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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

Is original sin a fact, or have the theologians hitherto been altogether wrong about it? Professor ROYCE says that the theologians have been wrong about it, but that original sin is a fact.

Professor ROYCE delivered a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston, and at Manchester College, Oxford, on *The Problem of Christianity*. They have now been published by Messrs. Macmillan in two highly attractive volumes (15s. net). The lectures are obviously untheological. They are the openly avowed interpretation of a philosopher; and, as is the way with philosophers, there runs through them a scarcely concealed determination to criticise the theological interpretation of life. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that Professor ROYCE rejects the theological theory of original sin. The surprise is that he accepts original sin as a fact.

He criticises the theological statement of original sin from Paul downwards. Paul himself misunderstood it. 'His Rabbinic lore, and his habits of interpreting tradition, troubled his speech.' The consequence is that 'technical problems regarding original sin, predestination, and related topics have come to occupy so large a place in the history of theology, that, to many minds, Paul's own report of personal experience, and his statements about plain facts of human nature, have been lost to sight (so far as concerns the idea of the moral burden of the individual) in a maze of controversial complications.' The consequence is that 'to numerous modern minds the whole idea of the moral burden of the individual seems to be an invention of theologians, and to possess little or no religious importance.'

Professor ROYCE believes that that popular opinion—and it is pretty popular to-day—is a profoundly mistaken one. The theologians may have missed the meaning of it. Professor ROYCE is very sure that they *have*, right down the history of Christianity; but he is just as sure that what they have been trying to interpret is a fact. When Paul set himself to interpret what he saw, he got entangled in the meshes of Rabbinism; but what he saw he saw 'with tragic clearness.' 'He grasped the essential meaning of the moral burden of the individual with a perfectly straightforward veracity of understanding.'

The theologians would have strangled the idea of the burden of original sin if it had not been a fact of human experience, growing more and more real through all the ages of Christianity. The traditional technicalities have obscured it, but they have not been able to affect its deeper meaning or its practical significance. To-day it is in closer touch with life than ever.

What is the fact? It is that there are, deep-seated in human nature, many tendencies which our mature moral consciousness views as evil. And these tendencies 'have a basis in qualities that are transmitted by heredity.' Professor ROYCE finds the best summary of these tendencies and their evil results in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. He does not say that the vices there exposed are to be found in modern life, at least in equal glare of vileness. He is none of those who call Christianity a moral failure. What he finds is that as society reaches better manners, the conscience of the individual becomes more sensitive, and the burden of guilt, though it may be much less in the mass, is felt by the individual to be as heavy as ever.

And this burden is felt by the individual, not as the burden of his own sin only, but as a social burden. As the individual conscience becomes more sensitive, it becomes more sensitive to the sin of the community. And in this way original sin is felt more than ever as a fact. Its pressure is on the individual first. For how otherwise can he account for the evil tendencies he finds in himself? And then it is felt as a social fact. And he whose conscience has been trained by these centuries of Christian teaching cries out with Isaiah, 'I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,' feeling the double burden, not less than Isaiah because the times are fairer, but more because the conscience is more sensitive and the sense of solidarity is more pronounced.

In an article in *The British Friend* for April, Dr. Rendel HARRIS announces the discovery, in a text of the Acts of the Apostles, of the author's own name. The name is Luke. That is now a surprise to scarcely any one. A few years ago it would have been a surprise to very many.

But for the last few years the main current of recent criticism has been running in favour of a belief in the unity and authenticity of the Lucan writings. 'Thanks to the acuteness of Ramsay's archæological and historical criticism (and we may add, in spite of its occasional excesses), taken along with the linguistic researches of Hawkins, the studies in medical language of Hobart (again a case often spoiled by the worst extravagances), and finally, the weighty and apparently unanswerable criticisms of Harnack (himself a convert from very different views of the composition of the Lucan writings), we are able to affirm St. Luke's rights over the works commonly attributed to him with an emphasis that has probably not been laid upon them since their first publication.'

The estimate of recent criticism just quoted is due to Dr. Rendel HARRIS. He makes it as he leads up to the announcement of his discovery. For his discovery is no ordinary event, and to appreciate its significance we must have some knowledge of what criticism has had to pass through. Two serious difficulties have had to be encountered — one, the possibility of a double authorship, due to the presence of the 'We-Sections'; the other, the possibility of a double text, due to the widely divergent forms in which the text of the Acts has come down to us.

