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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

## Notes of Recent Exposition.

We have reviewed in another column Professor G. D. Henderson's *Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland*. Here let us give an account of his paper contained therein on 'The Scottish Pulpit in the Seventeenth Century.'

The sermon was the outstanding feature of the regular services in Scotland throughout the seventeenth century, which was in keeping with the ideas of the Reformers, who set the preaching of the Word before the administration of the Sacraments in the order of importance. Indeed, the Sacraments were not administered without preaching, and the Evangelical was inclined to preach—it is added—even in his prayers and latterly in his hymns.

Sermons were long. The pulpit sand-glass was a half-hour glass, and sometimes the glass outran the discourse; it would appear that the normal length of the sermon was about an hour, the glass being turned once. But two or three hours was no extraordinary thing for Bishop William Forbes of Edinburgh, of whom Burnet says that he 'has a strange faculty of preaching five or six hours at a time.'

The sermon was from an 'ordinary.' A passage of Scripture was selected and this formed the basis of discourse over a considerable period. At Fraserburgh the 'ordinary' in August 1614 was in Haggai, and a year later it was still there. In 1617 there was trouble at Tyrie because the minister preached from no 'ordinary' text but as occasion offered. On the other hand, there was trouble at Rathen in 1619 because the minister continued too long with the same 'ordinary'; the Presbytery enjoined him to 'change his text.'

The sermon was not read. Manuscript was not tolerated. In consequence, some preachers first wrote their sermons and then learned them by heart. John Livingstone tells us that once he was so 'deserted' that the points he had meditated and written and memorized went from him. Other preachers spoke from notes or extempore. Hew Binning, being unexpectedly called on to preach on his wedding-day, 'having stept aside a little time to premeditate,' produced an effective sermon.

There was some temptation to the use of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, though no doubt this applies chiefly to published sermons. The 'Directory for Public Worship' condemns 'the unprofitable use of unknown tongues.' While Samuel Rutherford makes frequent references in his published discourses to Hebrew and Greek originals, this does not apply to his discourses taken down in church and published under the title 'Quaint Sermons.'

Presbyteries took a lively interest in the preaching which was carried on within their bounds. One minister is reproved for 'unnecessar prolixitie.' Another is urged to 'extend his voyce.' Another

is found 'exceedingly weak both in doctrine and application.' The minister of Inverkeithny in 1650 was admonished concerning his expression, and required to make up as far as he could for his want of teeth. But Presbyteries were not always critical or discouraging.

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There appear to have been many good preachers in the seventeenth century in Scotland. We read of one who had 'a very polite and accurat way of preaching,' of another who had 'a most pleasant and affectionat way,' of another who had 'a choice popular gift.' Dr. John Forbes of Corse speaks of 'many godly pertinent observations, instructions and consolations' which Dr. Alexander Scroggie (another of the Aberdeen doctors) 'delivered plainly and powerfully.'

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Dr. HENDERSON gives detailed accounts of certain preachers, such as Bishop William Cowper, who introduces into his sermons many classical and other anecdotes and a number of curious mediæval illustrations; James Guthrie, the stern and bigoted martyr leader of the Protesters, and his relative, William Guthrie, a great soul-winner, but a human being fond of fishing and curling and music; Andrew Gray, an astonishingly popular preacher in his time, on the merits of whose sermons opinions were divided—but we must refer our readers to the volume itself.

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Here is the concluding paragraph of the chapter: 'The importance of the pulpit in Scotland can scarcely be overestimated. By character and education the minister was the leader of his parishioners. The sermon was their chief source of information and instruction on all matters of local, national, moral, and spiritual concern. Nothing more interesting or exciting than the sermon occurred to relieve the monotony of their weeks. The Church dominated the century, and it did so mainly through the pulpit.'

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It is common ground in all the churches that salvation is achieved through the work of Christ, and is bestowed on them that put their trust in Him. It is also universally held that His death is specially significant. The central affirmation of the gospel from the first was 'that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.'

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This unanimity is very impressive and should ever be kept in view. Diversity of opinion arises only when further questions are asked as to what precisely Christ accomplished by His death, and what was the meaning and the value of it. And we find, from the earliest Christian times, that a succession of attempts have been made to explain the mystery of the Cross and to offer a consistent theory of the Atonement.

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Many books have been written in recent years on this great theme, and their very number is a sign of men's sense of the central significance of the Cross and of the inadequacy of current theories. It becomes clear that 'the history of the doctrine of Christ's work must always remain incomplete. It is not given us on earth to know in full what He has done for us, and all new understanding of the New Testament and all deeper realization of human need compel us to explore afresh the meaning of that work.'

