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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR KARL BARTH has contributed a characteristic volume to the 'Challenge' series published by Messrs. James Clarke & Co. It is called *The Church and the Churches*, and certainly answers to the name of the series. There are four chapters in the book, and the subject is Church union or Church unity, and how it is to be achieved. 'Achieved' is perhaps not the right word; for union is not to be *made*. It is only to be *found*, since the only union or unity that is Christian is created by the Lord Himself. But it can be recognized and accepted by us on the right conditions. There is a good deal in the working out of this idea that is worth considering, for the argument is both brusque and challenging.

Dr. BARTH deals first with the motives that raise the question of union. There is the dissipation of spiritual and material energies in mission work that arises from the fact that there is not one Church but many confronting the 'heathen.' What a hindrance to the hearing of the message, what a bewilderment to the hearers, what a burden to serious minds is the spectacle of Churches in conflict with one another, says Dr. BARTH. Then again in the homeland the Church is confronted by all kinds of new creeds, all kinds of moral, social or political schemes for betterment, and, split up as it is into a multiplicity of bodies, the Church is unable to make good its claim to possess a loftier message than theirs. Further, the Church is hindered in its necessary duty of self-criticism and

reform by the lack of a unison of will and direction, and in its influence over its own members when faith is set against faith in this array of various bodies.

But above all other motives that compel us to seek for the unity of the Church is the task from which the Church derives its existence. This task emerges immediately from the fact that the one and only Word of God has once for all been uttered, for all men to heed, in the fact of the Incarnation. The task from which the Church derives its being is to proclaim that this has really happened, and to summon men to believe in its reality. The task as thus committed contemplates no multiplicity of Churches. The unity of the Church is the acknowledgment that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Mere 'unity' in itself is nothing. It is nothing but fallen human nature. It is a policy. It is idle and empty. The quest for the real unity of the Church is the quest for Jesus Christ as the concrete Head and Lord of the Church. Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and man is the oneness of the Church, is that unity within which there may be a multiplicity of gifts, of persons, while through it a multiplicity of Churches is excluded. We must not have 'unity' in our minds, we must have Him in our minds.

We are apt to justify the existence of separate Churches as manifesting the variety of views

men hold, as exhibiting various aspects of truth. Or, again, as unfolding the wealth of that grace which is given to mankind in Jesus Christ. The Roman, the Greek, the Lutheran, the Reformed Churches are regarded as having their special attributes and functions within an imagined organic totality. But, however well this may sound, it is not theology, it is mere sociology or philosophy of history. And it has no recognition from the New Testament. In fact we have no right to explain the multiplicity of Churches at all. We have to deal with it as we deal with sin, to recognize it as a fact that has intruded itself, as guilt which we must take upon ourselves, without the power to liberate ourselves from it.

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We would be doing a great deal for the unity of the Church if we would frankly recognize this. The only multiplicity that is Christian is that *within* the Church, namely, that of the local communities, of the gifts of the Spirit, of the believers of each sex, language, and race. It is unthinkable that to *those* multiplicities which are rooted in unity we should have to add that which tears it to pieces, unthinkable that great entire groups of communities should stand over against each other in such a way that their doctrines and confessions of faith are mutually contradictory, that what is called revelation in one place is called error in another, and that the ordinances of one group should be regarded as alien and unacceptable by another.

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If Jesus Christ is the unity of the Church, then the union of the Churches is a mandate imposed by their Lord. But the fulfilment of this mandate is wholly the work of Him who lays it upon us. In Him the Church is one, and does not await any desires, capacities, or labours of ours for its unification. Yet we have a share in this, not by virtue of any Christian activity of ours, but in faith in Jesus Christ. Let us remember that the union of the Church is not mere tolerance or civility. The idea of tolerance is not Christian. It is political and philosophical, and is not only alien but even opposed to the gospel. And moreover it is fruitless so far as union is concerned. It has never succeeded in removing the old separations, or even affecting them.

Nor is the idea of federation more hopeful or Christian. A mere federation, in itself, has nothing at all to do with real Church union. And we must say the same of the œcumenical movement. None of these expedients touches the real core of our problem. Church union is a *fact*. It cannot be manufactured, but must be found and confessed, in subordination to that already accomplished oneness of the Church which is in Jesus Christ. Let us not deceive ourselves. The union of the Churches would mean more than mutual respect or co-operation, more than understanding one another, more than common worship. It would mean a common faith, a union of the confessions into one unanimous confession.

