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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

IN a recently published volume, *The Glory of the Father* (Mowbray ; 8s. 6d. net), the Rev. H. Leonard PASS, M.A., B.D., Canon of Chichester Cathedral, offers a study, theological and devotional, in St. John 13-17. The study does not require for its appreciation the mind of the trained theologian or Biblical expert. It is based upon a conservative view of the authenticity of these chapters. It contains a new translation of them, couched in dialogue form, and having regard to the Aramaic which must lie in some sense behind the Greek.

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A good example of the tone and quality of the book is provided by the exposition of 14<sup>5-6</sup> ('The Way, the Truth, and the Life'). 'THOMAS: Master, we do not know whither you are going; how then can we know the way? JESUS: It is I that am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' Truly the answer of Jesus to the question with which Thomas broke into His discourse is one of the most profound and most enlightening of the sayings attributed to Him and at the same time one of the most difficult to comprehend.

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Observe, in the first instance, that Jesus' use of the personal pronoun is emphatic: 'It is I that am the way.' Jesus is not merely a guide or example, He is something far more. He has not come into the world merely to indicate the path of righteousness, or to present the ideal of a human life; He is Himself the Way, the link between the

human and the divine. And because this is so, He is the only Way: no man cometh unto the Father but by Him. Union with the Father can only be effected by union with Himself.

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As Dr. H. B. Swete has expressed it, 'Across the infinite gulf which parts the human from the Divine, the creature from the Creator, the sinner from the Holy One, Jesus has thrown a permanent Way in His own Incarnate Life and Death. By that Way He Himself passed into the Presence of God; by the same Way will pass all who come to God through Him. He goes to the Father in right of His Sonship, His sinless obedience, His fulfilment of all righteousness; His disciples go in virtue of their union with Him; He is their Way, as He was His own.'

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But Jesus claims to be even more than the Way; He is also the Truth and the Life. This is verifiable in Christian experience. Those who have accepted Him as the living Way have discovered Him to be the Truth, and those who have experienced Him both as the Way and the Truth have realized in themselves His promise, that He would be Himself their Life. It is no abstract and impersonal Absolute that the Christian reaches in his quest of truth, but the living and energizing mind of God, who in the fulness of the time became Incarnate.

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To quote Dr. H. B. Swete again, 'He is the Way which leads through the Truth to the Life. Or

reversing the order, as we may, He is the Life which is the Truth, and being the Life and the Truth, He is also the Way. The three cannot be separated in our experience. As we live the Life, we know the Truth, and advance on the Way; as we follow the Way, we learn the Truth and are filled with the Life.' \_\_\_\_\_

Perhaps we could not do better than end this Note by quoting the beautiful Collect attributed to Erasmus: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, Who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we pray Thee suffer us not to stray from Thee, Who art the Way, nor to distrust Thee, Who art the Truth, nor to rest in any other thing than Thee, Who art the Life. Teach us by Thy Holy Spirit what to believe, what to do, and wherein to take our rest. For Thine own name's sake we ask it. Amen.'

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The physical science of to-day, as is generally known, has shown itself more friendly to a spiritual view of the world than was the case formerly. So we are not surprised when the physicist ventures into the fields of philosophy and theology. Indeed, we have almost come to expect it.

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The publication, therefore, of a new book by Sir Arthur EDDINGTON is of interest to theological as well as to scientific readers. The title of this book is *New Pathways in Science* (Cambridge University Press; 10s. 6d. net), and in it we find the latest results of his studies in modern science together with some discussion of the philosophical conclusions to which he believes these studies lead.

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The bulk of the book, it is only fair to warn the intending reader, is severely scientific and makes on the whole pretty stiff reading, though it is written with all Sir Arthur's great lucidity and charm. It deals with the problems which arise in sub-atomic physics, particularly the Principle of Indeterminacy and the quantum theory. Passing to astronomy it treats of cosmic clouds and nebulae and the expanding universe. Then we have two

really difficult chapters on the constants of Nature and the theory of groups.

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From the philosophical and theological point of view the most interesting chapter is that in which EDDINGTON replies to his critics and defends his view of what is implied in the overthrow of physical determinism. Of this some brief account may be given.

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All modern physicists are agreed that the law of causality cannot be empirically verified. In the sphere of large scale phenomena, the macroscopic world, linkages of cause and effect can be easily traced, and neither EDDINGTON nor any other sensible man casts any doubt upon the reality of these linkages. But in the microscopic world, where we deal with atoms and electrons, physicists find it impossible to trace causal connexions with any certainty. In particular the location and speed of the electron are wrapped up in a fog which physics finds it impossible to penetrate. There is a residuum of uncertainty which cannot be got rid of by any contrivance. All that can be done is to take account of this uncertainty and to work out the average result on a statistical basis. Where myriads of atoms are concerned, as is the case in all macroscopic phenomena, the average result is for all practical purposes correct, and may be made the basis of a so-called law of Nature.

