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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

CRITICS of Barthianism have long felt that this challenging movement in modern theology is in danger of 'gradually falling a prey to a kind of spiritual conservatism which may lead to obscurantism.' Emil Brunner is keenly alive to this peril, and in Miss Olive WYON'S excellent translation of his great work, *The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith* (Lutterworth Press; 20s. net), those who do not read German are given the opportunity of seeing how far he is able to avert such a catastrophe. This, of course, is not Dr. Brunner's motive for writing the book. On the contrary, he is as convinced as ever that the Word of God which comes to us as a challenge in Jesus Christ, the Mediator, can be met only by a faith which 'breaks through the intellectual process, and asserts that eternal truth is bound up with an event which took place in time.' None the less he shows a welcome tendency to grapple with some of the intellectual difficulties inherent in the Theology of Crisis, and especially with the problems connected with the historical element in Christianity.

Brunner maintains that in the ordinary sense of the word the Christian faith is not concerned with history at all, since it does not gain its unique character from its historical connexion, but he is quite alive to the fact that Christianity 'is absolutely concerned with an external historical fact.' 'All depends,' he says, 'upon the fact that the Word did become flesh, and this means that the Eternal has entered into the sphere of external historical fact.' How, then, comes it to pass that a theological movement which in its main emphasis is a very pillar of orthodoxy can include among its adherents Rudolf Bultmann, one of the most radical of modern New Testament critics?

Brunner meets the difficulty by contending that 'dependence on history as a science leads to a state of hopeless uncertainty,' and by pressing the distinction between the Christ who came 'in the flesh' and 'Christ after the flesh.' 'The "Christ in the flesh" offers a common point of interest both to the chronicler and to the believer. The believer believes in the Christ of whom the chronicler also must have something to report. But the Christ who is set forth by the chronicler, by the author of a report, or by the historian who is most profoundly prepared by all his previous training to understand the great and truly human in history, or by the man who in all reverence watches and listens for the voice of God within history, is the "Christ after the flesh." The believer alone sees more than the "Christ *after* the flesh" in the "Christ in the flesh."'

The idea behind this adaptation of the language of 2 Co 5^{16} is not, of course, new in Brunner's teaching; nor is it new in contemporary discussion; it is implicit, for example, in Professor James Mackinnon's distinction between the Historic Jesus and the Jesus of History. None the less the distinction is so fully treated in Brunner's

Mediator that it may be well to give another quotation. 'He alone can know the Christ who came "in the flesh" who does not know Him "after the flesh." For the historical student, for the historian and biographer, He remains the Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth, or the religious genius. This is the "Christ after the flesh," and to know Christ in this way is to know Him "after the flesh," even when such knowledge consists in the most profound and penetrating understanding of the personality of Jesus. But to know the "Christ come in the flesh" is to "know Him according to the Spirit"; this is the knowledge of faith, the knowledge of the Eternal Son of God as the "Word made flesh."'

The freedom left by this distinction for historical criticism is manifest, and it can no longer be a matter of surprise that a Bultmann among the Barthians is possible. There is, of course, no need for theologians of this school to be radical New Testament critics. Brunner's treatment of critical problems, for example, is conservative, although even he thinks that the Virgin Birth has obscured the meaning of the central thought of the Christian message, and is sure that the Empty Tomb 'plays no part whatsoever in the New Testament as the foundation for faith in the Resurrection.' None the less, Barthianism, as Brunner presents it, is a remarkable example of orthodoxy without shackles. He can go so far as to say that, when 'positive' theologians (as distinguished from liberal theologians) base their arguments on the 'Jesus of History,' 'it is a sign of their uncertainty.' His basal principles are that 'Faith never arises out of the observation of facts, but out of the Word of God,' and that 'Faith alone is able to know rightly the historical reality of Jesus Christ.' The position, it will be seen, is a logical development of Lutheranism at its best.

The attractiveness of Brunner's exposition is undoubted. Who would not be a citizen of two worlds, with the rights of the intellect in the one and the privileges of faith in the other? But is it possible, after all, to keep the two worlds so separate? Can Reason and Faith so easily, like the leopard and the kid, lie down together? Brunner's answer is that it is not impossible, so long as Faith postulates nothing which can be proved by historical science to be non-existent.