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The way to it is listening to Christ. But we must hear Christ within the particular leading of the Church to which we owe allegiance. Dr. BARTH acknowledges that there is already a real oneness among people of diverse bodies, that there are real Christians to be found in all the Churches. And he points out that the unity of the Church will be realized as these people, in complete loyalty to their own Church, really listen to Christ 'in the terms of their own tradition and confession.' The Christ he means is not just any vague conception of the Lord but the Christ of those Scriptures which we all accept, the Christ in whom the sin of all men, their contradiction against God and their own inner self-contradiction, is done to death, taken away, forgiven, and exists no more. This is true Church unity, and only by the way of this faith will the Churches come to the oneness which is Christ Himself.

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The greatest stress is laid in our time upon the social implications of the gospel, and there is a strong tendency, as there has always been, to identify the Kingdom of God with the dominant political theory of the day.

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Now the dominant political theory of to-day runs in the direction of some form of collectivism. The system of individual ownership has fallen into

disesteem, and it is generally taken for granted that by a process at once inevitable and right all ownership will be assumed and all men's activities will be controlled by the State. There are many earnest Christian preachers and teachers who appear to regard some transition of this sort as being pretty much equivalent to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

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On the other hand, the public mind has been gravely alarmed and shocked by what it has seen of collectivism in actual practice, whether in its Fascist or its Bolshevik form. It spells tyranny, both political and religious, a tyranny more intensive and effective than the world has ever known. It may be argued, of course, that a democratic country, in gradually moving in the direction of collectivism, may safeguard itself against such tyranny, but there is a very real danger that some irretrievable step may be taken even by popular vote which would put the lives and fortunes of the people into the power of a bureaucracy or dictatorship which might play the tyrant when once it was firmly seated in the saddle. These possibilities, upon which the well-being of nations depends, cannot be too seriously pondered.

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The whole subject has received fresh and vigorous treatment in a book from the pen of Mr. Walter LIPPMANN, the well-known American humanist and ethical writer. The title is *The Good Society* (Allen & Unwin; 10s. 6d. net). It is a book which deserves to be read and considered by all interested in social and political reform to whatever school they belong. The writer says that twenty years of study and three years of writing have gone into his book. The War and the revolutions which followed it swept him off his feet intellectually, and only after years of mental struggle has he found firm ground again on which to stand. He is aware that his conclusion runs counter to the current stream of political thought, but he pulls a very strong oar. If his voice be as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, it is at least a very powerful voice and one that will assuredly be heard far and wide. It may even prove to be the herald of national salvation.

Mr. LIPPMANN begins with an appeal to history. He asks by what process has our modern civilization been evolved. Undoubtedly the answer of history is, by a process of liberation, by progressively freeing the individual from the bonds that fettered and enslaved him. The power of kings and lords was curtailed, monopolies and taxes which hindered the freedom of trade were abolished, and the rights of the common man to think his own thoughts and live his own life were asserted. The general aim of this long struggle was to give to every man free scope for his energies in a community of free men. It was a policy which was working towards a peaceful community of nations, each finding its own prosperity in the prosperity of its neighbours. Thus David Hume could write: 'I shall therefore venture to acknowledge that, not only as a man but as a British subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of Germany, Spain, Italy, and even France itself.'

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Now it seems that the nations have turned back from this road by which in past generations their liberties were won, and are now bent on putting their neck again under the yoke of authority. The State, instead of being the arbiter which by just laws holds the balance even between individuals and strives to maintain the utmost possible liberty for each, is now called upon to take into its own hands the management of everybody and every thing. And the hope is that under such State control the highest possible degree of wealth and well-being will be attained. Perhaps the chief underlying cause of this extraordinary *volte-face* is to be found in the decadence of the liberal spirit in the later nineteenth century, which with its doctrine of *laissez-faire* proved traitor to its own essential spirit and withdrew its hand from the plough while it had still a long furrow before it. It grew blind to the fact that it had still a mighty crusade before the liberty of every class and of every individual was achieved. So the mass of men, groaning under their disabilities, began to look elsewhere for their economic salvation.

