THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

When Professor Harnack was in America last year he was accosted by an interviewer in Boston, who threw three questions at him and waited for an answer. He answered the questions. But he was taken by surprise; and after he had time to think, the answers did not satisfy him. So when he reached the University of Yale, and the students called for a speech, he took the opportunity of answering the interviewer's questions more deliberately. The questions and the answers are given in the second number of the *Yale Divinity Quarterly*.

The first question was this: 'What aim have you in your historical studies?' It was a wily question. If Professor Harnack should say that his aim was to establish the Faith he would be called an apologist. Yet he could not say that his aim was to destroy it. He replied that he had no aim. The historian, he said, has no business to have an aim. His sole business is to ask questions. If, after unprejudiced research, his questions are answered in accordance with his own wishes, let him publish the results and rejoice. But if not, it is still his duty to publish the results.

The second was a double question: 'Is there an historical kernel in the Gospels, and were the Gospels the product of Greek thought?' Clearly in its first part it is the question of an unbeliever, of an unbeliever of phenomenal stupidity and ignorance. Surely, says Professor Harnack, we are to blame that such a question should be possible. 'When I heard the question,' he says, 'I first felt indignant and ashamed; and then I asked myself, What can I do to make such a question impossible ten years hence?' But the second part of the question is scarcely better informed than the first. What it means to ask is whether the Gospels really originated in Palestine or were the product of the mythology, ethics, and philosophy of Greece. Professor Harnack expressed his emphatic conviction that the Synoptic Gospels were almost purely a product of the Jewish Palestinian mind.

'What do you think of the Abbé Loisy?' That was the third question. It was a question for the newspapers. Professor Harnack answered that Abbé Loisy is both a very devoted Catholic and also a very advanced critic. He is a more thoroughgoing Catholic, he said, than the pope or the Jesuits; and he is a more advanced critic than most Protestants. How does he manage to combine the two? He does not combine them.

He keeps them apart. That is the peculiarity of his position. And that is its impossibility.

The Abbé Loisy is not the only person who separates the Jesus of history from the Christ of the Church. In September 1903 Professor Pfleiderer delivered a lecture before the International Theological Congress at Amsterdam on the 'Early Christian Conception of Christ.' He has now expanded the lecture into a book, which has been published by Messrs. Williams & Norgate under that title. The Christ whom we know is sawn asunder by Professor Pfleiderer as completely and as unctuously as by the Abbé Loisy.

We boast of the scientific achievements of the nineteenth century. Its greatest scientific achievement, according to Professor Pfleiderer, is the separation which has been made 'between the Christ of Faith and the Man Jesus of History.' 'Now,' he says, and it is with much satisfaction he says it, 'we have reached the historic truth concerning the Founder of our religion; we can present His form, in its simple human grandeur and stripped of all mythical accessories, as the ideal of a lofty and noble religious hero, worthy of the veneration of the mind and heart of the modern world.'

It is not possible even yet, perhaps it will never be possible, to write a Life of this Jesus of history. Numerous are the Lives which have been written, but Professor Pfleiderer is dissatisfied with them all. They either add to the real Jesus some of the mythical elements of the Christ of the Church, or else they are carried aloft into the region of ideal fiction, in accordance with the imaginative disposition of their author. Harnack's *What is Christianity?* is the end, as Renan's *Life of Jesus* was the beginning, of 'a long succession of romances.'

But if it is not possible to write a Life of the Jesus of history, it is quite possible to write a Life of the Christ of the Church. That is what Professor Pfleiderer does. That is the purpose of his present volume. The method is new. He proceeds by disintegration. He takes the Christ of the Church to pieces and shows us how He has been built. He separates out the materials of which the figure has been formed; he shows us what they are and whence they came.

The Christ of the Church, says Professor Pfleiderer, has been formed out of those myths or legends which are the common property of religion all over the world. The elements of the figure are roughly separable into five groups. There is Christ the Son of God; Christ the Conqueror of Satan; Christ the Wonder-worker; Christ the Conqueror of Death and the Life-giver; Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The materials of each of these conceptions were taken from various sources. They came from Judaism, from Hellenism, from Mithraism and the Græco-Egyptian Religion, from Zoroastrianism, and even from Buddhism. They came gradually, and gradually the conception gathered shape. Take the conception of the Son of God. Follow it out in the New Testament itself. There are three stages in the history of its formation; and Professor Pfleiderer believes that these three stages may be successively and distinctly traced.

