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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

IN recent years there has been much thinking about values. It is being realized anew that values are what men live for. And thought about values leads us away from material things and into the realm of the spirit. We discover that the only real values are spiritual, not material. They belong to the soul, and they can inhere only in a person. Accordingly, if we are to live well and nobly, we must strive to open our thought and action to those influences that impart to personality consciousness and reality.

With such considerations in view, one turns with expectancy to a new book by Dr. Rufus M. JONES, *Some Problems of Life* (Macmillan; 7s. 6d. net), in which this veteran author sets forth his mature views on the conception of personality. Nor are we disappointed. Once more he raises us persuasively from the low-level of biological origins to the high-level of absolute worth and eternal significance, where personality lives and moves and has its being, where, in fact, humanity is truly viewed and interpreted.

Let us restrict ourselves to a partial account of our author's exposition of the 'Essential Characteristics of a Person.'

The first mark of a person is the possession of *self-consciousness*, in the sense of a stage of life beyond the level of mere conscious awareness. It involves the power which a person possesses of

recognizing a thought as his thought, a memory as his memory, a feeling as his feeling, an act of will as his act. It is the mysterious power of fixing upon and holding identities. 'It ought to give us a sense of awe greater than that which we feel at the Grand Canyon of the Colorado to find amid all the flux and welter of our kaleidoscopic mental processes the *same* objects, the *same* ideas, the *same* memories, and strangest of all the *same* identical self coming back again and again.'

Bergson has made much of the fact that consciousness is a preservation and accumulation of the past in the present. But consciousness is also an anticipation of the future. It is a living tie which holds past and future together. This inward capacity to create a novel future leads us to name the second mark of a person as the power of *self-development*. Here the end in view largely determines the deed which occurs. It is action not *a tergo* but *a fronte*. To be a person one must be able to look before and after.

Which brings us to the third mark of a person—the power to form ideals and to live by them. Let us call it *self-transcendence*. And let us observe that while all great ideals of the creative order have an immemorial history and have been tested through the ages, 'they are not passed on to us like the Colonial furniture which came over in the *May-flower* or the *Welcome*.' They are not given to us as to passive recipients. Neither a home, nor a

church, nor a social group of any kind could give them to us in this sense. They must be the person's own creation, the positive affirmation of a free soul. As Hegel said, 'To have discovered a limit is already to have transcended it.'

A fourth mark of a person is that sense of moral obligation which we name *moral consciousness*. This is man's supreme mark of greatness. It is not due to the drive of instincts, or emotions, or racial habits which aid survival. It cannot be explained on a basis of prudence or by any far-sighted calculation of interest. But it does not operate like a magical or infallible oracle; it bears the features of social group and temporal climate. 'We cannot have a conscience which really functions in the actual stress of life if we hold a theory of it which detaches it from the rest of our life and considers it as a miraculous principle, apart from and independent of our rich concrete actual life, like the rainbow above Niagara exerting no shaping influence on the course of the flood of water.'

We shall not follow our author in his discussion on the coming to a person of the trait of self-sacrifice, or the formation within him of the submerged life, or the question whether self-direction in terms of autonomous freedom belongs to the distinctive characteristics of a person. Enough has been said to indicate the intellectual and spiritual quality of Dr. JONES's exposition, and the concrete illustrative style in which it is couched.

Papini speaks of Jesus as 'the supreme maker of paradoxes,' and certainly there are elements in His teaching which appear sharply contradictory and which baffle systematic interpretation.

We speak of the simple gospel, but as soon as we begin to study the teaching of Jesus we find something very deep and elusive in it. He declares that He is come to fulfil the ancient Law, yet He does not hesitate to set it aside. He is the great Physician working incessantly for the healing of man's body and soul, yet He calls for self-sacrifice even unto

death. He offers to comfort men with a cross and to ease them with a yoke. He blesses the meek for they shall inherit the earth. He declares that he that would save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for the gospel's sake the same shall save it. He bids His disciples resist not evil, yet He resisted it. He says the first shall be last and the last first.

What are we to make of these and other like sayings of Jesus and of all that strain of paradox in His teaching which perplexed and bewildered many of His first hearers, making them say with impatience, 'Tell us plainly'? The subject is one which has often engaged the attention of students of the Gospels, and will doubtless continue to do so. A fresh treatment of it is given in *The Paradoxes of Jesus*, by the Rev. Ralph W. SOCKMAN, Ph.D., D.D. (Abingdon Press; \$2.00).