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What conclusion is to be drawn from this? Here a decided cleavage of opinion emerges. Some scientists continue to affirm with unabated confidence the principle of determinism, declaring that whether we can trace causal connexions or not they are there, and hold everything in their grip down to the tiniest atom. Sir Arthur EDDINGTON and those who think with him, and Einstein admits that they are the majority of physicists, reply that that is an assumption which should not be made, as it cannot be verified. The determinist says, 'How dare you deny the principle of causality? You are not omniscient. You are basing your argument on your own ignorance.' EDDINGTON replies, 'How dare you affirm the principle? It is you who are presumptuous in making affirmations

which go clean beyond the evidence. You speak as if the whole secret of nature lay open before you.'

Each side, in a word, accuses the other of unwarranted dogmatism. EDDINGTON is anxious to make clear that his position is rather of suspense of judgment and of a refusal to speak in terms of dogmatic determinism. It may be given in his own words. 'Firstly, it is not suggested that determinism has been disproved. What we assert is that physical science is no longer based on determinism. Is it difficult to grasp this distinction? If I were asked whether astronomy has disproved the doctrine that "the moon is made of green cheese," I might have some difficulty in finding really conclusive evidence; but I could say unhesitatingly that the doctrine is not the basis of present-day selenography. Secondly, the denial of determinism, or, as it is often called, "the law of causality," does not mean that it is denied that effects may proceed from causes. The common regular association of cause and effect is a matter of experience; the law of causality is an extreme generalisation suggested by this experience. Such generalisations are always risky. To suppose that in doubting the generalisation we are denying the experience is like supposing that a person who doubts Newton's (or Einstein's) law of gravitation denies that apples fall to the ground. Thirdly, the admission of indeterminism in the physical universe does not immediately clear up all the difficulties—not even all the physical difficulties—connected with Free Will. But it so far modifies the problem that the door is not barred and bolted for a solution less repugnant to our deepest intuitions than that which has hitherto seemed to be forced upon us.'

The negative character of this conclusion should be carefully noted. There is no question of science 'proving' religion or human free will. 'The bearing of physical science on religion is that the scientist has from time to time assumed the duty of signalman and set up warnings of danger—not always unwisely. If I interpret the present situation rightly, a main-line signal which had been standing at danger has now been lowered. But

nothing much is going to happen unless there is an engine.'

'Nothing much is going to happen unless there is an engine.' These words might well have been printed in italics or block capitals. They are a challenge to the individual Christian and to the Church. They are a very necessary reminder that the power of religion must be sought elsewhere than in the realm of natural science. There is a tendency in religious quarters to hail some pronouncement of science as if it were a new gospel. It should be clearly understood that science may hinder but can never generate religious belief. What present-day science is doing, according to EDDINGTON and those who think with him, is to say, 'We stand clear. If you have spiritual energy, forge ahead.' That is all that EDDINGTON, speaking as a scientist, is competent to say.

There is, of course, much more that he can say as a man. At the beginning of his book he whimsically describes the scientific observer as a purblind creature, stripped of all his organs of sense except for one eye, or part of an eye, which just enables him to decipher a pointer reading, sensations of all other kinds having no significance for him. But these have to be taken into account, and in his epilogue EDDINGTON takes some account of them. For him the ultimate significance of the world and man is that man can ask questions about his world with a feeling for truth and a consciousness of right. 'What is the ultimate truth about ourselves? Various answers suggest themselves. We are a bit of stellar matter gone wrong. We are physical machinery-puppets that strut and talk and laugh and die as the hand of time pulls the strings beneath. But there is one elementary inescapable answer. *We are that which asks the question.* Whatever else there may be in our nature, responsibility towards truth is one of its attributes.'

It is in looking into our own nature that we first discover the failure of the physical universe to be co-extensive with our experience of reality. 'The "something to which truth matters" must surely

have a place in reality whatever definition of reality we may adopt. In our own nature, or through the contact of our consciousness with a nature transcending ours, there are other things that claim the same kind of recognition—a sense of beauty, of morality, and finally at the root of all spiritual religion an experience which we describe as the presence of God. In suggesting that these things constitute a spiritual world I am not trying to substantialise them or objectify them—to make them out other than we find them to be in our experience of them. But I would say that when from the human heart perplexed with the mystery of existence the cry goes up, “What is it all about?” it is no true answer to look only at that part of experience which comes to us through certain sensory organs and reply: “It is about atoms and chaos; it is about a universe of fiery globes rolling on to impending doom; it is about tensors and non-commutative algebra.” Rather it is about a spirit in which truth has its shrine, with potentialities of self-fulfilment in its response to beauty and right. Shall I not also add that even as light and colour and sound come into our minds at the prompting of a world beyond, so these other stirrings of conscience come from something which, whether we describe it as beyond or deep within ourselves, is greater than our own personality.’