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But the way of collectivism leads to inevitable disillusionment. Mr. LIPPMANN makes a terrific

attack upon it in all its forms. It is impracticable. The job of managing the whole life of a nation is too big for any man or group of men. It is vain to hope that a bureaucracy of supermen will somehow arise. The governors, whoever they may be, are but mortal men who may be tired, careless, prejudiced, ambitious, unscrupulous. A moment's reflection on the infinite complexity of a nation's life shows that the work of overhead planning is beyond human capacity. It could be done only by a rigid discipline of labour and a standardizing of the products of labour.

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Collectivism, also, instead of enriching tends to impoverish. It can function only inside an enclosed area, for out in the open market its Five Years' Plans would be upset. Hence it involves 'the whole apparatus of a politically administered economy, the fixed prices and fixed wages, the sumptuary laws, the forced labour, the communized consumption, the directed production, not to speak of the censored and managed opinion in the totalitarian states, which is a reversion to the political technic which had to be rejected in order that the industrial revolution could take place.' For this reason it is in reality a 'war economy.' It tends to cultivate an intensely nationalist spirit; it builds barriers between the nations which curtail the freedom of trade; its discipline leaves no room for the dissenter and the conscientious objector; it turns the nation into an army. The social order resulting from it is as different from the social order envisaged in the gospel as the awkward squad under the sergeant-major is different from the family circle in a Christian home.

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This leads to the ultimate objection to collectivism—that it does not respect human personality. It demands that the individual shall become an instrument of the State, and it is workable only when it can enforce this subjection. But man is inviolable because his personality is an end in itself, because, in Christian language, man has an immortal soul. This truth, which is vital to Christianity and to all spiritual religion, is the charter of the rights of man and sets a final limit to human interference. For this reason the true collectivist

is hostile to religion, and hence we see the dictators attacking the Churches. 'They are well advised. They are not stupid men. They have appraised the religious life correctly when they have seen in it the source of the infection, or, as we should call it, the source of the inspiration, that makes men secure in their manhood, rejects the pretensions of their masters, invests the human personality with infinite dignity and untold promise. They have seen truly that the religious experience must forever raise up new enemies of the totalitarian state. For in that experience the convictions which the dictators must crush are bred and continually renewed.'

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A little volume has been recently published on *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Epworth Press; 3s. 6d. net). It consists of four lectures by members of the staff of Wesley College, Headingley. The Biblical foundations of the doctrine, its history in the life and thought of the Church, and its theological implications are successively set forth in outline. Let us notice the contents of the second lecture, on 'The Spirit in the New Testament,' which is by the well-known Biblical scholar, Principal Vincent TAYLOR, D.D.

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A notable feature in the New Testament is its witness to the strong consciousness of the first Christian believers of being under the power and direction of the Spirit of God. It is not too much to say that the New Testament Church is the community of the Spirit. The Spirit enters into the most intimate relationships with believers, teaching, guiding, inspiring, constraining, and so on. There is scarcely an aspect of Christian belief and character which is not in some way or other associated with the Spirit's presence and power. It is especially to be noticed that the fruits of the Spirit are ethical. The Spirit is 'Holy,' and His power is directed to the sanctification and enrichment of life.

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As for the place of the doctrine of the Spirit in the message of Jesus, there is a very limited number of references to the Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels, not only on the part of Jesus but also on that

of the Evangelists. The explanation lies in the principle which the form-critics are emphasizing, namely, that the preservation of both narratives and sayings in the oral period A.D. 30-60 was determined by the dominating interests and problems of the primitive Christian communities. And among these the doctrine of the Spirit is not to be numbered. The belief in the Spirit was a commonplace of Apostolic Christianity.

This is said on the assumption of the essential trustworthiness of the gospel tradition. But what if Bultmann and Branscomb are right in finding that the references to the Spirit in the message of Jesus are unauthentic, being products of the Christian community? How must we explain the rarity of the references then? The fact is that it is impossible on this critical theory to account for the rarity of the references, for it is impossible to say what prevented their wholesale introduction into the stream of the gospel tradition. Why, for example, does the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels not exhort His disciples to receive the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, to manifest the fruits of the Spirit?