Various efforts have been made to resolve the paradoxes of Jesus, to elude or explain away such elements in His teaching as seem intractable, and reduce them to a more easily understandable and logically consistent whole. The simplest expedient, of course, is to question the authenticity of difficult passages. Jesus, it is said, was above the heads of His reporters and doubtless was not always correctly reported. But, whatever truth there may be in this suggestion, it can least of all be applied to His paradoxical sayings. For if they had not been spoken by Him they would certainly never have been invented by His reporters. 'The devotional purpose of the documents would predispose the writers against those seeming contradictions in the record. The natural tendency would have been to trim them down to fit the simple consistencies. Hence the normal inference of the reader is that these difficult paradoxes have a special claim to credence.'

Another expedient is to ignore the paradoxes of Jesus, to focus the eyes on one side of His teaching and take no account of the other. Many readers of the Gospels do not study them systematically enough to be made aware of the difficulties of harmonizing them; they treat Scripture 'some-

what as sentimental maidens treat wedding cake—they break it into small pieces and sleep on it.' No doubt they may get from it what suits their own particular interest or need, but 'this attitude of taking what we want of Jesus' teaching and ignoring the rest, gains for us neither its full meaning nor its full service.'

A more deliberate and considered effort to resolve the paradoxes of Jesus was made in the suggestion, which for a time found great favour, that His moral teaching was an 'interim-ethik.' In other words, Jesus was living, and taught His disciples to live, in full expectation of the immediate end of the world, and accordingly in His moral teaching He limited Himself to counsels suitable for the brief interval that might elapse before the end. These counsels, therefore, are not to be taken as applicable to a stable society. This school of Biblical criticism, which laid so much stress on the apocalyptic element in the teaching of Jesus, was a much needed and timely reaction against the view that Jesus was simply a quiet ethical teacher. But it is now generally agreed that both these views are equally one-sided. Both of them are, in fact, violent attempts to cut the Gordian knot of Jesus' paradoxes, and neither of them does justice to His teaching.

A less reputable, though widely popular, way of getting rid of the difficulty is to relegate the teaching of Jesus to some realm of unearthly idealism. There are those who say that there are spheres of life over which Jesus has no right of control. The German nationalist, for instance, maintains that the State has a supreme and underived authority which will not brook the control of Christ's law, but is a law unto itself. But more generally the view is held that there is something impracticable about the teaching of Jesus, that a great deal of it has no relevance to business life, or politics, or amusements, and that if it were so applied it simply would not work.

At first blush this has a certain appearance of reasonableness. There are some sayings of Jesus so startling in their absolute demand that one feels if they were taken literally they would precipitate

a crisis in any social circle. On the other hand, if we begin to qualify them or try to give them a more tenable meaning, we incur the charge of explaining them away. All the same, there are certain considerations which, with all loyalty to the teaching of Jesus, have to be kept in view, and which are specially helpful in this connexion. One is that Jesus sometimes spoke to an individual and laid a certain injunction on him which is not necessarily to be taken as a law for all disciples. The injunction laid on the rich young ruler is a case in point. But a much more important consideration is that, in the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, 'when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other parts that speak more clearly.' In other words, we must not take an unbalanced view; we must not lay hold on any one saying of Jesus and treat it in isolation as if He never said anything else.

In accordance with this a little study of the Gospel records will suffice to show that it was the method of Jesus to give principles of conduct rather than detailed rules. His great principle of love is obviously intended to govern every detail of conduct and to be applied to every situation. He does not bind His disciples by rigid unalterable rules, but He lays it upon their conscience in every case to follow that line of conduct which would most completely fulfil His law of love. If any one imagines that such an interpretation of Christ's teaching is less exacting than a rigid rule would be, he is quite mistaken. 'Consider the employee whose hours and rules are prescribed. Later he becomes head of the business. No time schedule and no code of rules are laid down for him. He is simply expected to follow one central principle, that of doing the best he can to make the most of the business. But if he is a conscientious man, his sense of responsibility will prove far more exacting than any set of rules held over him.' Much more is this the case where love is the impulse. The child's nurse is under rules and hours appointed. The mother's time is her own. But is it? No, 'a mother's love knows no time schedule, no nights out, no days off. She carries her concern for her

child into her very dreams.' Even so in giving principles rather than rules Jesus took off the upper limits of what was expected of His followers. 'Making the methods of obedience less rigid, He made the demands more exacting.'

