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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

TÜBINGEN, which was a storm centre in the theological world of the nineteenth century and a name of dire significance to many, has still a place of eminence in the religious life of Germany to-day. Among its teachers are Wilhelm HAUER, the prophet of the German Faith Movement; Karl HEIM, the most prominent theologian of the Lutheran Church; and Karl ADAM, who ranks second to none among Roman Catholic theologians.

A very useful and timely book has been published, entitled *Germany's New Religion* (Allen & Unwin; 5s. net), which contains an exposition, eloquent and passionate, of the German Faith Movement by HAUER, followed by incisive criticisms by Karl HEIM and Karl ADAM from the Christian point of view. It is a book which should be read by all who wish to understand what the German of to-day is thinking and feeling, and what is the meaning of this terrific onslaught on the Christian faith.

The German Faith Movement, though professing to tolerate Christianity and expressing a certain qualified admiration for Jesus Christ, is really pagan in its origin and spirit. It is based on faith in the unconquerable heart of the German people and in the national destiny. Whatever else Hitler has done it must be confessed that he raised up from the dust the drooping spirit of the German people, and taught them once more to believe in themselves and in their destiny. The German of to-day under the

third Reich is more fanatically proud of his race and country than ever he was in the days of the Kaiser.

This spirit has found religious expression in the new Faith Movement. It claims to be self-sufficient, and demands the rejection of all that is foreign to the German genius. It is only fair to keep in view that HAUER lays emphasis on the fact that he uses the word 'German' not in any narrow and merely national sense, but as denoting the whole Germanic race, as opposed for example to the Semitic. He has been credited with a desire to re-introduce the worship of Odin and Thor, but he repudiates this as ridiculous. 'We have no intention of awakening the old gods to life; we know perfectly well that they will never emerge from their twilight, and that each new age must mould its own religious forms. If we mention here and there the old Teutonic deities, they serve only as symbols, just as the classical deities have been used as symbols in art and poetry since the Renaissance; and the reason is the same in both cases; they express ideals which we feel to be essentially akin to us . . . The figures in these poems are truly nearer to us than the figures of the Old Testament, the offspring of so different a racial character.'

This German Faith may be so stated as to appear simply the outcome of Nazi fanaticism and unlikely to make any wider appeal. But essentially it is the religion of the natural man, and makes a very wide appeal indeed. It is the religion of the man who

says, 'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.' It offers again the alluring promise of the Serpent, 'Ye shall be as gods.' It knows of no transcendent God who is Creator and Ruler and Judge. The only god it acknowledges is the divine within the soul of man. As HAUER says: 'the religious life of the believer has its source in the eternal deeps of his own personality.'

In accordance with this it has no place for the religious feeling of dependence on a higher power, or of the need of heavenly help or salvation. 'We reject the whole conception of mediation, whether through a sacred person, a sacred book, or a sacred rite.' It is not denied that there have been religious leaders, 'but the office of the leader is to help Man to come to himself.' Among these leaders Jesus has an honourable place. 'Many of Jesus' words and deeds touch a chord deep down in our hearts. But we protest against His being imposed on us as a leader and pattern. We must not allow our native religious life, which grows immediately out of our own genius, to be diverted into foreign tracks.'

The practical result of this spirit of self-sufficiency and of racial exclusiveness is seen in the expulsion of the Jews. It also inspires a passionate demand for the abolition of Christian teaching in the schools. 'These schools are the clearest expression of the Christian credalism which we have characterised as anti-German.' They are 'an unbearable yoke and the most deadly peril to the German will to unite. We want our children to experience together first and foremost that they are Germans, that they are nourished by the German genius, that they are being introduced to the heritage of their forefathers and are to mould their lives unswervingly according to that model.'

In criticism of all this it may be said that every faith must be judged and must stand or fall by two things, its doctrine of God and its treatment of the problem of sin. HAUER finds the divine in man, and he idealizes and practically deifies the race, but his teaching on the subject of God is vague in the extreme and ultimately agnostic. 'We worship the God who is revealed to us by our native genius, and

other nations do the same. It is impossible to know what God is really like, or to say anything about his ultimate nature and character at all.' Similarly, he fails to come to grips with the problem of evil. Some use is made of the term 'guilt,' but HAUER teaches that man is in the grip of a blind fate and must fulfil his destiny in a spirit of heroism, a doctrine which would appear to leave no room for personal responsibility and for guilt.