The existence in the Acts of the Apostles of the 'We-Sections' seemed to say that the real composer of the book was not Luke, but a later writer who had access to notes of travel which Luke had written down. If that opinion had finally prevailed, the Acts would have been a much later book than had commonly been supposed, and there would have been a corresponding reaction upon the date of the Third Gospel. It has been found impossible to detach the 'We-Sections' from the rest of the book. In language and style, in atmosphere and outlook, the book is a unity. If the 'We-Sections' are the work of Luke, the whole book is his work.

The difficulty of a double text is greater. It is so great that the late Professor BLASS felt himself obliged to assume that Luke had issued two

separate editions of the Acts in his own lifetime. The one text, it was believed, had circulated chiefly in the East, the other in the West. The Western text was fuller than the Eastern. Dr. Rendel HARRIS was able to show that the fuller Western text, which had been called Western simply because it was found in Latin and Græco-Latin manuscripts, was just as widely diffused in the Far East as in the Near West. And among the items of his proof was an Armenian commentary on the Acts in which the text used by the commentator was the second and more expanded text called Western.

Then came the discovery. Let us give it in the words of the discoverer himself: 'In Acts xx. 13, it is clear that we are either at the beginning of a "We-Section," or in the heart of one. The seventh verse of the chapter brought Paul and his companions (including the editorial "We") to Troas; the thirteenth verse describes the departure from Troas, "We" going by sea, and Paul going overland to Assos for reasons not specified. Now the Armenian commentator takes up the thread of the discourse in the words:

'"But Luke and those who were with me went on board," instead of the conventional

'"But we went before to the ships," etc.

'It only requires a microscopic change to bring out the statement, "But *I*, Luke, and those who who were with me, went on board." This, then, appears to have been the original "Western" reading; not to be neglected because it happens to be preserved only in an Armenian Catena on the Acts.'

Is it the original reading? Dr. Rendel HARRIS does not say so yet. 'It would be premature to say. We may, however, say this much, that if it is the original reading, we have the Lucan authorship attested by the composer himself; if it is a secondary reading, then, even if we may not incorporate it in our New Testament, we are entitled to say that the problem of the "We-Sections" had already been solved by a writer in the second century, even if he did not realise all the difficulties into which the hypothesis of Lucan authorship would plunge the critics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.'

One of the least observed of our Lord's parables is that little parable of the Two Kings which is found only in the Gospel according to Luke. It is little observed for two reasons. One reason is that its object has never yet, after all the history of Christianity, been rightly recognized. The other is that the most important phrase in it has been mistranslated and misunderstood.

Its object is to show us how great is God's respect for the human will. We have never recognized that yet. It is a weakness of evangelical preaching that it takes the human will for granted. The offer is salvation. The conditions are easy. Evangelical preaching is never weary of showing us how easy the conditions are. It is their ridiculous simplicity, we are told, that makes their difficulty. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' And never for a moment is this parable remembered, although the point of it is that the conditions of salvation are so difficult that we are recommended to sit down first and count the cost.

The parable is spoken for no other purpose than to warn us against hastily resolving to follow Christ. There is no other purpose in it. And the parable is not alone. 'I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,' said a certain man who encountered Him on the way. He looked at him for a moment: 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'

It does not mean that the conditions are not

simple. It means that they are not so thoughtlessly easy as popular evangelism has been wont to make them. It means that one of the conditions is the deliberate consent of the will. For that is the mark of manhood. Without the will we are not men. And every time we think that God is ready to have us with a rush, we should remember the words of John the Baptist, that He 'is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,' that if He simply desired to people heaven without considering whether it is a willing people or not, He has all the omnipotence that is necessary.

The other reason why the parable of the Two Kings is little observed is that the most important phrase in it is mistranslated or misunderstood. This is the parable: 'Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace' (Lk $14^{31.32}$).

The mistranslated phrase is the last: 'and asketh conditions of peace.' Mr. St. John THACKERAY discusses the text and the translation of that phrase in *The Journal of Theological Studies* for April. The text is somewhat uncertain because of the variation in the manuscripts as to the preposition (εἰς or πρὸς) or article and preposition combined (τὰ εἰς or τὰ πρὸς) which is translated 'conditions.' As to the word translated 'peace' (εἰρήνην) there is no variation in the manuscripts.