As we cannot, then, dismiss the paradoxes of Jesus it remains to ask why He adopted a manner of teaching which His hearers from the first found so perplexing. One reason, no doubt, was to attract and rivet attention. In puzzling His hearers He sought to awaken them to mental activity in reflection and questioning. But deeper than that He doubtless meant to show 'that the discovery of spiritual truth requires more than secular knowledge.' He had a secret to impart which could not be given in words merely, for it is a gift of life. 'The Master realised that He could not expound His principles by lectures nor save men by discussion.' He rejoiced that that which was hid from the wise and prudent was revealed unto babes. He called for faith as the necessary pre-requisite of knowledge. And so it is worse than futile to try to rationalize the deep sayings of Jesus for the casual outsider and the merely intellectually curious. The inner meaning of His teaching could only be apprehended by those who had received His spirit.

The paradoxes of Jesus, then, are an indication that the mysteries of the Kingdom of God elude the grasp of scientific knowledge, even when it humbly and earnestly seeks. Life, as has often been remarked, is larger than logic. It has margins which extend beyond rational and scientific explanation. Every train of thought when pursued to its ultimate ends in antinomy, which can only be expressed in paradox. 'Hence Jesus made use of paradox as a means of dealing with the supra-rational elements of life.' He did not outrage reason, but He outran it. He confounded the world's logic because He saw more than other men saw. 'Jesus, in using parables and paradoxes, outran the rational as Charles Dodgson outran the science of mathematics when, as Lewis Carroll, he wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The Oxford don, like the Nazarene Carpenter, was trying to tell us that the world is a wonderland

which cannot be charted completely by the instruments of science. Our codified knowledge is but a little island in the boundless ocean of mystery. The larger the island grows, the longer the shoreline of mystery becomes. The paradoxes of Jesus serve both as a reminder of the limitations of logic and as incentives to explore beyond them. They are like Browning's "paradox that comforts while it mocks."'

At the Student Christian Movement Conference held in Birmingham in January of this year, the report of which has just been published under the title *God Speaks to this Generation* (S.C.M.; 2s. 6d. net), Dr. TEMPLE, Archbishop of York, gave an address on 'God in Christ,' which not only deals with the supreme issue of religion at the present time, but does so in an unusually fresh and suggestive fashion.

He began by emphasizing the fact that a really complete explanation of the whole range of experience, which would be something like an intellectual proof that that utterance comes from God, is really impossible. It has never been done. We have to fall back (if it is really falling back) on something which is much less than an intellectual proof. Consider what the position would be if there were an intellectual proof that God speaks in Christ. All the heroism, if not all the interest, would have vanished from faith. We are apt to think that if only we could get an absolute intellectual certainty we would possess wonderful peace. So we should, but it would be the peace of indolence, not of victory. Anyhow, the possibility is not open to us.

How, for example, are you going to interpret *Nature*? It is a question of how you look at it. Are you going to be swayed by the order in Nature, the marvellous manner in which things fit together, or by that thing which, when first it came home to the minds of our fathers, was so harassing—'Nature red in tooth and claw'? Perhaps if we had the clue we would read the Book of Nature, as something that God has written, but not until

we have a clue. By itself it does not bear witness to anything that we can worship; power, yes; intelligence, yes; but goodness—question!

Or *History*? You may find the faith that you bring to the interpretation of events justified in broadest outline. But if you begin from the other end, the story of the great civilizations, the story of the ancient world, and the gradual process of the intercourse of these peoples with one another, you will be fortunate if you arrive at a conclusion that there is any plan or purpose in it all pointing anywhere.

But the gospel says, first, that God speaks. In the beginning, in principle if you like, there has always been a Word which was with God, and indeed was God; that is a way of saying that utterance is part of the life of God. Part of what the word 'God' means is that He should speak, and that His word, uttered both in Nature and in History, 'was made flesh, and we beheld his glory.' Of course a great many people saw the life of Christ, and did not behold His glory; and those who did reached that vision quite independently of any process of arguing about it. The surrender of faith is not in the least like the acceptance of the conclusion of an argument.

It is like the submission which all generous-hearted people offer to a hero who calls upon them to join him in his adventure. It is a response of the whole personality, including the mind, certainly. The faith that puts a check on the activity of the mind is a defective faith. But the essential surrender of faith is more like your feeling for a trusted leader than it is like your acceptance of the Q.E.D. at the end of a geometrical proposition. And that is the first thing we are to be clear about. If we are to hear God speak, as the gospel claims that He speaks, it will be because we are aware that our souls are confronted with something before which they can only bow in worship and self-dedication. It is by that means, and that alone, that any one can come to believe that God speaks in Christ.

If we consider the outstanding features of the

Divine utterance, there is one that is predominant, both in the Old and in the New Testament. It is that of Divine Judgment. The day of God and the acts of God are both associated with the vindication of the righteous sovereignty of God in the world that He has made. And that is something that has not only happened and that is not only going to happen, but that is always happening. And when Christ comes that is not changed. It is still true that for judgment He is come into the world; that because He is there the judgment of the world is come.