Brunner does not believe that a sane criticism stands in contradiction to the demands of Faith; on the contrary, Faith faces a field open for its exercise. He argues that the ecclesiastical dogma of Christ is scriptural through and through, and that there is no unbridged gulf between the Pauline-Johannine faith in Christ and that of the Primitive Church. The destructive effects of historical criticism, he believes, have been greatly overestimated. 'On the whole,' he says, 'the picture of Jesus which is sketched by the most extreme critics who verge on actual scepticism (like Bultmann, for instance) does not differ very greatly from the picture given by the Synoptic Gospels.' The average scientific picture of Jesus at the present time is neither the 'Liberal' portrait of Jesus nor the Christ of Orthodoxy. 'It is more concrete and more living than either of these, and yet at the same time more remote and more difficult to grasp.' The stiffness and unreality of a Byzantine picture has disappeared.

All this, and in particular Brunner's most interesting chapter on 'The Historical Figure of the God-Man,' is an excellent piece of apologetic, but it is characteristic of Brunner that immediately he suspects this, he is at once up in arms with the war-cry: 'Faith cannot be proved valid by human argument.' First and last, Faith is a venture, the decision and obedience of the soul that is confronted by the Word of God in Jesus Christ.

Brunner's vindication of the rights, and the duty, of historical research is worthy of all praise, but it is not here, we think, that the main need of many of his readers will be found to lie. What is wanted more than anything else is a richer and more satisfying conception of Faith. There is perhaps no word he uses more, or defines more often; it none the less remains true that there is no conception which cries out for study so much on the part of Barthians.

Faith, as Brunner sees it, belongs to the sphere of Biblical revelation; it 'depends on the Word of God alone, which can be trusted because it is the Word of God': indeed, 'Faith is pure dependence on revelation.' We have no desire to contest the positive truth of this: but how much more remains to be said! Faith is surely far more dynamic, far more personal, and far more human than Brunner will admit. He approaches such a view when he says that Faith 'is a wholly personal attitude towards the divine Personality,' but he is too much afraid of the ghost of Schleiermacher to follow this thought far. If only Brunner could forget Schleiermacher and Ritschl and the Enlightenment for a while; if only the word 'mysticism' did not bring him to his feet in wrath; if only he were less suspicious of a term like 'Christian experience'! Then might we gain from him the book we still look for and, we believe, the message this age needs.

Paley's famous argument from design, once so convincing, was for a long time under a cloud. In nineteenth-century scientific circles materialistic views were in the ascendant, and Paley's watch became a standing joke. Any suggestion that the evolutionary flux had guidance and purpose in it was not counted worthy of serious argument, but was simply laughed out of court.

With the new century and all its wonderful and dire events there has come a remarkable turn of the tide. The science of to-day speaks with a new voice and in tones which are far more sympathetic to a spiritual interpretation of Nature.

Evidence of this will be found in *The Great Design*, edited by Frances Mason (Duckworth; 8s. 6d. net). In this book fourteen scientists deal with the problem of whether there are order and intelligence in Nature, and they bring weighty reasons in support of an affirmative answer.

It cannot be said that the book is of equal value throughout. Each writer has been left with a free hand, and there is in consequence a good deal of overlapping. There is also a lack of logical sequence and naturally a considerable diversity of view. Perhaps the best known contributors are Sir Oliver LODGE, Professor C. Lloyd MORGAN, and Professor Hans DRIESCH, though some would doubtless give pre-eminence to the late Sir J. Arthur THOMSON, who writes a beautiful article on 'The Wonder of Life.'

'A scientific explorer from another planet, examining the earth at some future stage in its history, could not account for the remains or ruins of the roads, the bridges, the houses, the churches, as the result of physics and chemistry alone. He would have to postulate the activity of a race that had designed and planned these things, and constructed them for some specific purpose.' That quotation from the pen of Sir Oliver LODGE might have been written by Paley himself. It is on all-fours with his celebrated illustration of the watch found in a desert place for which a designer must be postulated. This argument, however it may have been overpressed by its defenders, and however subtly it may have been confuted by its opponents, has never ceased to make its impression on the minds of plain men, and it is interesting to see it sponsored anew by so distinguished a scientist.

Professor DRIESCH, whose experimental work in embryology has been recognized as of the first importance, writes a chapter on 'The Breakdown of Materialism.' He describes briefly how the segmented egg can be separated so as to produce two or four normal organisms instead of one, how two eggs can be made to coalesce, and how at a later stage of development parts may be transposed without injury or disorganization. The point of these experiments is that the development of a living being is not rigidly predetermined so as to proceed in a machine-like manner. 'The machine theory of development or morphogenesis has been *completely refuted*. A "machine," *i.e.* a specific material structure working by the interaction of its material parts, *cannot* be the basis of development and regeneration, in short, of morphogenesis. For a machine does *not* remain what it has been, if you

take away as many parts *as you like*, in any place *you like*—(note the double "you like")—or if you disturb the arrangement of the parts. But here we have a something which *does* remain what it is, as regards its capacities, after the drastic disturbances of the type above described. In this way the mechanistic theory has been refuted in the field of embryology.'