And that is well, because it is the mistranslation of the word translated 'peace' that has made all the misunderstanding. If we had to do with Greek alone there would be no doubt about the translation. In Greek the word means 'peace.' But in Hebrew the word means much more frequently 'welfare.' It was the ordinary form of salutation. 'Peace!'—it was our 'How d'ye do?' So if Luke was imitating the Septuagint, and it is very likely indeed that he was, he would mean that the king with the weaker army sends to the king with the stronger and asks after his health.

Does that not seem likely? Scarcely, under the circumstances. We read in the *Times* last autumn that 'Kiamil Pasha, the Grand Vizier of Turkey, has asked King Ferdinand to agree to a cessation of hostilities with a view to the direct discussion of the preliminaries of peace'; and we understood that, in the circumstances, that was the proper thing for the Grand Vizier of Turkey to do. But we should have been surprised if we had read, as Mr. THACKERAY humorously puts it, 'that the Sultan or his ministers had sent to beleaguered Adrianople or Kirk Kilisse to make kind enquiries after the health of his Majesty of Bulgaria.'

But where royalty was concerned the Semitic phrase acquired a special connotation. Turn to the Old Testament. In the eighth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel we read of a series of victories which King David celebrated over various enemies. He defeated the Philistines and Moabites; he smote Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah; and when the Syrians of Damascus came to the aid of Hadadezer they met the same fate.

Then the narrative proceeds: 'And when Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer, then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass: these also did king David dedicate unto the Lord, with the silver and gold that he dedicated of all the nations which he subdued.'

The phrase rendered in the Revised Version, 'and to salute him,' is given in the margin, 'ask,

him of his welfare.' And the meaning seems to be no more than that Toi congratulated David upon his victories over foes that were common to both. But when the versions are examined with the care spent upon them by Mr. THACKERAY, it becomes manifest that King Toi did much more than that. In short, the phrase is the usual courteous expression for an act of submission. When Toi 'saluted' David he recognized his suzerainty, as Dr. CHEYNE shows in his article on 'Toi' in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*; when he 'blessed' him he bowed the knee to him in absolute surrender.

Now Mr. THACKERAY believes that this narrative is the very source of the parable. The 'two kings' referred to by our Lord are David and Toi. Mr. THACKERAY brings forward many illustrations from other Semitic sources. But this is enough. We may take it as established that when Jesus recalled the well-known case of the one king who sent an embassy to another, He did not say that the embassy was to ask conditions of peace or even to inquire after the king's welfare, but to tender complete submission. And this is the only translation that agrees with the context. The words which follow the parable are: 'So therefore every one of you who renounceth not (saith not farewell to) all his possessions, cannot be my disciple.' We must not lay stress on the details of a parable. But that word 'therefore' binds the moral closely to the parable. Mr. THACKERAY believes that our Lord intended His hearers to recall the fact that Toi in saluting David surrendered not only his vessels of gold, silver, and brass, but also his independence.

Days of the Son of Man.

BY THE REV. EDWARD W. WINSTANLEY, D.D., WOLVERHAMPTON.

'Days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.'—LUKE xvii. 22.

THESE words seem to form one of the most studiously avoided texts in all the Gospels: they constitute a puzzle for the exegete, and for homiletical handling they present great difficulties.

Yet because of the mystery of their meaning, they exert a peculiar fascination upon the student of the sayings of the Lord Jesus.

The connexion and interpretation of the statement are alike subjects of dispute and disagreement, and it must, we think, be admitted that no certain explanation has yet been discovered and perhaps no sure solution will ever be forthcoming. However, a little consideration may serve to throw some light upon meanings that are possible, and it will not be altogether without profit to see if any practical application of the words reported of our Lord can be made for our own conditions and needs.

I. Let us examine for a moment the context in which the saying in question lies embedded. It is found almost at the opening of what can only be termed an apocalyptic section or collection of utterances concerning a future catastrophe, which is itself inserted in the so-called 'great interpolation' of this evangelist, and the verse is entirely peculiar to his record.

At the outset the definite statement is made that this revelation from the Lord's lips was uttered in response to a direct question on the part of the Pharisees, 'When does the Kingdom of God'—which had evidently formed the burden of the message of Jesus—'come?'

And the immediate answer is that much discussed, and in the last portion obscure, saying that it 'comes not with observation,' its advent cannot be calculated from external signs; nor is its manifestation local, that men may hurry thereto, 'for, behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst' (I give an ambiguous rendering of ἐντὸς ὑμῶν purposely). It is to be remarked that the opening and close of the reply of the Master are alike unique, confined to this report from the third evangelist.