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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

ADDRESSING Convocation the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the years of King George's 'steadfast service.' This magazine had gone to press last month before we heard the sad words, 'He whom we loved as King has passed from our midst,' and so this month we would pay our tribute to that King whose reign covered the most difficult period that any monarch ever lived through and who during the whole of the years toiled for his people, often beyond his strength. It was at a time of constitutional crisis that he came to the throne. In four years' time there was the world's greatest war. Then came trouble in Ireland; in India. And then the economic crisis. And during all the twenty-five years England was blessed with a King who never spared himself, and more and more endeared himself to his people, by his unceasing labours on their behalf, by his kindliness, humility, and complete integrity of life.

It is good to remember the happiness that the Jubilee demonstrations brought King George—so spontaneous, so widespread they were. They recall to our minds the words of Donald Hankey in *The Beloved Captain*: 'We were his men, and he was our leader. There was a bond of mutual confidence between us, which grew stronger and stronger as the months passed. The fact was that he had won his way into our affections. We loved him.'

We think of Queen Mary and remember their happy home life—how he spoke of her as 'my dear wife.' We pay our tribute of affectionate recognition to the strength she was to him and to her faithful service also for her people.

The mantle has fallen on King George's son, and we have sound ground for believing that the fine

tradition of service will be carried on. Was not his motto as Prince of Wales 'Ich Dien'? And do we not remember the tedious tasks that he went through patiently, and the sympathy and understanding he has shown to those who are handicapped in life? We rejoice at the gifts he has so richly inherited, and pray God He will bless our King.

Behind all those years of steadfast loving service there lay King George's sense of duty to God. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who had known him as a friend for forty years, has said of his religion, 'It was at once most simple and most real. It was based, not upon emotion, but upon a reverent sense of his duty to God. It showed itself in certain fixed habits of his life, his daily prayers, his daily reading of the Bible, his attendance every Sunday, wherever he might be, at the public worship of God. The use of the Name of God in public utterance was for him no mere convention, but the expression of simple reverence and a deep sense of his own responsibility towards God.'

'When all is said,' wrote Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, 'probably the greatest service which the late King rendered to the people of this land was something quite imponderable, which will never find a place in history books. It was the influence of a transparently simple character. We cannot estimate the value of having a man at the head of the State whom no sane person could suspect of any personal ambition, who was plainly set upon doing his duty in the most difficult circumstances, who never despaired of the State in the darkest hours, and who quite obviously had no aim but to promote the well-being of his subjects; who loved England without sentimentality and served her without thought of applause.'

THE distinction between *revelation* and *discovery* is well known, but rarely, we think, has it been made so clearly, and with such an emphasis on its practical importance, as in Professor H. H. FARMER'S valuable book, *The World and God* (Nisbet ; 10s. 6d. net).

Both words refer to the apprehension of truths and facts of our world, but whereas in discovery there is activity only on the side of the inquirer, in revelation there is activity of a personal kind *on the part of God* ; in the one case we work in an impersonal medium, in the other in one which is personal. 'When we turn to the religious usage of the term revelation,' says Professor FARMER, 'we find that quite central in it is the living sense of God as entering into personal rapport with the soul, the living sense, that is to say, of God as active personal will approaching the individual in his own immediate situation in absolute demand and final succour.'

It is at once obvious that, if this is a true account of revelation, it is of vital importance whether we can find room for such a divine activity in our conceptions of God and the world. Is it true to-day that even when we use the word 'revelation' in respect of the knowledge of God, the thought of God's personal activity is not often present, 'or, if present, is so in such an attenuated form that the word discovery would be just as appropriate'? Does the existing religious situation furnish fresh evidence of the loss of the sense of God as personal, and of the obsession of men's minds with what is in reality a monistic system of thought?

Professor FARMER'S conviction is that the peril at which we have hinted is real, and he thinks it is to be traced to two popular non-religious uses of the term 'revelation' which have worked back into religious thought with unfortunate results.

First, there is the use of the word in connexion with any sudden acquirement of knowledge which appears to be disconnected with our own efforts of research and discovery. We ponder long over a problem, and when we are doing, or thinking of,

something else, the solution flashes into our mind. Secondly, we use the word from the standpoint of philosophy and speak of the ultimate reality of the universe as 'revealed' in phenomena. Or, as scientists, we say that the law of gravitation is 'revealed' in falling apples and stones, and like phenomena. No one would wish to ban such uses of the idea of revelation, even if it were possible ; but is it not easy, through such usages, to lose the fully religious connotation of the term?