The presence of the Lord among men inevitably results in judgment. Some can see the glory and others cannot, and that is the judgment upon them. 'This is the judgment that light is come into the world, and men chose darkness rather than light.' There is nothing worse you can do to them than that. The man chooses to live in the dark—nothing more can be done to him, or worse. Nor is our Lord at all reluctant to impress upon those who listen to Him in His own or any age the terror of that judgment.

We have become accustomed to an emasculated picture of Christ and of God as represented in Him. But let us remember that (for example) in one of the parables dealing with the invitation of God into His Kingdom, the king who represents God 'destroyed those murderers and burnt up their city.' There is a principle at work here. Our Lord never relies on the motive of fear for positive results, but He is prepared to use the motive of fear in order to counterbalance that self-interest which hinders us from hearing the positive appeal of love. You cannot eliminate the element of fear and even terror from the teaching of our Lord. It is what Dr. Mott calls 'the stormy, north side of Jesus.'

Against what does that terrible sternness direct itself? Against every form of self-centredness, self-satisfaction, self-content. All the things that make people hard and unsympathetic. There is always judgment in coming face to face with the manifested love of God. God is love, but whether that for us should bring more of consolation or of judgment

must depend on how far our natures are responsive to love. It is consolation to all who are trying to subject their souls to the power of love and live by it. It is full of terror to everything about us that is selfish. It is the proclamation that every purpose we may form, every policy we may pursue, which is based on the desire to gain rather than on the desire to serve will always lead to calamity because it is fighting against the ultimate reality of the world.

But there is a point here at which we reach the centre of things. We may be dismayed by the vision of Christ as embodying what we should be, of Christ as the judgment on our self-will. But it is just here that the gift in Christ to us becomes

manifest. He is the source of power. 'And the only thing that makes sense of that is the great Christian doctrine of His Deity. What you find in Him is the great Eternal Spirit in which we live and move and have our being. He is not isolated from us by vast tracts of years. He is the source and perpetual sustenance of our being, and when we look upon that life once lived, and that death once died, we see the perfect expression of the Divine spirit within every soul that is always struggling somehow to express itself through the life in which it dwells.' And just because of what He has done, because His love has uttered itself completely, what we have to do is, not to achieve something unheard of, but to allow our souls to be captivated and controlled by Him.

The Beatitude of Endurance.

BY THE REVEREND CANON A. C. DEANE, M.A., CANON OF WINDSOR AND CHAPLAIN TO H.M. THE KING.

'BLESSED is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life' (Ja 1¹², R.V.). The general meaning of this sentence is so clear that no explanation or exposition of it can be needed. But a few notes may be added, by way of suggestion:

Verbal resemblances with other Biblical sayings.—Here a note of caution is advisable for the general reader. New Testament critics, specializing in their own immensely important subject, are seldom, in the wider sense, men of letters. Were they themselves literary craftsmen and equipped with a large knowledge of general literature, they would be far less confident about the arguments they base on parallelisms. They would know that literature abounds with examples of accidental resemblance. Often passages remarkably alike occur when it is impossible that the one should have borrowed from the other, or that the two had a common source. The plain truth is that, given similar sets of circumstances requiring the same things to be said, different men will repeat those same things in very much the same words. Failing to take this simple truth into account, the critics fasten eagerly upon parallelisms, and suppose that they can be explained only in one of three ways—*a* has borrowed from *b*, or *b* from *a*, or both *a* and *b* are derived from a

source *c*. Then, having made his choice between the three, the commentator takes advantage of the general reader's guilelessness to set forth his view, not as a conjecture, which is all that it can be at its highest, but as an indubitable fact. 'The obvious indebtedness of *a* to *b* for this saying,' he will write, 'seems to justify the inference that'—and further speculations are based upon this unsafe foundation. Or, alternatively, 'What is the common source from which *a* and *b* are so evidently taken? Perhaps we need not look farther than *c*,' and so on.

Of such methods the commentaries on Ja 1¹² supply examples. 'Blessed is he who endures,' writes Professor Moffatt (*Moffatt N.T. Commentary: The General Epistles*, 16) 'is a reminiscence of Dan. xii. 12.' It may be; but at least as probably it is not. To affirm that James when writing 'blessed is the man that endureth temptation' must necessarily have had in mind 'blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days' seems unjustifiable.

There is a much fuller and more striking parallelism between Ja 1¹² and Rev 2¹⁰: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.' Professor Moffatt does not remark on this,