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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

The Rationalist Press Association Annual for 1914 (Watts; 6d. net) publishes a correspondence which took place in July 1913 between Captain Hubert Stansbury, R.N., and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

'I have been engaged'—this is how the correspondence began—'I have been engaged,' wrote Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'for more than a month in reading your *In Quest of Truth*. I have annotated my copy from cover to cover. Then I have copied the annotations into another copy and sent it to a friend. I mention all this to show how seriously I take it. I think it is a very fine book. I have seldom read one so helpful or so full of the fruits of learning. I thank you for it.'

He afterwards speaks of his annotations as 'for the most part mere signs of admiration.' But mark that phrase, 'for the most part.' The remaining part, which he estimates at a sixth of the volume, he does not agree with. There are three things in it which he does not agree with. Captain Stansbury, he says, refuses to allow to a man even the smallest margin of determining will. He denies the possibility of continued life. And he talks of law effecting this or that, as if a law were a self-constituted thing.

Captain Stansbury replies. 'I have never,' he says, 'upheld that there is no such thing as human will-power. I have certainly given arguments which show, in my opinion, that the will-power of any individual is the result of outside influences acting upon hereditary qualities; but that is surely not the same as saying there is no human will-power.' Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says no more about that. Probably he felt that the only answer was, 'Surely it *is* the same.'

Nor does the argument about the independence and immortality of the soul lead to anything, though it is continued a little longer. Both men 'are inclined to believe' in telepathy, but the belief affects them differently. To Sir Arthur Conan Doyle it is a lesson in restraint. It warns him against dogmatism. 'Telepathy would have been unthinkable some years ago to an ordinary reasoner. Now many of us have to admit that it exists. So an independent soul or spirit may seem unthinkable and yet exist.' Captain Stansbury 'cannot see that it is any more wonderful than wireless telegraphy, or that it warrants belief in the dual existence of soul and body.' This also is left there. The only matter which is pursued in the correspondence is the meaning to be given to a law of nature.

Now it has to be realized that this old controversy is the newest controversy of all. Materialists like Captain Stansbury may go all over the world for

support to their materialism. They may go to ancient philosophy, to primitive religion, to symbolism and poetry. But this it is that makes them materialists; from this they start, and to this they always return—the universe shows no signs of being created or controlled by a mind; in Captain STANSBURY'S words, it 'consists of an eternal substance, ether, and an eternal energy, operating in accordance with the eternal qualities of the primal electricity and ether.'

Sir Arthur Conan DOYLE uses arguments to the contrary. 'You appear to think,' he says, 'that if you can demonstrate some points which do not show design'—Captain STANSBURY had referred to 'the recent occurrences in Macedonia, the *Titanic* disaster, and the Messina earthquake' —'you upset the theory; whereas I feel that, if I can show evidences of design anywhere—and I see them nearly everywhere—then I prove my point, since we cannot be omniscient and explain everything. I can afford to let a hundred points go, and profess ignorance of them, if on the hundred-and-first I can give reasonable proof of purpose in creation. To my eyes the good enormously preponderates, and I am prepared to wait a few æons before the mystery of evil is unveiled.'

Who has the advantage? No doubt Captain STANSBURY thinks it is he, for the correspondence is sent by him to the magazine. But there are two considerations. First, he is dogmatic just where he ought not to be; his opponent is never so. And secondly, he is outdone by the other in courtesy, that inimitable evidence of a wholesome belief. Once Captain STANSBURY employs the familiar argument: 'Your views about God seem exactly the same as those I held myself a few years ago, before I had sufficient leisure to thoroughly study the subject.' He even adds, 'Will you excuse my saying—for it sounds very presumptuous—that you read my book in the light of your conviction of a God-ruled universe, and, by dogmatically rejecting every statement that appears to conflict with that conviction, you have failed to follow my argument.' The rudeness only makes Sir Arthur Conan DOYLE more careful to be courteous and considerate. It is he that has the advantage.

The Religion of the Atonement (Longmans; 1s. net) is one of the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Divinity Publications. It contains three lectures delivered in Liverpool by Canon J. G. SIMPSON of St. Paul's.

Canon SIMPSON believes that one of the chief theological tasks of the twentieth century will be the rescue of the doctrine of the Atonement from the comparative neglect into which it had fallen during the nineteenth century. The statement is worth considering. The popular belief is that we have passed away from all ideas of atonement for ever. Yet Canon SIMPSON is fully abreast of the movements of thought of our time and keenly sensitive to their direction.

Why was the doctrine of the Atonement neglected in the nineteenth century? It was not denied; it was not belittled; the attitude was not opposition, it was neglect. The neglect was due to the emphasis laid on the Incarnation. That emphasis has served some good purpose. 'What the invaluable teaching of the nineteenth century —the Oxford Movement, F. D. MAURICE, WESTCOTT, the authors of *Lux Mundi* and the circle which gather round them—has fixed, let us hope indelibly, in the conscience of the Church, is the great truth that it is the living personality of Christ our Lord which is the centre of the faith and life of the Church.'

The emphasis on the Incarnation was natural. For the Evangelicalism which went before had become hard and formal. It had almost transformed Jesus into an official mediator. It emphasized the transaction which redeemed at the expense of the personal relations which were

effected by the redemption. It ran the risk of substituting the way of salvation for Christ who is the way.