As regards the first use of the word, says Professor FARMER, 'we have many consciously or unconsciously echoing Schleiermacher when he says, in effect, that the bearers of revelation in religion are simply the great men of religious history, who by a unique gift perceive something new and introduce it into man's religious outlook, so that all thereafter are enabled, in greater or less degree, to share in it.' Whatever truth there may be in this way of looking at things, it is undeniably unfortunate. It concentrates on moments when something original occurs in religion and obscures the fact that all living religious experience has the quality of revelation in it. It hides the distinctiveness of revelation in religion, and 'it is apt to give the ordinary believer a wrong estimate of his own religious life.'

'It is often said: "Oh, I have had no revelations"; yet, if week by week, in the worship of the Christian fellowship, ordinary folk apprehend anew, in relation to their own individual situation, the challenge and the forgiveness of God, that is every bit as much revelation as ever came to the most gifted prophet or seer in history.'

The second popular use of the word 'revelation,' with reference to an order known through the phenomena of Nature and history, is more clearly religious ; yet too easily the scientist or philosopher may leave out the thought of an activity on the other side. 'This, perhaps, is of no moment in itself, but it becomes of moment when the usage works back into theology and into men's whole approach to religion.'

Thus, Professor FARMER works back to his

foundation conception of revelation as 'a category of personal relationship.' 'Our position is . . . that wheresoever and whensoever God declares Himself to the individual soul in such wise that He is apprehended as holy will actively present within the immediate situation, asking obedience at all costs and guaranteeing in and through such asking the soul's ultimate succour, there is revelation.' But if every situation may be the medium of revelation, any situation is not necessarily of this character; for the notion that we should be able to find the active presence of God in all events and situations is merely pietistic. In making this point Professor FARMER displays shrewd judgment. 'Much of man's life,' he says, 'of necessity runs in a routine of daily tasks which are the better done for receiving undivided attention undisturbed by the explicit awareness of God.' In many decisions what is required is 'only some experience and common sense.'

What, then, is the kind of situation in life which may rightly be expected to be a medium of revelation? To this question Professor FARMER's answer, put briefly, is that it is a situation which calls for decision and obedience. Only then can it mediate vivid awareness of personal rapport with God. 'Revelations in this sense are always points of tension in the soul's history, and therefore points of crisis, where the soul must take either a step forward or a step backward in understanding God and in stature as a child of God.' This fresh treatment of a well-worn theme is only one example chosen from many in a living discussion of the problems of Prayer, Providence, and Miracle in Christian Experience.

Dr. W. R. MATTHEWS, the Dean of St. Paul's, has published the substance of his Alexander Robertson Lectures recently delivered at the University of Glasgow, under the title *The Purpose of God* (Nisbet; 7s. 6d. net). It is a subject which lies at the heart of the modern theistic apologia, and it is significant that the Dean's two predecessors in the Alexander Robertson Lectureship dealt with the

self-same subject, although with different methods of approach.

There is much historical matter in the earlier part of this volume, in which the Design Argument is examined in its general theistic setting and its classical formulations, and the objections to it by Kant, Hume, and others are considered. In the later part of the volume the idea of a teleological universe is defended in the light of modern thought. Any adequate defence must take into account the problems raised by the fact of evil in the universe, and Dr. MATTHEWS pays some attention to such problems, hoping to give a fuller treatment in a subsequent work.

Let us see how he deals with the problem of human history as it presents itself in a teleological view of the world. If the system of Nature and the evolution of life culminate in the emergence of personal beings, then one might anticipate that the purposive character of the world would be plainly shown in the sphere of history. But is it so?

On the one hand, it has been held that history has no significance and that to search for its meaning is futile. This is the view expressed by Anatole France in his apologue of the young king who, out of his desire to be guided by the lessons of history, appointed a Commission of learned men to discover what they were. On his death-bed the last survivor of the erudite band whispered in the young king's ear the dismal conclusion: 'Men are born, they suffer, they die—that is all.'

On the other hand, it has been held that all events in history are significant and that the search for their meaning is to be encouraged. Providence governs the whole of human life, and everything was fore-known and fore-ordained in the infinite wisdom of God. Leibniz conceived the Creator as having reviewed before Creation all the possible universes and brought into being that one which contained the maximum of good and the minimum of evil.