It looks as though the historian is justified in refusing to find an unbridgeable gap between the teaching of Jesus and the faith of the Early Church, and the theologian may build with confidence on the tradition of Jesus' reported sayings.

In the Fourth Gospel the sayings of Jesus with reference to the Spirit are more numerous than those in the Synoptic Gospels. While it is impossible to claim that these sayings reproduce the exact words of Jesus, it is just as impossible to maintain that they are inventions of the Evangelist simply put into the lips of Jesus. Sometimes the Evangelist expresses original sayings of Jesus in another idiom, sometimes he expresses what he believes to be the mind of Christ. But we cannot identify the kind or class to which a specific saying belongs.

The real question, however, is whether the Johannine sayings express the mind of Christ, and we may confidently say that they do. It may be

doubtful whether Jesus actually said that the Spirit comes from the Father, testifies of Christ, and leads men into the truth; but there is no doubt that such sayings give the teaching of Jesus as elucidated and expressed by a singularly discerning mind. The influence of the Christian community is to be found with far greater justice here than in the case of the Synoptic sayings.

So closely connected is the doctrine of the Spirit with the revelation made in Jesus Christ that it is natural to speak of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of God without any intention of making exclusive distinctions. This is the foundation upon which Christian theology must ever build. And if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, as the Gospels and the Epistles represent Him to be, and as faith and experience interpret Him, then the way is prepared 'for that long process of Christian inquiry and debate which finds its least inadequate expression in the historic doctrine of the Trinity.'

The Archbishop's 'Recall to Religion' has certainly caused in all the Churches a welcome stirring of the waters. It has at least made Christian men face the situation in all its seriousness and begin to seek earnestly for a remedy. And this of itself is good, and may be taken as a sign of the coming of better days.

Among other things it has been, partly at least, responsible for the publication by Canon Peter GREEN of an admirable little book for laymen entitled *The Christian Man* (Hodder & Stoughton; 3s. 6d. net). It may be taken as a companion volume to his Durham Lectures on 'The Man of God,' which were addressed to the clergy.

Desperate situations call for desperate remedies, and the religious situation to-day may well be regarded as desperate. At any rate, it is not a situation which can be met by any activity of the clergy alone. 'Nothing can save western civilization from complete collapse except a great return to God. Now in such a revival of religion the

clergy must obviously play a great and important part. But it may well be doubted whether the part which the laity must play, if any results are to be attained, is not greater and more important.'

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It is not merely that the clergy alone cannot possibly overtake the work, nor merely that as long as the laity are unaffected the work has obviously failed. There is more in it than that. So long as the clergy regard the laity, with the possible exception of office-bearers and church workers, as simply supplying a field for their activity, the Church must necessarily fail. 'The laity are not primarily a field in which the clergy can labour. They supply, or should supply, a field from which can be drawn active workers for Christ. Indeed the parson has failed unless he has helped his men to be, in all their work and in every relation in life, "labourers together with God." This is true alike for the sake of the men themselves, and for the sake of the Kingdom of God which needs their work.'

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Now there is no such thing as a dual standard of Christian life and morals. The Church of Rome has countenanced a deep distinction between the properly 'religious' life, so called, and the secular, demanding from the various orders of its clergy a degree of consecration which, owing to the weakness of human nature, could not be expected from the common man. This error finds a ready acceptance in many minds throughout all the Churches. But apart from the reasonable expectation that the Christian minister should be more obviously devoting himself to Christian work, there is no ground for the idea that the clergy are to live on a higher spiritual level than the laity. 'The layman who supposes that he is justified in trying to serve God on a lower level of spirituality, and with less entire self-surrender, than he himself would deem necessary in a priest, deceives himself grievously. Holiness is required of a lay Christian no less than of a priest, and the idea that a lower standard of holiness will do in the one than in the other finds no support in Holy Scripture.' Not to the Twelve only, but to all His disciples, Jesus said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' All Christians without distinc-

tion, whatever their worldly occupation or calling may be, are 'called to be saints.'

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Misunderstanding must, of course, on this point be carefully guarded against. The word 'saint' has unfortunately lost its original meaning and fallen somewhat into contempt. But it simply means 'belonging to God,' or 'set apart for the service of God.' In this sense even inanimate things, like the vessels in the Temple, could be called holy. But, of course, in morally responsible beings set apart for the service of God there is required of necessity a certain moral character in accordance with the character of the God whom they serve.