‘It is the essence of religion that it presents this side of experience as a matter of everyday life. To live in it, we have to grasp it in the form of familiar recognition and not as a series of abstract scientific statements. The man who commonly spoke of his ordinary surroundings in scientific language would be insufferable. If God means anything to our daily lives, I do not think we should feel any disloyalty to truth in speaking and thinking of Him unscientifically, any more than in speaking and thinking unscientifically of our human companions.’

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In *The Church and Society*, by Dr. F. Ernest JOHNSON (Abingdon Press; \$1.50), there is a frank and vigorous description of the criticisms that are

levelled at the Church on the score of its social policy—or the lack of it—from different quarters. It should be stated that the aim of Dr. JOHNSON’S book is to present the elements of a social philosophy for organized Christianity, in order to stimulate more critical thinking on the important issues that are raised by the facts of social life.

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There are three directions from which shafts are discharged at the Church. There is first the radical indictment. The Church is helpless as a social force because it is too deeply embedded in the economic fabric of a social system that is now disintegrating. It is bound up with the fortunes of the privileged classes who are to be shorn of their privileges in the near future. Protestantism is a first cousin to Capitalism, which is leading an increasingly precarious life. Institutionally, the Church has given hostages to an admittedly unchristian order. The revolutionary elements in Christianity have been smothered. The fierce words of the Magnificat,

He hath put down the mighty from their seats,  
And hath exalted them of low degree,

are sung in an innocuous setting.

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Moreover, the Church has a moral code which is constructed so as to preserve the economic *status quo*. It protects property with religious sanctions while it admonishes the half-crushed debtor class to pay its debts. Not only so but the whole trend of the times is away from individualist morality, which the Church has emphasized with its code of resignation and obedience to the powers that be. Men are conceiving of social progress in terms of justice, a demand for fundamental rights. Gandhi and Communism in different ways are expressing Christian ideals, while the Church is travelling another road. Revolutionary Christianity, less and less at home in the Church, is finding its friends among the unbaptized agencies of modern life. The ethic of Christianity and the prevailing ethic of Capitalist society are in irreconcilable opposition.

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Professor Coe, for example, the well-known authority on religious education, has become con-

vinced of the impotence of the Church because of the control exercised over it by property and privilege. 'Christianity will not,' he says, 'and cannot live a vigorous life while it clings to its present self-contradiction. If its aspiration for a just society upon earth is valid, its accommodation to Capitalism cannot be valid; it is infidelity and unfaith. One or the other of these two—Christianity's belief in a Christlike society and its acquiescence in the ethics of Capitalism—must yield.'

The aim of this indictment is that Christianity has ceased to be apostolic or primitive. It is a decadent form of a once potent faith. And one serious result of this has been its attitude to the rich. A Church which is constantly asking for money is in no strategic position to criticise the sources from which it comes. The givers may not lay down conditions. The minister may not 'soft-pedal' his message. But there is an implicit, unofficial 'gentlemen's' agreement in the whole situation. The possessing elements make their demands known, sometimes gently and sometimes not so gently. And the Church is not very well able to assert its independence.

In the second place there is the criticism of the conservatives. The patent lack of vitality in organized religion is due, they aver, to the loss of emphasis on personal religion. The failure of revival in the Church is due to worldliness and lack of emphasis on individual conversion. The so-called 'social gospel' has turned men's attention away from spiritual things. Humanitarianism has become humanism, with its religious barrenness. Christianity, says Dean Inge, 'is a religion of spiritual redemption, not of social reform. Christ cared very little for the paraphernalia of life. He lived on a higher plane, in the conscious presence of His Father in Heaven.'

It is safe to say that, generally speaking, conservatism in religion and in a social theory go together. The present social system, according to the conservative, is the result of Providential ordering. The doctrine of *laissez faire* has been underpinned by a traditional theology, which has

gone hand in hand with the idea of religion as a private concern, remote from the collective affairs of mankind. Emphasis is laid on individual regeneration. Religion is a subtle change of heart, and has nothing directly to do with economics or social problems.