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A welcome contribution to the subject has been made by Principal Sydney CAVE, D.D., in *The Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s. net). It is a book which can be read with pleasure and profit by the intelligent layman as well as by the student of theology. It gives in broad outline with wonderful clearness a history of the doctrine from New Testament times to the present day. The reader does not get lost in a multiplicity of names and theories, but is skilfully guided along the main currents of Christian thought. Special attention is given to modern writers on the Atonement, and then in a valuable concluding chapter Principal CAVE sums up the discussion and appraises the value of the various theories.

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In studying the history of the doctrine of the work of Christ, it is customary to distinguish broadly two types of interpretation, which are often

spoken of as the Objective and the Subjective theories. The so-called Objective Theory, also known as the Penal Theory, takes its rise with Anselm, who interpreted Christ's work as the satisfaction of the honour of God injured by man's sin. At the Reformation and in Protestant theology this theory became authoritative in a modified form which interpreted Christ's work as the satisfaction of God's justice by the vicarious punishment of Christ. The Subjective or Moral Theory takes its rise with Abelard, who in common with many modern writers regarded Christ's work as the revelation in word and deed of the forgiving love of God inspiring in us love to God and man.

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Principal CAVE, however, lays some stress on a third view, the Patristic, which sees in Christ's work a victory over the powers of evil, redeeming men from their tyranny. That theory was undoubtedly expressed by the Fathers at times in most crude and ludicrous ways as the paying of a ransom price to the devil whereby he was somehow cheated out of his rights in sinful man. Even Augustine in his popular preaching could fall into this grotesque way of speaking, as when he says, 'What did our Redeemer do to our captor? As our price, He held out His cross as a mouse-trap and set as bait upon it His own blood!' Taking offence at such absurdities the modern mind has simply ignored the Patristic view as unworthy of serious consideration. But Principal CAVE points out that 'it dominated the first millennium of Christian thought,' and he believes there is something in it of permanent value if it be fitly expressed.

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There are moods when, weary of conflicting theories, we are content to echo Dora Greenwell's lines:

> And was there, then, no other way
> For God to take?—I cannot say;
> I only bless Him day by day
> Who saved me through my Saviour.

These words remind us that 'beneath all the differences of interpretation there is the common Christian experience that Christ does save, and uncertainty about interpretation may exist side by side with the certainty of the fact which the various theories seek to explain.' Yet we cannot be content, like Barth, to assert the fact that Christ saves, and to denounce as arrogance any attempt to say how or why. His protest is obviously directed against those in modern times who speak as if God's forgiveness were an easy thing and quite to be expected. One cannot seriously ponder the problem of the divine forgiveness without discovering that there is a mystery in it which finds no analogy in mere human forgiveness. As M'Leod Campbell put it, 'The Atonement is to be seen in its own light.' It is this mystery which theologians throughout the Christian ages have been striving to elucidate, and their various theories are endeavours to express such glimpses as they have had into the meaning of it.

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The penal theory is one which many in modern times have found it easy to criticize and to caricature. But it has its roots in a profound conviction that sin is a very serious thing, and that salvation from sin, if it is to be accomplished at all, must be brought about in such a way that all just claims are satisfied. This no doubt tended to put emphasis on the divine law as over against the divine love. It tended also, perhaps, to introduce a contrast between the righteousness of God and the love of Christ. But this is to misapprehend the theory. Calvin, while teaching that Christ 'bore the weight of the divine anger,' at the same time says, 'How could God be angry with the beloved Son, with whom His soul was well pleased?' And Brunner, the most vigorous exponent of this theory in recent years, though he speaks of Christ's work as 'the expiatory, penal sacrifice of the Son of God,' is yet careful to emphasize that 'it is God Himself who expiates, who provides the sacrifice.' No doubt those who understood this theory were well aware that the love of Christ was the love of God, and they had the profound and most comforting assurance that that love had at infinite cost brought it about that 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.'

Most modern theology has not found the forensic language of the Penal theory congenial and has tended towards the Moral theory in some form or other. According to this the gospel is held to be a proclamation of God's love, supremely illustrated and commended in the life and death of Jesus. This theory has the merit of presenting God as a God of love, and as One who manifests love in all His dealings with sinful men. It has often been preached with much winsomeness and in such a way as to draw out a warm, responsive love. Yet it seems to give no adequate answer to the question of why Christ must needs die. His death on the Cross is the supreme proof of God's love only if in that death He were doing some great thing for man's salvation which could not otherwise or at any less cost be done. In other words, it must have been a real act of redemption and not a dramatic representation merely. There must have been more in it than simply an affecting scene to touch men's hearts.