There would seem to be a growing consensus of opinion that the world cannot be explained otherwise than as the product of intelligence. 'Is there mind behind the universe? Certainly no one in his senses would feel any justification, from the facts of science, in answering "no," for no one who understands even the rudiments of logic would think of asserting a universal negative. But there is an impressive body of scientific evidence which makes the inference of mind behind or within Nature a perfectly rational working *hypothesis*.'

To Sir Oliver LODGE it is more than a hypothesis; it is the faith by which he lives. In a noble passage he says: 'In dealing with the universe as a whole we have no prehistoric qualms to contend with, no hesitation about attributing Intelligence to the operations of a distant Mind or Logos. "In the beginning was the Word." The mind responsible is still active to-day, and we have no reason to suppose that it has changed in the least. The material universe has evolved, and has rendered possible a fresh influx of spiritual reality as it attained greater complexity, but the Creator may be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His design and purpose in bringing the Universe into existence may not be apparent to us; or we may form some hazy conception of it. That is a relative and subjective matter, not of much consequence except to ourselves. But surely we may have faith that there is a Design and Purpose running through it all, and that the ultimate outcome of the present cosmos, and all its manifold puzzles, will be something grander, more magnificent, and more satisfying than anything we unaided can hope to conceive.'

Granted that there is design and purpose manifest in Nature, the further question remains to be answered, namely: What is that design and purpose? This is a question that carries us beyond the realm of natural science into that of metaphysics. Professor Metcalf, however, in his contribution offers some suggestions. He sees in Nature a striving after an ever-increasing abundance of life, beauty, and love. The whole is not to be understood unless full account is taken of man with all his spiritual capacities and powers, with his sense of duty, with his appreciation of the beautiful. He is part of Nature, and of Nature at its highest, and in him Nature reveals most intimately her purpose. In the very nature of the case we must find the Why in personality and in the values which only persons can appreciate. 'Survey the whole sweep of evolution; the wonder of regulation amid the immensities of the universe, beyond the reach of the most powerful telescope; the equal wonder of regulation amid the minutiæ of atomic structure and behaviour, far beyond the penetration of the microscope; the emergence of life on the Earth, on that speck of the universe of which we know most; the gradual development of intelligence, of reason, of appreciation of beauty and of power to create beauty, even the transcendent beauty of personal character. A star is no greater than a violet; gravitation as a force cannot transcend love, for love seems incomparably more effective, more forceful than any physical force, lying as it does at the very root of the universe. But it is all one, beginning in the dust and reaching up into persons who can appreciate and create beauty, and feel love—a constantly changing whole, alive, personal. And it doth not yet appear what there shall be.'

Canon STREETER recently delivered the nineteenth annual Hale Memorial 'Sermon,' and chose as his subject *The Church and Modern Psychology* (S.P.C.K.; 1s. net). In his hands the treatment of the subject is not only competent; it is also, as one might expect, lively and suggestive. He begins by comparing and contrasting the attitude taken by the Church toward Psychology, up-to-date, with its attitude in the past to other sciences when they were as young as the New Psychology is to-day.

The Roman Church made a big mistake in the case of Galileo. And the Protestant Church repeated it in the case of Darwin, though fortunately, even before the Darwinian theory had completely established itself in scientific circles, a minority of thinkers within the Church had begun to analyse the situation, and reached a saner conclusion. The recent scientific movement known as the New Psychology marks an epoch in human thought in this field as obviously as do the names of Galileo and Darwin in the fields of astronomy and biology. It is therefore a fact of great importance that the Church as a whole has not in our days repeated in regard to the New Psychology the error which it made of old in regard to Galileo and Darwin. It is clear that we have to come to terms with this new science, but it is equally clear that psychology is not necessarily an enemy of religion.

Admittedly, if all the conclusions drawn by certain psychologists are true, the existence of God is a pathological illusion, and Christian ethics are an irrational taboo. This may fairly be said of the Behaviourist school, which is an almost purely American product. And to it Canon STREETER turns first of all. The Behaviourists have carried through an uncompromising attempt to explain all the activities of the human mind in terms of mechanism. But, in the course of expounding the mechanical aspect of these activities, they have really demonstrated that to try to explain the workings of the human mind by mechanical conceptions *alone* can only result in absurdities.