First of all, the man Jesus was raised to be the Son of God by a divine act of adoption. In its very earliest conception this act was connected with the resurrection from the dead and the ascension to heaven. But afterwards it was associated with the voice from heaven heard at His baptism. The adoption of Jesus as the Son of God did not imply that He was supernatural, it only signified that to Him had been given the office and power of the Messiah.

The next step was due to St. Paul. It was made at a date scarcely later than the first step—for Professor Pfleiderer is well aware of the difficulty of finding time for these developments. By St.

Paul Jesus was regarded as the Son of God, not in virtue of adoption, but because a spiritual personality, pre-existing in heaven, had become incarnate in Him. This new being, this Christ-Spirit, or Spirit-Christ, was not looked upon by St. Paul as God. He was still a man, but an ideal heavenly man, the express image of God and His firstborn Son, who from the beginning was destined to appear on earth in order that He might redeem mankind from the curse of sin and death and the law.

These two stages in the conception of Jesus as the Son of God may be described as the Man-God and the God-Man stages. The one was the apotheosis of a man; the other was the incarnation of a God. The last stage was their combination. It was accomplished in the second century, and among Christians of Gentile origin. It was due to the prevalence of an idea with which the Gentile Christians had long been familiar, the idea of Virgin-birth. Supernaturally conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, Jesus of Nazareth at last attained to the full stature of Godhead in Christ.

Such is Professor Pfleiderer's theory of the rise and progress of the conception of Christ the Son of God. It is a simple theory; but when Professor Pfleiderer sets out to establish it, his troubles begin. He has to fetch his proofs from far, and they are sometimes too evidently far-fetched. But his greatest trouble is with time. Give him the utmost stretch of time that can be given: it is still utterly inadequate for his purpose.

Is the fear of Hell an instrument of conversion? Mr. Clement F. Rogers, writing to the *Guardian* of 22nd February, denies that it is or ever has been.

Who says that it is? Gibbon says so. But the only evidence which Gibbon quotes is the peroration of Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*. The Lives of the Saints say so. Mr. Rogers denies that. He has read extensively in the Lives of the Saints, but he does not seem to have come upon a single saint who was converted by this fear. Puritanism says so. Mr. Rogers does not deny that. For three hundred years, he admits, Puritanism has emphasized the doctrine of Hell as an essential part of its theology, and evangelicalism has pushed it as an instrument of conversion. Therein lies the offence, and the reason for Mr. Rogers' article. In America the offence has been greater than in England. But even in America, says Mr. Rogers, when Professor Starbuck induced some hundreds of converted persons to tell him how they were converted, only fourteen per cent. ('who may easily have been mistaken') attributed their change to the fear of Hell.

In the familiar beginning of that familiar chapter of St. John's Gospel, the 13th, there is a difficulty which is probably felt more or less distinctly by every reader every time he reads it. The difficulty is in the statement with which the first verse ends. This is the verse: 'Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.'

The difficulty is in the last clause. Not in the translation of it. There is a slight difficulty in that also; and the Revisers, feeling it, have offered in the margin the alternative translation, 'he loved them to the uttermost.' But the deeper difficulty, the difficulty which everybody feels at least a little, is in the statement itself—'he loved them unto the end or to the uttermost.' Why is this statement made? Why is it made just then? It seems to stand by itself, without a proper occasion. But if the occasion is the washing of the disciples' feet, which follows, then it should be brought into closer connexion with that incident.

In the *Baptist Review and Expositor* for January Dr. S. M. Provence proposes a way of removing

the difficulty. It is a matter of punctuation. He would not put a full stop at the end of the first verse. He would make the sentence go right on to the end of the fourth verse. There is the difficulty that 'he loved them unto the end' contains a finite verb, and seems to end a sentence. Dr. Provence would throw the phrase into a parenthesis.

He then offers a free translation of the whole passage: 'But before they began to eat the paschal supper, Jesus, knowing that the time was at hand when he would leave this world and return to the Father, although he loved his friends who must remain in the world (them he loved to the last), and the feast being ready, the devil having previously put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, knowing that the Father has given all things into his hands and that he came from God, rises from the table and lays off his cloak; and taking a towel he wound it around his body.'

Dr. Provence claims that this 'fits all the circumstances.' Jerusalem was crowded with visitors who had come to the feast. Every householder had his guests. Our Lord was the host of the evening in this upper room. The company had left their sandals outside. Their feet must be washed, and there was apparently no servant. A question of priority arose among the disciples. Perhaps it was about this very service, which someone must perform. Jesus took the service upon Himself.