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The Patristic theory, like the Penal, emphasized the objectiveness of Christ's work. Its representation of His death and resurrection as a victory over the powers of evil strikes a genuinely Christian note. 'Simple and learned alike sing Luther's great hymn of triumph, *Ein' Feste Burg*. . . . The Church has never quite lost the sense that the power of evil has been maimed. Few passages of St. Paul are more greatly prized than the concluding verses of Romans viii., and none who know these words can quite ignore the conception of Christ's death as a victory over all the forces that would separate us from the love of God in Christ.' This theory presents Christ not as a victim but as victor, and gives a cosmic significance to His work. 'His death appears not as the satisfaction of God's justice but as the victory of His love and power.'

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Each of these theories then, imperfect and open to criticism as it obviously is, has something to teach us of the ineffable mystery of Christ's redeeming work. No one can write of that work without a sense of the utter inadequacy of human thoughts and human words, and it would have been well if theologians had always kept that in view. It would have led to less dogmatism and more openness of mind and heart. In the study of the work of Christ we must not forget that it is with God we have to do, and before God we are driven to awe and adoration; we worship even where we do not understand. 'But if, as we believe, Christ's work is God's decisive work for men, then we have a ministry of reconciliation to proclaim, for God is other than men have thought; He is a God who took the first step in reconciliation, who in Christ entered into human life that He might make real to men His forgiveness, a forgiveness not of indifference but of love—a forgiveness in which sin's gravity is exposed. Not until we gaze on God's love in Christ with eyes undimmed with sin and folly shall we understand the fullness of Christ's work.'

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The Master of Balliol College, Oxford, has written an extraordinarily interesting book on *The Moral Teaching of Jesus* (Hodder & Stoughton; 2s. 6d. net). Actually it is an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. An 'examination,' Dr. LINDSAY calls it, but it is a very good example for the preacher of how an exposition of Scripture should be done. There are just six chapters in the book (a lesson in itself on the proper length of a 'course' of sermons !), and the subjects dealt with are Jesus' demand for perfection, His teaching about desire, and His basing of moral conduct on reverence. In addition, there is a chapter on non-resistance, and two on the relations of men and women.

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The part that will cause most discussion is that on 'The Gospel of Non-Resistance.' Dr. LINDSAY points out that the Sermon on the Mount is not a new law or code. A law that is not likely to be obeyed is a bad law. A law that puts pressure on people to be saints is a useless law. Jesus told men, not as a command but as a revelation and a hope, that they were to be perfect. He bids us look at an absolute *standard*, in order to give us a new sense of direction in our lives. We can never, and must never, read the Sermon apart from the thought of the Grace of God, which gives us power to abide in the true line of life.

Let us apply this general principle to the teaching about non-resistance. The verses about this are the most difficult in the Sermon. But the difficulty is not in the task they set. The real difficulty is to believe that, if we had the strength and faithfulness to put these precepts into practice, it would really be for the good of society. The precepts that follow about loving our enemies are really far more difficult to carry out. But we have no difficulty in believing that, if we *did* carry them out, the world would be a more wholesome place. Our difficulty about non-resistance is different. Taken literally, the commands are easier. That is to say, if we are to stop at the actual outside action.

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But we naturally ask: If we did this, what would be the good of it? Would not these precepts encourage greed and violence, if the men remained unchanged? Does not a bully become more and more a menace to society if no one opposes him? Would not the body of society be endangered, and would not also the soul of the bully be in a worse danger than before? Is it at all clear that if we loved our enemies, we should always behave as these verses suggest?

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Before considering the thirty-ninth verse ('resist not evil,' etc.), look at what follows it. We are to give more than is demanded (the cloke and the coat). But if we take this as laying down a universal rule for society, it would mean that we are never to resist any claim made against us at law. That would practically mean that we are not to have laws at all. It is true that a society in which all men always insisted on their legal rights would be a disgusting society to live in. But on the other hand, do we seriously think that we are loving our enemies if we do not resist the claims of legal blackmailers? If we were to act in that way constantly we should be making rules and laws impossible. That is true. But what is really asked of us is to bring love to our interpretation and application of the Law. We are never to say, The Law is on my side and that is an end of the matter. We are to be ready to modify our private resentments when we can do that without danger to society.