Both of these views as to whether any teleological

direction can be seen in history are extremes. The purposive nature of the world-process in the inorganic and organic realms makes against the first view, and against the second view may be set the frustration of higher tendencies through natural happenings. Chance or accident seems at least to play a part in human affairs when a man of genius dies before the completion of his work, or when an epidemic or a change of climate destroys a whole culture.

Despite, however, the presence of chance or accident in the universe, we may still contend that history shows a teleological character. Notice, first, that the historical process has included a long struggle with and eventual dominance over the material environment—a struggle which opens its final phase in the development of modern science. And no bound can be set in theory to the power over the environment which science may secure.

Secondly, there has proceeded, concurrently with the attempt to dominate the environment, the attempt to conquer the lower self. The development of the moral consciousness is the process by which the animal self is superseded and controlled by a higher self directed towards ideals. The moral consciousness, when conjoined—as historically it has been—with the religious consciousness, gives rise to the sense of guilt and sin, in which the teleological nature of the universe finds its most universal expression. For it presupposes a cosmic purpose of ideal good, to which sin is a hindrance.

Thirdly, we must consider the cosmic purpose manifested in history from the standpoint not only of the environment and of the development of the self, but also from that of the social ideal. For there appears to be an ideal implicit in the social development of mankind, subject as it has so markedly been to the influence of sheer chance and thus full of perplexity for the exponent of teleology. And the ideal is implicit not only in the vague sense that men are urged on to a better state by a divine dissatisfaction, but in the more definite sense that we can already discern its outlines. The ideal

society or community would be one in which, through the social relation, each individual comes to the realization and expression of his nature and its potentialities.

It may be, however, that the full social ideal can only be conceived as a Kingdom of God which is not of this world. But it remains true that there can be endless approximation in this world to the ideal, and its presence in men's minds, however vague and dream-like in form, is the secret of man's unquenchable hope of the future.

After all, human history is still in the making. We are reading a story of which we know, and that very imperfectly, only a part. We are presented with a wavering line and not with a rational curve, still less with a straight upward path. And was not the possibility of wavering an element in the design? Chance only partly accounts for the set-backs and disasters of history, for the frustrations of high promise; they are also due in part to the failure of persons and societies to respond to their vocation. Nevertheless, history discloses purpose and direction. There is something significant going on—the progressive creation of man.

'This, then, is my philosophy of religion.' These are Professor John MACMURRAY's words at the end of the chapter entitled 'Religious Reality' in his book just published, *Reason and Emotion* (Faber & Faber; 7s. 6d. net). What is that philosophy? We shall see. But we may preface a summary of it with two remarks. First, Professor MACMURRAY is not easy to follow. His thinking is somewhat exacting. And secondly, he seems to be an 'unconscionable time' in getting to his religious conclusion. But then he would say, quite rightly, that his conclusion was implicit in the whole process of reasoning. In any case be patient while we drive along to the goal.

He begins with an interesting point. The philosophy of religion arises because the philosopher is faced with a claim which religion makes, and cannot

help making. It is the claim that reality is personal. If that claim is untrue, religion is irrational and misleading. If it is true, any philosophy which denies it is false and misleading. The philosopher, if he is to carry out the task which he has set himself, of expressing the nature of reality, cannot leave religion out of account. He must evaluate the claim which is implicit in all religious experience and reach some conclusion about its validity. It would seem that in the nature of things this is a claim upon which no compromise is possible. The philosopher must either accept the personal character of the real, or he must reject completely the claim of religion to be a necessary and wholesome expression of human nature. If reality is not personal, religion is an illusion.

But (and here Professor MACMURRAY begins to be a trifle difficult) both these terms 'real' and 'personal' are not unambiguous. They supply us with marks of interrogation. What do we mean by real? What do we mean by personal? To determine the validity of religion it is necessary to determine the meaning of these terms. 'What I wish to do in this lecture is to express the results of my own thinking about what personality is, in order to explain what I mean when I accept the religious claim that reality is personal. The question is perhaps the most difficult of all questions, and what I have to say about it is neither final nor satisfactory, but I think that it points in a definite direction which ought to be explored.'

Well, then, here is a point—and it is really the author's main point—the source of the tendency to make religion subjective by denying the personality of God arises from a misconception of personality. Personality is not individualism. We are persons because we live in and through what is not ourselves. Our dependence on what is not ourselves is the core of our reality. And the objectivity of our experience reveals a threefold dependence upon the world by revealing three levels of objective reality. We know the world as matter, as life, and as personality. This knowledge is the knowledge of a threefold nature in ourselves, and of a threefold dependence of ourselves upon the world.