Now there is no doubt that this is what St. John sets out to tell us. Before he tells us, he introduces all the preliminary circumstances. He even draws one moral from the incident, the moral of Jesus' unalterable love. But surely, says Dr. Provence, he does not introduce that moral as if it were itself the story he means to tell us.

If there is one thing more than another which it is better to do than to talk about, that thing is Prayer. Nevertheless people will talk about Prayer, and especially the wrong people, the people who do not pray. Let us continue praying, but when occasion arises let us talk a little about it also.

An occasion has arisen over the issue of Dr. Hastings Rashdall's book, *Christus in Ecclesia* (T. & T. Clark; 4s. 6d. net). In that book there are three papers on Prayer. The first is on the Matter of Prayer, the second on the Manner of Prayer, and the third on Intercessory Prayer. Now when Dr. Rashdall writes upon anything he endeavours to be scientific and very frank. He is scientific and very frank when he writes upon Prayer. Does he find a place for Prayer? Does he find a place for Intercessory Prayer? He does. For the time has come when the straitest sect of the professors of natural science has been compelled to acknowledge that, in the cautious words of Dr. Rashdall, 'it is not impossible that prayers for the sick may produce a real effect, even apart from the influence which the consciousness of being prayed for must often have upon the mind of a sufferer.'

What a change is here from the attitude of Professor Tyndall. But in the name of science Dr. Rashdall can go even farther than that. In the name of science he can say, Do not cease to pray. There may come a time to you when science seems to cover the earth with the gross darkness of materialism. Yet do not cease to pray. There may come a time when you can see no Will in the universe better or holier than your own. Even then do not cease to pray. In your darkest moment you will discern at least a 'tendency that makes for righteousness'; put yourself on the side of that tendency, urges Dr. Rashdall, put yourself on its side by steady and persistent prayer, and it may be that the practical experience of the effects of treating that tendency as a Person will supply you with one great argument for the belief in a living God with whom the

human soul comes into a real personal relation in prayer.

The Bishop of Ripon has contributed an article to the *Hibbert Journal* on 'The Education of a Minister of God.' It is still felt that there are not men enough offering themselves to be educated as ministers of God. Dr. Boyd Carpenter believes that there is a matter of deeper concern than that. The men who offer themselves do not receive a good education.

A minister of God, says the Bishop of Ripon, has to be educated both intellectually and spiritually. He has to be educated intellectually. If he need not be learned with the learning of an expert, he should yet be able to appreciate the general direction of the tide of thought, and the way in which it has been influenced by currents set in motion in other days. On questions of thought, scientific discoveries, and criticisms, he needs to be abreast of his age. He must have, in short, an adequate intellectual equipment.

But the Christian minister must have more than an intellectual equipment. He is a messenger. He carries a message of eternal significance to men. It is well that he should understand his own age, but unless he compels men to measure life by the standard of eternal values, his office is that of a lecturer, not of a preacher. He lacks that prophetic and ministerial force which men expect from those who minister in spiritual things.

Intellectual equipment in touch with modern needs, and a personal spiritual meetness needed in every age—these are the two qualifications with which the Christian minister should go prepared to his work. Education may furnish the one: it cannot furnish the other. Personal ministerial fitness is a gift beyond all human power to bestow. But the man who offers himself for this high office has a right to expect that the Church will afford him the means of reaching an efficient standard of intellectual equipment.

Does the Church provide such an education for its theological students? Does any Church provide it? The Bishop of Ripon does not believe that any Church provides it. He is careful to abstain from criticising the theological institutions of the land. But he mentions three things which ought to be aimed at in every school of clerical training; and it is clear that he cannot name any school in which the aim is realized.

What are the three things which the theological student of our day should know? They are, first, the difference which the scientific method in theology has wrought. Next, the recognition that religious belief stands upon a basis of ethics. Lastly, the contents of the religious consciousness, both in non-Christian religion and also in the experience of Christians.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter does not deny that there is a general recognition now of the scientific method in theology. But he thinks it is quite superficial, and sometimes quite perverse. It is supposed that what the scientific method has done is to prove untrue certain things which had formerly been believed to be true—things like the turning of water into wine, or the rising of Christ from the dead on the third day. That is a misunderstanding. That may be one of the results of the scientific method and it may not; it is not the scientific method itself. The Resurrection of Christ from the dead may still be true, but now we must prove it true, not by deductions from theories in the air, but from facts upon solid ground. Certain movements of water and air used to be explained on the theory that Nature abhorred a vacuum. That explanation will not do now, but the movements are there still. 'If,' says the Bishop of Ripon, 'a girl believes that her lover is good because she thinks him good-looking, she may be correct in her conclusions, but her reasons are bad. If a man who wears a charm passes through battle unhurt, I may dispute the virtue of the charm without denying the fact of his preservation from wounds

or death.' The scientific method in theology searches for the true causes of religious phenomena; it does not necessarily disprove the phenomena themselves.