We may apply the same principle to the thirty-ninth verse, about not resisting evil and turning the other cheek. Force is rightly suspect because it is a natural accompaniment of anger and greed and evil passions. This is true of almost all use of physical force against our fellow-men, and of course especially true of its greatest and most terrible example, war. The use of force against each other is always a sign of failure or misunderstandings. But when we *have* failed, to refuse to use force might be a sign of even greater failure. It can never be our duty just to say, This is a situation where nothing can be done without force, but force is wrong, therefore I must do nothing.

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Does this mean that the appeal of extreme pacifism to the Sermon on the Mount is unjustifiable? The answer depends on the form that appeal takes. The truest way to love your enemies, or, for that matter, your friends, may sometimes be to resist forcibly the evil they are trying to do, as we should hope ourselves to be resisted in like case. 'I am sure that you cannot take the command to resist not evil literally *as a universal command* without giving up all law and justice, and few if any people, whether pacifists or not, are prepared to do that.'

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There are the strongest reasons for taking all possible steps to bring our international relations up even to the level of our imperfect relations to our fellow-citizens, but that is not of course to give up the use of force, though it is radically to change the way force is used. But when pacifists argue, as they sometimes do, that the use of force is justified within the State because there it sustains justice, but cannot be justified in international relations, such argument is surely absurd. It really implies that you are asking men to adopt a higher standard of conduct in international than in civil relations. At home our justice may have the sanction of force, but abroad, though we seek justice, we are to take the higher line and renounce force altogether. For that is what extreme pacifism as a public policy involves.

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If it be our duty to support the rule of law at

home, even if that cannot be done without our being prepared to use force where necessary, it is surely our duty to do our best to bring about the rule of law abroad even if it may mean using much more force than is now necessary to bring it about at home. It remains our duty, both at home and abroad, to behave in such a way to other people as to give every chance of securing justice to those who most need it without the use of force.

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But at home, while we have got a long way towards such a general acceptance of law that force retires more and more into the background, we have got to that position by pursuing the double policy of seeking to make force unnecessary, but being determined in the meantime to see justice done even if force must be used for the purpose. And there is no reason to suppose that the same double policy is not as essential if we are to inspire our international relations with justice and gradually bring into being a world community which accepts law. Dr. Lindsay sees no escape from this position unless force is regarded as a thing so intrinsically evil that we are prepared to give up any kind of law or rule altogether. And can any one maintain that force is intrinsically evil?

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But if any one should say, 'I grant that justice is worth, if need be, fighting for, whether at home or abroad, but modern war has so poisoned all our international relations that only some striking repudiation of it can bring men to a more sober view, and for me any participation in this use of force is too high a price to pay for social security. I therefore feel called upon to pursue the exceptional conduct which, the Sermon on the Mount clearly teaches, may be demanded of us for the purposes of God, and I am prepared to abide by the consequences.' In this attitude of such a conscientious objector there seems to be no inconsistency, and we may clearly be called upon to act in that sort of way when confronted by evils which have got so entangled with the whole existing system that we cannot easily repudiate them without repudiating much of the system at the same time. On an issue of that sort a man must judge as he has conviction, and in following his conviction he may do noble service even to the State whose commands he is repudiating.

# The Teaching of Theology.

By Professor A. C. Welch, D.D., Edinburgh.

The editor has asked me to contribute a paper on the teaching of theology in view of 'the needs of the age' and with the Presbyterian training as its background. The leading impression which has emerged from my experience as student, minister, and professor in the service of that Church is that its theological training represents a consistent system. It is integrally related to the type of man to whom is entrusted the care of a congregation. When a man is ordained and inducted in a Scottish parish, he dedicates his life to the service of the Church, and the Church pledges itself to provide him with a sufficient maintenance. It is possible, and at one time it was common, that the minister's life was spent in the service of the parish in which he was first ordained. During my lifetime a change has appeared in this respect; but the possibility remains that his work will end where it began, and it is certain that in one of his charges he will have to endure a longer pastorate. Further, he is left at large liberty in the conduct of Divine Service. He is responsible for the conduct of the devotional service and for the celebration of the Sacraments, but he is supplied with no prayer-book to guide him in these matters. He is expected to preach once or twice each Sunday; and this part of his duty occupies a large place in his work among the people. He is also responsible for the training of the young, and must prepare candidates for their first Communion, and admit them after preparation to full membership. He may commit the children to the care of Sunday-school teachers, but he must