In his criticism of HAUER, Karl HEIM deals especially with this latter point. The antithesis between blind destiny and personal responsibility cannot be transcended as HAUER attempts to do. 'There have always been two tendencies in conflict with each other, one is the attempt to take away from guilt its sting and transform it into a tragic destiny of mankind, in which we are involved by our human make-up, the constitution of our sensual nature, or the history of our race; the other is that awakening of the clear consciousness of guilt which leads to passionate self-accusation, and so to the repudiation of all excuses and all confusion of personal responsibility with forces that are morally neutral.' Here lies the fundamental cleavage between HAUER and Luther, between the German Faith and the Christian. On the one side a man is thrown back on self, it may be self-reliance or self-pity according to his disposition; on the other side he is led through penitence to self-abandonment and humble trust in a Divine salvation.

Karl ADAM deals with the revelation of God in Christ. 'As soon as we speak of "God," we can only really discuss, not a God who is tied to the world, but one who is transcendent and a Creator. Every believer of every living religion means this when he prays to God.' God reveals Himself in nature and in the mind of man and in the primal will of every nation. But is it not to be expected that He, the living God, 'would disclose Himself, over and above the visible token of His love in the creation, by encroaching upon the order of nature and speaking to men as Spirit to spirit, and Person to person? Was it not to be expected that He would give a supernatural revelation in addition to the natural one, which should not bear the stamp

of the purely human but be His work alone, His property alone, in origin and substance, and which would therefore in its content surpass all human thoughts, all racial wisdom ?'

This, we believe, He has done in Jesus Christ. The spirit of the age has balefully influenced men's view of Christ. It is a critical spirit, the offspring of the Age of Reason which resents every claim to truth made by the inexplicable and the mysterious. 'But nowhere does the mysterious and the miraculous obtrude itself more strikingly than in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. The whole story, from the star in the east to the resurrection, is a blaze of miracle. And His preaching culminates in the unheard-of, unbelievable assertion that He, a hungering, suffering, mortal man, is God's own Son and our Redeemer.' 'He died. But after three days—as His disciples bore witness their whole life long, in the face of suffering and death—He appeared alive and transfigured as their Lord and Saviour. Since then He has moved through history. And He is still moving through the world to-day.' For this reason we cannot regard Him as merely a prophet among others, or as limited by racial characteristics, or subordinate to national destinies. He is the Saviour of all mankind.

The appeal of the German Faith Movement is to the heroic in the mind of youth, and Christianity is caricatured not merely as alien but as weak and effeminate. But surely the spirit which refuses to bow the head before God is not heroism but what the Greeks called *hubris*, a vaulting pride which often goes before destruction. On the other hand, the gospel utters a trumpet call to the heroic. Think of Paul fighting against principalities and powers and proving himself and his fellow-soldiers 'more than conquerors.' All the great names in Christian history are of the heroic type. 'We cannot be true, staunch Christians save by following Christ in that unsparing devotion to God and man, which is depicted for us in His life and above all in His heroic death upon the Cross. . . . The heroic has always been woven into the texture of Christian living, and without it Christianity has never been wholly genuine.'

In the recent volume of composite authorship entitled *The Mission and Message of Jesus* there is a section by Professor T. W. MANSON, D.Litt., on 'The Christian Gospel and the Teaching of Jesus.' Of this section we should like to give a brief account.

What were the motives that led to the preservation and collection of the sayings of Jesus? The chief motive was that these sayings were needed in the pastoral work which necessarily followed on any successful missionary effort. No doubt for the primitive Church the central thing was the Cross on the Hill rather than the Sermon on the Mount. The Christian gospel came first and the questions of Christian doctrine and Christian ethics afterwards, in particular the question of the standard and form of Christian behaviour. That was found in the life and words of Jesus.

Another motive for preserving and collecting the sayings of Jesus was a personal interest in Jesus Himself. It was a natural instinct to treasure up characteristic words of the Master, just as—though the comparison is on a lower plane—the oracles of the Hebrew prophets were preserved long after the historical situations to which they were relevant were past.

Yet another motive was the use of the sayings in Christian propaganda in the Græco-Roman world. Though they did not constitute the gospel, which meant primarily the story of the Passion and the Resurrection, they provided a way of approach to those people in the Roman Empire who were in earnest about religion and morals. The Apologists made good use of them as such, through them commending Christianity to those who looked for something more attractive spiritually than Stoicism, and socially than Judaism.

Finally, the sayings of Jesus were important to the Palestinian Church in its relation to the Jewish Law. His teaching, in some points heretical from the standpoint of orthodox Judaism, was apt to be misrepresented in other points by Jewish opponents, and it was therefore more necessary that a reliable and authoritative compilation of it should be in the

hands of the Palestinian community, first as a defence against misrepresentation, and secondly for propaganda among Jews who might show some sympathy towards the Christian religion.