Well, that is the first thing that our theological colleges should do for a man. It should teach him the scientific method. The results will not necessarily be disastrous to faith. It should teach him the scientific method whatever the results may be.

In the second place, theological education must recognize the demand of our day for an ethical basis to all belief. It must recognize—to quote one sentence from the Bishop of Ripon which ought to become immortal—that 'the creed, whatever it is, must make an ethical response if it is to become a spiritual power.' He goes on, and here at least he is on solid ground: 'The only avenue to spiritual conviction is an ethical one. You may reach intellectual ascent, theological harmony, neat and compact systems of belief, through other channels, but without the sanction of the moral nature there is no faith. As it is true that as soon as the moral sense is revolted, belief in previously-accepted doctrine disappears, so it is true that it is only when the moral nature is called into active response that we can expect spiritual conviction. If, therefore, our teaching shows no point of contact with ethic, it will be, as far as spiritual response or faith is concerned, entirely valueless.'

That is the second thing which theological education must give a man. And it is as revolutionary a thing as the first. Dr. Boyd Carpenter illustrates it a little. He recalls the question of Sophocles, 'When gods do ill, why should we worship them?' He quotes from Benjamin Jowett: 'The stories of the gods of Olympia were felt to be fictions, because they were found to be immoral.' He says that the saving element in the Old Testament itself is the ethical one. The prophets insisted on it. They stood for righteousness. And standing for righteousness, they stood for faith. He comes to Christ. Christ taught that no man can reach God except through the conscience. 'If thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.' He comes down to our own day. 'If the revival in Wales,' he says, 'shows us men paying their old debts, returning loans, exhibiting a high and honourable contrition for past wrongs—in fact, first reconciling themselves with their brothers—we begin to count the revival a true work.'

The last great novelty which should enter into the education of a minister of God in our day is a recognition of the witness of the religious consciousness of man, not only in the spiritual experience of Christendom, but also in the experience of religions that are not Christian. These two things may be studied separately. For the study of Christian experience the Bishop of Ripon suggests such books as James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Granger's *Soul of a Christian*, Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*, and Forrest's *The Christ of History and of Experience*. The two things may be studied separately, but they are not separate. And perhaps the greatest revolution of modern times will take place when the study of other religions becomes a regular part of the theological curriculum, and men are taught to understand the value and significance of the religious consciousness, wherever and however it may have expressed itself.

Is there a place in true religion for the Myth? We are freely told in these days that the early narratives of Genesis are myths. Is that possible? Is it possible that we may have to adjust ourselves to that belief yet?

Dr. J. A. Stewart, White's Professor of Moral

Philosophy in the University of Oxford, holds that it is quite certain. He says that the Myth is the highest form of religious instruction. He believes that if the early narratives of Genesis had not been myths they would not have served their purpose, they would not have conveyed to man that knowledge of God and of man's own life which they do convey. If the early narratives of Genesis had not been myths they would long ago have been buried in oblivion.

Professor Stewart has published a book on the *Myths of Plato* (Macmillan; 14s. net). In that book he shows that in the Dialogues of Plato the Myth, although but an occasional instrument of instruction, is an instrument of the highest value. The Myth is mostly placed in the mouth of Socrates himself. And it is made use of at the moment when the argument has touched those eternal things which are of the deepest interest to men. It is as if Plato had realized that, much as reasoning or logical debate may do, there is a point in the search after the knowledge of God and the duty of man where it stops short, and the rest must be done by the Myth. Professor Stewart accordingly gives this volume to the study of the Platonic Myth. He gathers the Myths out of the Dialogues, translates them, annotates them, and shows by many means, but chiefly by a long illuminating Introduction, that not in the Dialogues of Plato only, but everywhere, the highest and absolutely essential form of religious instruction is the Myth.

What is a Myth? It is a story. It is a fanciful tale in which, by the aid of imaginative language, the fundamental conditions of the knowledge of God and the conduct of life are set forth. Its characters are not real nor its events historical. At least they need not be. It does not matter whether they are or not. They are often absurdly unreal and unhistorical, as when animals are made to think and speak as men. Professor Stewart would at once describe the story of the Fall as a myth, the evidence that it is a myth being quite unmistakable when the serpent is made to speak.