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What should be made clear is that this holiness or consecration to God is natural to man, that is to the true man that each of us ought to be, and every man's holiness should sit naturally upon him like a well-fitting garment. That holiness is natural to man in the deepest sense becomes evident when we reflect that man was created by God and is sustained by God for nothing less than this great end, that he should 'glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.' Holiness is to the soul what health is to the body. The Spirit of God is the life of the soul as the air we breathe is the life of the body. 'Holiness, healthiness of the spiritual side of man's being, means surrender to, and direction by, the Holy Spirit. That is what man was created for. And the man who is living apart from God, self-seeking and self-directed, is living an unnatural life, and is in what a doctor, if talking of the bodily state, would call a pathological or unhealthy condition. And that being so, holiness, true and real holiness, is possible for all; for boys and girls as much as for men and women, though of course the holiness of a lad or girl will be of a different kind, and show itself in different ways, from that of a man or woman in old age.'

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The statement that holiness is natural to man needs to be qualified, or rather to be properly understood. Human nature has been so far perverted by sin that man is led by his evil desires to do many things which are really unnatural. There

are many to-day who loudly claim that they are entitled to follow the desires of their own sinful hearts without restraint, and that to enlarge in every possible way the circle of their experiences is to live the more abundant life. They need to learn that there are promptings of passion which, instead of enriching life, impoverish and may even ruin it; that there are experiences which, so far from adding to the fullness of life, subtract from it, and may end by putting the final balance on the wrong side. We must therefore say to young people, in answer to their claim for full self-development and self-expression, 'You are right, absolutely right, to desire to develop all your powers and potentialities; to make the most of yourself. But the way to do so is not to throw the reins on the neck of your lower nature, but to set before you the ideal of true holiness. If we are right in believing that man is made to be in-dwelt and directed by God, then a life lived apart from God must always be a failure.'

Now there is a point at which all this must take its rise, and it is a point which must on no account be overlooked or passed in silence. 'Before anything can be perfected it must be begun, and the first step in holiness is that surrender to God, and acceptance of His Holy Spirit as Ruler and Guide, which we call conversion.' It may come in a single moment of strong decision, or it may be the fruit of a long process, a daily resistance of evil and choice of good. 'But whether as an instantaneous experience or as the result of innumerable acts of choice, one thing there must be, and that is a voluntary, distinct, and conscious acceptance of Christ as unquestioned Master, Saviour, and God. The weakness of the Church is that so many of her members have never made that choice at all.'

It is not possible here to indicate the wealth of wise Christian counsel which Canon GREEN gives to the layman for the culture of his spiritual life,

the conduct of his business life, with all its special temptations and difficulties, and for his public service to the Kingdom of God. He calls for men who, in every walk of life, will be true to their colours and staunch to their Christian principles. 'When religion is discussed in the columns of the daily press we are often assured that there is a great deal more religion than the clergy think; that men are more religious at heart than they are willing to admit; and that men who make no profession of religion are often truer followers of Jesus Christ than the active members of church and chapel. If this is really true—and personally I think ninety per cent. of it is shocking nonsense—it would seem to be a very deplorable thing. I can forgive a man who is utterly indifferent to religion for doing nothing in God's service. I find no excuse for a man who is, or at least claims to be, truly religious and an earnest follower of Jesus Christ, who is too lazy or too timid to stick to his colours.'

Amid the cares of his business and the multitudinous activities of his daily life the layman must not forget the culture of his own soul. This is due to no spiritual selfishness, but to the obvious fact that no man can do good while he is not trying to *be* good. 'It is difficult to say whether the slogan, popular before the War with a certain school of writers, which ran, "Don't bother about saving your own dirty soul. Try and do some good in the world," was more silly than wicked, or more wicked than silly. Certainly it was supremely both of these things. It was like saying to a surgeon, "Don't bother about cleansing your own dirty hands. Get on with the operation." The only result would be that the patient would die of septic poisoning.' There is nothing better a man can do for his neighbour, his country, and the world than to seek holiness, for holiness is very infectious, and the people who do most good are the people to whom God is most real.