifice have been disappearing. *Our* normal will never be again reached. Our old home is in the hands of the housebreakers. And what of our present dwelling-place ?

In facing this question Mr. HEATH lays it down, to begin with, that the one solid fact of European life, past and present, is its ultimate worship of power. 'Ultimate' presumably means that, when you get down and back beyond all pretences, this is its essence. Its real God has always been the Power-God rather than the God of the Cross ; its ideal Man the Warrior rather than the Suffering Servant. Too often the Christian Church itself has been the advocate of this Power-God. And Europe has accepted this because it has been in harmony with her old historic and instinctive nature. 'Europe,' wrote Edward Quinet, 'by her admiration for and compliance with unrestrained force, has clearly shown that she remains more barbarian than had been supposed.' This is heathenism, and heathenism is not confined to a class. It is a theory of life that is extremely potent and popular to-day—the theory of the good life by force and by despotism. And to-day we

need to realize that this European continent (of which we are spiritually a part) is, from its Germanic north to its Latin south, and eastwards also, in the grip of a reversion to its native and unashamed heathenism.

'The Christians,' writes Mr. R. H. Tawney in his book 'The Acquisitive Society,' 'are a sect and a small sect in a pagan society.' We should be more honest did we frankly recognize the truth of this dictum, and it would help us greatly in reaching a true view of life if we could but clarify our thought as between Christianity and heathenism. The Christian religion is set over against a powerful and heathen world, over against the immense, scientific, materialistic, efficient, civilized, and ruthless ideology of present-day heathenism, an ideology quite different from the Christian. This is the important fact we need to comprehend in this Age. For the choice we make will follow upon this.

Why do intelligent men swing back to this idea of unrestrained force, and hope thereby to attain to the good life, at least for their nation ? Mr. HEATH puts the case for dictatorship. It is this claim that is made for the strong men of vision and of purpose, the great men of genius who shape society after the pattern of their own larger insight. Where they come the unending talk of ineffective parliaments ceases, and there disappear also the selfish confusions of little men who are incapable of producing a rational society, along with the foolishness that results from the counting of heads. If we look at the type of community that democracies actually produce, is there not much that calls for the strong hand of the man of vision and ruthless determination ? While parliaments talk and financiers scheme, the people suffer from exploitation, unemployment, poverty, ill-breeding, disease, crime, and war. Should we not, then, welcome the Nietzschean supermen who, with calm courage, sweep over the world and cleanse its Augean stables ? Great revolutions, re-shaping human existence, cannot be effected with the courtesies and the consideration of a garden party. You cannot erect war memorials and defend war,

and then condemn revolutions, Fascist or Communist, because they demand a like suffering of the innocent for a like social good.

What is the answer to this case? It depends on our view as to the nature of man, and of the spiritual life. The Christian religion rests upon a certain doctrine of life and experience, a particular conception as to man's basic nature. This conception is of necessity at direct grips with the whole theory of life that lies behind dictatorship. In the fundamental economy of things God and the soul stand sure and first.

Religion represents a different synthesis. Instead of seeking the totalitarian state, or the corporative state, or the Communist state—none of which, in spite of their names, can ever stand for more than the working out of the convictions of one group of men (as against those of other groups)—it seeks first the free personality, and out of free personalities would build the free community. It does not look for, or desire, a perfect social mechanism; it looks for and desires free *men*. It sees this human existence with its struggles and tragedies as unmeaning unless it be part of a larger life in which

increasingly the free spirit can come to rule and can open out to men higher and higher purposes. Dictatorship inspires youth at times because it calls for a practice of the heroic in a society that has become tame. But it cannot allow of freedom and change and the spirit of adventure. These belong to the heroism of a society that is spiritually free.

What, then, asks Mr. HEATH, should a spiritual conception of religion amount to in a mechanized society of dictatorial states? The first claim of a spiritual society is revolutionary as against such states, for it must affirm and re-affirm a freedom of *persons*. The spiritual life cannot be mechanized, rationed, or controlled by authoritarian states. But the spiritual society is not merely an affirmation of freedom. It is an explosive force where this freedom is denied, for it has an uncanny way of breeding saints and martyrs, who cannot be denied because they are driven by a stronger force than themselves. If we could touch even the borders of the eternal life we should be freed of our fear and our sense of insufficiency. We should stand again on our own spiritual feet and be strong. This is not mere independence. It is the sense of a tremendous relationship between the free soul and God.

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## The Message of the Epistles.

### Second Peter and Jude.

BY PROFESSOR VINCENT TAYLOR, PH.D., D.D., WESLEY COLLEGE, HEADINGLEY, LEEDS.

AMONG the New Testament Epistles, Second Peter and Jude are perhaps the two which are least known and read by modern Christians; and yet these letters have a real message for to-day. Both come from a period when Christianity had lost its first glow, when the bonds of morality were in danger of being relaxed, when a strong but not enlightened orthodoxy was confronted by heretical teaching, and when doubts of God's intervention in the course of history were troubling the minds of men. How the writers of these Epistles met these tendencies is surely a matter of interest and importance, and such a study ought to yield practical

and helpful results for our own time. From these ancient problems we can turn to those which confront us; we can mark things to be avoided, and learn how best we can lay the ghosts of doubt, moral laxity, and fears caused by a suspicion of the inactivity and silence of God.

I. In a series of articles like the present, questions of 'Introduction' must obviously take a second place. It is not possible, however, to neglect them entirely because it is a first principle of exegesis that, if we are rightly to appraise the significance of the New Testament writings for our time, we