According to the Behaviourist, thought is nothing more than a mechanically determined reflex action, of which the subject *happens* to be aware. To this Dr. STREETER replies in a trenchant and conclusive argument. First, he says, if our awareness of objects is largely compounded of illusion, all conclusions based on it are untrustworthy, however scientific they may seem. If the mind does not know when it knows, then all knowledge, including that which the Behaviourist calls psychology, is illusion also. Secondly, to say that thought is merely a mechanically determined reflex action is but an elaborate way of saying that thinking is not really thought. The essence of thinking lies in its ability to distinguish between what is true and what is false.

Reflex action, on the other hand, is only the way in which an organism responds, and *cannot help* responding, to a particular stimulus. If I am asked a question, what matters is not that I reply, but that I give a *correct* reply. Now automatic reflex action may be relied on to reply; but only by an accident can it be the right reply. If the Behaviourist premise were true, we could never know it to be true; all we could say would be that the mind of the Behaviourist has been so conditioned by previous experience that, when presented with this theory, it registers 'true,' while the opposite conclusion is registered by the minds of other people whose reactions have been differently conditioned. But to say that is to deny the possibility of science itself, and the validity of its method and results.

But there are other schools of psychology which are more important in themselves, and important particularly in their bearing on religion. And Dr. STREETER singles out two points among others that raise practical issues. One emerges in connexion with the emphasis laid on instinct. In the animal world instinct and environment are so well adjusted that instinctive action is normally that which is best adapted to the welfare of the individual, and still more to that of the species. This is far, however, from being the case with man. His environment has become highly complicated with his advance in civilization, and every advance has complicated it still more. Yet the instincts which man inherits from his animal ancestry have been very little changed. Thus, for civilized man, there exists an enormous unspanned gulf between the kind of action which is best for himself and his species, and the kind of action which is the expression of the natural instinctive response to the stimuli of his environment.

There is a conspicuous *maladjustment* between the instinctual organization of man and the demands of the artificial environment into which in civilized countries he is born. This maladjustment

constitutes the greatest problem with which the educationists, and the individual himself, have to deal. A large part of what theologians call 'Original Sin' is really the result of this. Europe inherited from St. Augustine a diagnosis of this maladjustment which attributed to human nature an original depravity. And Calvin gave to the Augustinian doctrine both a more clear-cut form and an extended lease of popularity. Against this diagnosis of man's disease the theory of the 'noble savage,' with its implication of an original perfection of human nature, was an extreme reaction.

Educational theories and practice in Europe and America have been largely influenced by one or the other of these two false diagnoses of the human problem. Traditional education was largely based on the former. The newer education leans heavily to the latter. There are some modern theories of education which would only be justified if we were entitled to accept the theory of the 'noble savage.' But no educational theory can be psychologically sound which minimizes the extent of the maladjustment which the normal child and adolescent must overcome before he can become a tolerable member of civilized society. Moral personality must be acquired; and it cannot be acquired without cost.

One other point in Dr. STREETER's striking essay must be briefly referred to. He has been impressed by the close resemblance of Freud's view of morality to that of St. Paul before his conversion. Freud regards morality as a set of rules imposed by society upon a recalcitrant individual, beginning in early life. These rules have a certain quality of awe attached to them, since they have been imposed by the authority of some one, like the father, who to the child is a majestic personage. Nevertheless, the awe with which they are regarded is balanced by a resentment which necessarily brings with it internal conflict.

This conception is substantially identical with the view of morality under the law which St. Paul entertained before he became a Christian. The Law was regarded by him as something majestic in its claim to obedience. The commandment is 'holy and righteous and good.' Yet, by the mere fact that it made that claim, it stimulated in him an instinct of resentment and rebellion. 'I had not known sin except through the law; for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.'

Accordingly the change from being an orthodox Jew to being a Christian was conceived by St. Paul primarily as a *liberation*. The Christian was no longer 'under the law.' To him right conduct had become a form of *self-expression*. But it was right not because it was *self*-expression, but because the self-expressed had been transformed. Through Christ, Paul had entered into a new relation to God. He was not a servant but a joyful son. Christ was born within him. There are circles to-day in which what is called 'self-expression' seems the first and great commandment. But self-expression will be a good thing or a bad thing according to the inner quality of the self which is expressed. To St. Paul Christianity is self-expression; but it results inevitably in moral acts because it is the expression of a self recreated by the spirit of Christ.

Things most certainly Believed.

BY THE REVEREND A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D., D.TH., LONDON.

I. IN writing the first of the series of articles which the editors, wisely in my judgment, are providing on this subject in the pages of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, I may be allowed to offer a few introductory comments. (1) There can be no doubt about the importance of the subject. If there be any belief in God at all, that belief must be the supreme belief, to which all other beliefs must be sub-