Now the Myth is not a story with a moral. Indeed, the less of a moral there is in it the more it is a Myth. Nor is it simply a story. It is a story in which such language is employed, or such a situation is created, as brings the mind into the presence of the Eternal; or, to use Professor Stewart's words, into a state in which we feel 'that which was and is and ever shall be' overshadowing us. The charm of the Myth is the charm of Poetry generally. There is no essential difference indeed between the Myth and such Poetry as is truly religious like the *Divina Commedia*. It is a species of Poetry which uses its own vehicle to fulfil its ends, that vehicle being the imaginary experiences of imaginary beings which go to form a story.

Professor Stewart, then, says that the Myth is essential to instruction in religion. What does he mean? Can we not instruct our children directly by teaching them actual facts and events? No, he says, we cannot. He recalls the words of Plato in the second book of the *Republic* about the religious instruction of children. The education of children, says Plato, is not to begin with instruction in 'facts' or 'truths.' It is not to begin, as we should say, with the 'elementary truths of science' and the 'facts of common life.' We fill our primers with such things, and thrust them into our children's hands. But Plato says we do wrong. Children cannot yet understand what is true in fact. We must begin with stories, with fictions, with what is false in fact. We must teach them what is literally false in order that they may get hold of what is spiritually true. And it is not simply because their only interest is in stories, although that is significant; it is because the story is the only possible means of instructing them in the things that are unseen and eternal.

Professor Stewart agrees with Plato. And it is, he seems to say, because we have been taking the wrong way with our children, that there are so

many atheists and agnostics among us. For science is opposed to religion. Science and religion, says Professor Stewart, cannot be reconciled. If we teach our children the facts of science when they are young and neglect to tell them stories, we are making it hard, perhaps we are making it impossible, for them ever to attain to a knowledge of a living personal God.

Now, without a personal God there can be no religion. This is religion, the recognition of a personal God with whom I, a person, have to do. But natural science denies a personal God. When natural science or metaphysics occupies itself with the idea of God, it always arrives at the conclusion that God is not a person. The god of modern metaphysics is the Absolute; the god of modern science is Nature, and they are none the less impersonal that they are spelt with capital letters.

That is why science is opposed to religion. The God of religion is a personal God; the God of science is impersonal. Science cannot help itself. With all the will in the world it cannot find a personal God. For personality means portion. If there is one person in the universe called God, there are other persons in it called men. Therefore God is only a part of the universe. But how, asks science, can a God that is only a part of the universe be its Maker and Ruler?

Professor Dods' New Book.[1]

By Professor the Rev. W. Sanday, D.D., LL.D., D.Sc., Oxford.

Dr. Marcus Dods always writes genially and attractively, in an easy and agreeable style, with just a pleasant subdued colour, and in a way that none can fail to understand. He is always well informed, and has a special skill in weaving in apt quotations. He addresses himself to the general public, and makes it his object to carry the average man safely through the great transition of thought that is characteristic of our time. Those who trust to his mild and reasonable guidance are not likely to go far astray.

In the little volume before me he has undertaken to sum up in seven chapters, which were originally lectures, the present position of opinion in regard to the Bible. He has done this under the following heads:—'The Bible and other Sacred Books,' 'The Canon of Scripture,' 'Revelation,' 'Inspiration,' 'Infallibility,' 'The Trustworthiness of the Gospels,' 'The Miraculous Element in the Gospels.' I am not sure how far the reader will agree with me, but I am inclined to think that under the first, the third, and the last but one of these heads the treatment is freshest and most interesting.

I may give just a few specimens of this treatment, which seem to me to be also noteworthy for their own sake. The following, I think, goes to the heart of the failure of Buddhism:—

> 'To subdue all desire was to become superior to life; and perfected triumph was to enter Nirvana, a state of passionless, apathetic, unmoved existence or non-existence. This was a view of life he could not possibly have taken had he believed in God, and his system fails because deeper even than the thirst for righteousness is the thirst for God' (page 8).

> 'I would be disposed to say that the two attributes which give canonicity are congruity with the main end of revelation and direct historical connection with the revelation of God in history' (p. 54).

> 'What is the infallibility we claim for the Bible? Is it infallibility in grammar, in style, in history, in science, or what? Its infallibility must be determined by its purpose. If you

[1] *The Bible: Its Origin and Nature*, by Marcus Dods, D.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905. 4s. 6d.