We may summarize this section briefly. As persons we have an objective consciousness of matter. We know material objects. But this knowledge is inherently a knowledge of ourselves as material objects. It is equally a knowledge of our dependence as material objects upon the society of material objects which is the material world. But if we were merely material objects in a material world we should not know ourselves even as material objects. Such knowledge presupposes that we already know ourselves as more than material. The same is true of the world of organic life. We can only assert our animal nature because we already have a consciousness of ourselves as persons.

And so we reach this further point, that the primary condition of our being is our objective consciousness of a world of personality of which we are members and within which we are dependent individuals. It is in and through my consciousness of other persons alone that I can know myself as a person. To be a person is to live as member of a personal reality, in dependence upon it. To put the matter in a different way, personality is essentially mutual (this is the core of much of Professor MACMURRAY's thinking). There can be no such thing as an isolated person. It is only in relationship between itself and another person that the self can exist at all. The self can never be independent and alone. The true formula is not 'I and the world,' but 'I and you,' or 'I and you and the world.' This mutuality of the personal is the basis of religion. Personality is essentially friendship or the communion of persons.

This may be expanded a little more before we come to the religious conclusion. There is a definite field of empirical experience which is the field of religion. It is the field of personal life, the field of personal relationships. Professor Whitehead is therefore wrong when he says that religion is what a man does with his solitariness. Religion is what a man makes of his personal relationships. We may use other persons as instruments. Slavery is the crudest form of this. And this is irreligious, because there is no mutuality or equality in the relation. The same thing is true—this is not so

obvious or even clear—when the relationship is one of co-operation in a common purpose.

‘So far I have made no mention of God.’ That is, says Professor MACMURRAY, because he wished to lay the foundation securely. But in his concluding pages he makes the omission good, indicating how essential to the view he has outlined is the idea of God. All experience, he says, at any level is the experience of the finite in the infinite. Even a triangle, as Spinoza pointed out, can be seen, or imagined, only as a limitation of infinite space. At the material level we apprehend all material objects as finite and dependent upon the material infinite. This is not a matter of reflection, but of immediate common experience. Similarly, we apprehend all organisms as finite dependents of infinite life.

And when we come to the personal field it is no different. It has been already insisted that our apprehension of ourselves as persons is at the same time an apprehension of our dependence upon what is not ourselves. We can now see that it is an apprehension of our own dependence, and the dependence of all other finite persons, upon infinite personality. God as infinite personality is the

primary natural experience of all persons. ‘That, then, is my philosophy of religion.’ We could have wished a little more about the concluding stage of the argument, particularly about the apprehension of anything being an apprehension of the finite in the infinite.

Instead, Professor MACMURRAY points out the concrete, practical meaning of his philosophy. It is not so much a reflective formulation of religion, as we know it, as a demand for a new step in the creation of human society. The field of the personal, which is the field of religion, is one where we grope in the dark and in which our civilization is perilously unskilled. In that field the modern world remains a world of individualism. It is, therefore, anti-religious. Our religious life remains primitive and undeveloped. The religious task remains unfulfilled. Its goal is the creation of a human society, universal in its extent, based upon the community of persons. We have to address ourselves to the task of creating the life of truly personal relationship between men, and of destroying those elements in modern society which frustrate and deny it. Whatever works for this end is religious. Whatever opposes it is the enemy of religion.

Recent Thoughts on the Doctrine of the Atonement.

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IN February 1926 an article by the Rev. Robert Mackintosh, D.D., under this title, was published in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. It reviewed the literature on the doctrine of Atonement published during the previous decade—in the years following Dean Rashdall’s famous Bampton Lectures of 1915¹—and found in it, apart from purely historical contributions and certain re-interpretations of the writings of Dr. Denney and Dr. Forsyth, a predominantly Abelardian outlook² which seemed to

¹ *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (Macmillan, 1925).

² xxxvii. 200.

the writer lacking in objectivity and unwisely intolerant of any penal element in atonement. There were, moreover, other tendencies discernible in the theology of these years which aroused misgiving and led to a protest against the blotting out of justice from the moral ideal and the degrading of God’s love into an unethical softness, which was described as ‘the master error of our day, and the form in which the contemporary mind becomes guilty of apostasy from God.’³

Ten years have passed and two notable changes at least have taken place in the theological situation

³ *Op. cit.*, 203.