On these motives Professor MANSON remarks: 'All four might be expected to make themselves felt at a very early stage in the history of the Church, and this expectation is confirmed by literary criticism of the Gospels. For it appears that both Matthew and Luke used a document consisting entirely of teachings of Jesus, and this document has a fair claim to be as old as, if not older than, the earliest written Gospel—that of Mark.'

'We have, in fact, to recognise that in the earliest stages of the Christian tradition there are two streams which eventually unite to form the Gospel as we see it in Matthew or Luke. The one has its source in the Passion and Resurrection: its story is the story of Him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. The other is the record of the sayings of a Teacher who astonished the multitudes because He taught with authority and not as their Scribes.'

On the nature of the teaching contained in the sayings of Jesus it is to be remarked that His teaching has to do not with mere acts and motives, but with the fundamental relation of man's will to God's. We are not asked to bring our conduct into line with the Jewish Law or some higher standard, nor are we asked to substitute unselfish for selfish motives; what is asked is a submission of our wills to God's will. Such life is inspired, creative, adventurous. It is movement towards a goal. For it the teaching of Jesus is not an ordnance map but a compass. Nor does it matter whether He conceived the goal as near or far away; for He came to give us direction rather than directions, and the important thing is whether the direction be correct.

'The teaching in its inmost nature is thus bound up with faith, the conviction that the world has meaning which can be expressed in terms of the wise and loving purpose of God; that man's sin

and misery can be explained in terms of his opposition to that purpose, and cured by a new submission of man's will to God's; and that by this submission man's life acquires new unity, new meaning, new direction, and new hope.'

One particular (literary) response to the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent 'recall to religion' is worth noting because of its clear-sighted ability and earnestness. It is *Back to God*, by the Rev. W. Thompson ELLIOTT, Canon of Ripon (Nisbet; 2s. 6d. net). Canon ELLIOTT gives us a survey of the moral and spiritual conditions in our time which is remarkable for the well-balanced judgment it displays. It is exaggerated neither in one direction nor in the other. And the same quiet sincerity and restraint are in evidence all through the book.

On the favourable side he singles out certain features of our modern life for which we do not always get credit. One is the underlying moral sense which manifests itself in times of emergency in a very impressive way. The moral instincts of our people are sound, and there is a steadiness and stability of judgment which is the admiration of foreign observers. There is a simple, far-reaching sense of duty which can be seen obviously in the public services in a marked degree. Of British sailors Conrad wrote that 'in their collective capacity they can best be defined as men who lived under the command to do well or perish utterly.'

Further, it may be justly claimed that the 'social conscience' of our people is very much more sensitive than it has ever been. We regard with abhorrence practices which were formerly tolerated freely, like the exploitation of child labour. And to-day unemployment, poverty, evil conditions of housing are a manifest burden on our conscience. Moreover (if this may be brought under the heading of 'social conscience'), it is said by people in responsible positions that the standard of honesty has risen. There are still discouraging facts in this sphere, but on the whole it may be said with truth that the profit motive is not allowed to dominate the

business world to the exclusion of moral considerations.

And, finally, when we consider 'morality' in the usual sense of that word, Canon ELLIOTT finds ground for satisfaction. The gross viciousness of the past, its traffic in little girls, its sordid prostitution are for the most part gone. There is far less drunkenness, and what there is is not so beastly. There has been a general advance in the decency of behaviour. And when we consider 'religion,' there is a good deal to encourage us. There is at least a wide-spread 'interest' in religion. The attitude to outward religious duties, to church services, to the profession of faith shows a marked decline. But 'the strong religious instinct of the Englishman' is there, and it is deeply implanted in his soul.

It is well to acknowledge all this, for pessimists and critics abound. But there is another side. And this other side seems to Canon ELLIOTT to consist almost entirely of 'the growing secularism of the age.' The whole foundation of our deeper life is being shaken by this. He points to the prevalence of gambling, juvenile crime, sexual looseness, and the general tendency to identify 'civilization' with wireless, motor cars, gramophones, and the cinema. The whole emphasis on comfort and pleasure and money, and generally on the outward trappings of life, is one of the outstanding phenomena of our time.

This secularizing tendency is due to many things—the amazing material progress of the industrial era, the never-ending advance of scientific discovery, the concentration on questions of economics, fierce competition in trade, development of transport and the craze for speed by land, air, and water. All these things tend to secularize the outlook of the modern man, so that, though, in the words of Christopher Dawson, he 'has not consciously denied the Christian tradition, he has simply lost sight of it in his concentration on material progress. His loss of faith is due not so much to a change of belief as to a change of attention.'