There is, however, a third position which is totally different from the two already mentioned. It is occupied by men who are theologically conservative but often socially radical. They are apocalyptists who conceive the Kingdom of God in exclusively, or prevailing, supernatural terms. It comes only by God's will. This is the view of Barth and the 'theology of crisis.' Barth's theological position is well known. It is not so widely recognized that he is a stout social democrat. But his democracy, his social radicalism, is the direct result of his transcendental theology, and by no means due to any idea of a 'social gospel.'

Indeed the 'social gospel' of the usual type is anathema to the Barthian. It is sentimental, humanistic, and unchristian. It is simply a 'compensation' for the loss of a substantive religious faith. Yet the Barthian movement has been led largely by socialists. And this is quite intelligible. For the very nature of faith as conceived by this group of thinkers makes a revolutionary programme readily possible. Only it does not come from our social enthusiasms. It is a supernatural act. 'In the last analysis,' a Barthian would say, 'we must stand aside and watch God work.' There is a curious affinity between Marx and Barth. If we can imagine Marx's theory of history made religious, that would be Barthianism. Marx was an atheistical Calvinist. And Barthians are quite consistent in standing aside to watch the sovereign Will work out its purpose in accordance with the Christian ethic.

Summing up, Dr. JOHNSON admits that all three criticisms, the radical, the conservative, and the apocalyptic, embody a truth. The truth they all express is the defectiveness of the Church at the present time. And he offers three reasons for this. One is the fact that Protestantism is split up into

so many sects. This has made anything in the nature of a general consensus impossible, and has impeded intellectual and moral growth all along the line. Another reason is the influence of the laity. The Protestant principle of the 'priesthood of all believers' requires that all the members of a Christian fellowship must have a say in its declarations of faith and policy. And in this matter of

social reform the laity is far behind the clergy. And, finally, the slowness of the churches in pressing their social doctrine is a direct result of the impact upon them of an increasingly complex and unwieldy social order. The great values of historic Christianity were formalized under very simple conditions of life. It is very different to-day.

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## A Jubilee Sermon.

BY PRINCIPAL W. F. LOFTHOUSE, D.D., HANDSWORTH COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM.

'Give the king thy judgements, O God.'—Ps 72<sup>1</sup>.

FORTY-EIGHT years ago all the prestige and wealth of the Empire and all the pomp and circumstance of the proudest nations in the world were assembled in London to offer their thanks for the blessings which had marked the fifty years of the reign of Queen Victoria. Ten years later the Imperial pageantry was repeated; and before the captains and kings had departed they had witnessed the tokens, as it seemed, of abiding prosperity and strength. Now, the great and honoured in our country and in our commonwealth of nations gather to join our King and his family in a tribute of gratitude no less reverent and fervent. But they gather in a changed world. The assured and peaceful supremacy which then seemed God's best gift to the country has vanished as completely as that connexion of the royal houses of Europe among themselves which held the dynasties together almost as one great family. Before the shouts of the second jubilee had sunk into silence, the first murmurs of war in South Africa were breaking in on startled ears; and in another twenty years the roar of guns was heard in three continents and their terrible explosions shook the world. The old stability and order had gone. Sceptre and crown were falling. Ancient loyalties were flung aside like useless lumber. Of all the thrones which then seemed likely to stand so firm, only one has maintained its ancient state, the throne whose present occupant, surrounded by the confidence, the gratitude, and the affection of his people, renders homage to-day to the King of kings for the judgments which have been bestowed upon him.

On such a day, the language of humble gratitude

would suit ill with national boastfulness or pride. Yet we may reflect that our own history furnishes an example of steady growth unobserved elsewhere. Its music has not been that of drum and trumpet's din; but rather of

The continuity, the long slow slope  
And vast curves of the gradual violin.

Burke's words were not extravagant when he spoke of our liberty as carrying 'an imposing and majestic aspect. It has a pedigree and illustrating ancestors. It has its bearing and ensigns armorial. It has its gallery of portraits; its monumental inscriptions; its records, evidences, and titles.' Historians and philosophers may assign ample and varied causes for this slow and unbroken broadening down from precedent to precedent. We are an island people, dwelling in a fortress (to quote Shakespeare's majestic words) 'built by Nature for herself against infection and the hand of war.' Our race is mixed of Celt and Saxon, Norman and Dane. We have had that within us which has made of us a nation of shopkeepers. We have been forced to seek our fortunes overseas; and our ships have carried, not only our men-at-arms, but our merchant adventurers, our explorers and our emigrants. We have had our vision of the better world, and the noblest poetry of mankind is enshrined in the tongue that Shakespeare spoke, and Milton. In spite of all the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, there has lived in us a sense of justice and fairplay; a fellow-feeling for the weak, a hatred of tyranny and pride, and, with all this, in every age, a certain deep responsiveness to religion. No Bernard or