One result of the prevailing secularism has been

an increasing humanism in the region of thought. And this has deeply influenced the religious outlook of our age. The conception in the mind of the ordinary man of the meaning of such fundamental beliefs as the reality of sin, the need of forgiveness, and the atoning work of Christ, has undergone a far-reaching change. The ordinary man is not a systematic theologian. But, by a process of permeation, he has come to think of sin as a negative thing, no more than a regrettable stumble on the upward road. He attaches very little reality to the ideas of judgment or punishment, and is inclined to resent any suggestion of either. The Cross of Christ is simply a supreme example of what the human spirit can attain to, and His teaching is regarded as not very relevant to present-day conditions.

When we have looked at these characteristics of our time, good and bad, the question inevitably suggests itself: What hope is there of better things? One answer is to be found in the striking theory put forward by Nicholas Berdyaev, that we are to-day at the end of an epoch. The present phase of secularism is temporary. It is the last stage of the process which was begun by the Renaissance, and will soon pass into a more spiritual era. There are moments in history when the whole spirit of civilization has changed with startling rapidity, when the stream of history seems to change its course and flow in a new direction. Sixteen hundred years ago, when the ancient world became Christian, was such a moment. In the sixteenth century, the Renaissance and the Reformation brought the mediæval world to an end. And to-day another great change is in process, and the real significance of it is that all the tendencies of the last four hundred years are passing away. Materialism, rationalism, secularism are the culminating expression of these tendencies, and because they have demonstrated their futility we are beginning to discover that mind and spirit must be reinstated in power.

This theory of an inevitable new beginning is supported by the attitude of leading thinkers to-day. However far some of them may be from accepting Christianity, they are pressing more and more

strongly for a recovery of spiritual values. 'The command of Nature has fallen into man's hand before he knows how to command himself,' one writer asserts. And Professor McDougall means much the same when he says that 'every step of progress physical science may make in the near future can only add to our dangers and perplexities,' and he goes on to plead that only a shift of emphasis from the mechanical to the biological sciences can save us, meaning by 'biological sciences' those which are concerned with life, physical, mental, and spiritual.

These voices are representative of the rapidly growing revolt against the mechanistic standard of values that has been so prevalent. There is among thinking people an increasing realization that the prime need of mankind is the recovery by the soul of man of a power of control over his own manifold activities, a capacity to direct those currents of change on which he seems now to be floating without apparent concern for whither he is drifting, or ability to stem the tide, when he knows full well

that it is carrying him far out of his course. The tide will not turn of itself. There is no reason why it should turn at all. And the perception of this has created in thoughtful minds in all spheres of life an intense sense of the need of a spiritual foundation for life.

The drift of Canon ELLIOTT's book is just that the Church should be awake to this prospering wind of heaven. If this age of mechanism is near the point of exhaustion, and a new era is being born in which the spiritual will be dominant, this is a great opportunity for the Church, which has as its very heart and soul the message such an age is awaiting, that faith in God is the one security in a perishing world, and that the eternal worth of man, redeemed by Christ, a child of God, can only be secured by its gospel of grace. And so he proceeds to ask, first, what are the churches for? And on the back of that, what do we need? He is very practical and plain spoken on both these matters, and his answers will do much to reinforce the appeal to the nation that has inspired his book.

The Beatitude of Giving and Receiving.

BY THE VERY REVEREND RICHARD ROBERTS, D.D., TORONTO.

I.

'I HAVE coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel,' said St. Paul on taking leave of the Ephesian elders. 'Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Ac 20³³⁻³⁵). The *logion* seems to fall into its place here with perfect aptness. Nevertheless, there may well be some hesitation in accepting the saying, as it stands in English, as a faithful rendering of our Lord's mind. Blunt, in the *Clarendon Bible: Acts*, suggests that 'it may be an authentic saying of Jesus, or it may be Paul's summary of many words of Jesus.' It is true that there are 'many words' in the Gospels that bear upon the grace of giving and upon the manner of giving. But it would be difficult to find a group

of sayings which, summarized, would give us this particular result. For it is one thing to say that it is blessed to give, and quite another to say that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

For that is not necessarily true. There cannot be givers without receivers. Giving and receiving are the obverse and reverse sides of one and the same transaction; and there is no reason why both should not be equally blessed. The man who is too proud or independent to receive what is offered to him in simple generosity is guilty of the sin of frustrating a gesture of fellowship. It may be that it requires less grace to give rightly than it does (for some persons at least) to receive rightly, and that consequently it may sometimes be more blessed to receive than to give. Certainly there is no blessedness in any but gracious giving. The giving which is marred by patronage or condescension blesses none, neither him that gives, nor him that receives; and there may be grudging and ungenerous giving, which hurts both giver and