The reaction was natural, if not inevitable. And as usual it went too far. It went so far as to run a far greater risk than the other, the risk of having no gospel to offer. For 'it is quite possible,' says Canon SIMPSON, 'to construct a system, and that with the aid of the New Testament, developed out of the Divine humanity of our Lord, which recognizes the Church as His Body, which justifies the sacraments as extensions of the Incarnation, and which unifies all things in heaven and earth in the Incarnate Word as its central principle, and leave out what is distinctively Christian.'

In any case, the theology of the nineteenth century, the theology of the Church of England, avoided the language and ideas proper to an evangelical theology. Phrases like 'the finished work,' were looked at from a distance and uneasily. Sacrifice was interpreted in terms of self-sacrifice. Substitution was either definitely rejected or moralized out of all semblance to itself. And the death of Christ came to be looked upon as simply a result of the Incarnation.

Now Canon SIMPSON holds that this emphasis laid upon the Incarnation is untrue to the New Testament. 'It does not help us to understand St. Paul when he declares that "God commendeth his own love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died," or St. John when he finds the warrant and source of love in the fact that God "sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."' No separation, he says, is possible between Christ and His Cross. The preaching of Christ is the Word of the Cross. However manifold the apostolic faith may be, it is all comprised within the limits of Christ crucified. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the apprehension of Truth and the attainment of Holiness, are comprehended within, not realized side by side with, the good news of the free favour of God, whereby He reconciles us to Himself in the redeeming personality of His Son. 'Some of my Oxford friends,' says Canon SIMPSON, 'remind me of a bowler, perfect in delivery, in pitch, and everything else, *but invariably off the wicket.*'

Dr. A. C. HEADLAM was invited to write one of the 'Cambridge Manuals of Science and Letters,' the subject being *St. Paul and Christianity.* When it was written it was found to be 'considerably too long for the series,' and as he thought it had been unduly compressed already and he could not compress it more, he was allowed to issue it independently (Murray; 5s. net).

What does 'St. Paul and Christianity' mean? 'I was left,' says Dr. HEADLAM, 'to interpret the title for myself, and I took it to mean a study of the teaching of St. Paul and its place in the development of Christianity.' It is not wonderful that Dr. HEADLAM found that that was too large a subject for a Cambridge Manual. In order to bring it within compass he resolved to express his own opinion on the points that are under discussion, and say nothing about the views held by others. And he did not think we should lose much: 'a discussion of opinions is never really illuminating.' But now that the separate publication gives him room, he writes a preface to the book in which he presents us with a survey of 'the main alternative opinions about St. Paul's theological position which have been held.'

He begins with the critical question. There is considerable diversity of opinion as to the number of letters which belong to St. Paul. Dr. HEADLAM believes that all the thirteen epistles which claim to be his were actually written by him. No serious scholar doubts the genuineness of the four principal epistles—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians—'with the exception of one particular school of Dutch critics who have not succeeded in gaining any credence for their views.' Nor are there many now who reject 1 Thessalonians,

Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. There are some who doubt Second Thessalonians and Ephesians; there are more who refuse to accept the Pastoral Epistles.

Of 2 Thessalonians Dr. HEADLAM says nothing. Of the Pastoral Epistles he says that 'for our purpose' their genuineness matters little. But of Ephesians he has this striking word to say: 'It is in my opinion fundamental to a proper understanding of St. Paul's thought. To me Ephesians is Pauline through and through, and more even than Romans represents the deepest thoughts of the Apostle; and to hold, as some would do, that it is a compilation, or that it is largely interpolated, shews an incapacity (in my view) to form a judgement of any value in critical matters.'

The next question is the origin of St. Paul's distinctive thought. Was St. Paul a Hellenist? There is a considerable school in Germany—it is best represented in England by Professor Percy GARDNER—which seeks to explain much of St. Paul's teaching as the product of Hellenic influence. Dr. HEADLAM definitely rejects that theory. It is true that St. Paul used the Greek language. It is true also that the Jews had been under Hellenic influence ever since the conquest of the East by Alexander, and 'a clever, many-sided man like St. Paul could not move about in the Graeco-Roman world without being affected by it; but none of these influences touched the heart of his thought. In no case did they penetrate beneath the surface. St. Paul was at heart a Jew and a Pharisee. His mind had been formed in the Rabbinical schools, and Pharisaism had been developed on lines antagonistic to Hellenism and Hellenistic Judaism.'

The third question is the relation of St. Paul to the primitive Church. To understand this question we have still to go back to Baur and Tübingen, and to the theory that between St. Paul and the original Apostles there was a complete and fundamental schism, two schools being formed, the Ebionite or Jewish Christian, and the Pauline or Hellenic Christian; and that Catholic Christianity rose out of a combination or conciliation of these two extreme schools. Nobody believes that now. But its influence lingers; and we must go back to Baur to understand even Kirsopp Lake.'

Now 'it is obvious to any one who reads St. Paul, that he was a man of pronounced and decisive individuality; that he held his opinions strongly and definitely; that he would not be patient of half-measures or compromises, and that there were occasions when he differed from the other Apostles.' But on all the main lines of Christian teaching, St. Paul and the primitive Apostles were at one. What he condemned in them was not their theology but their timidity. He realized more fully than they did that Christianity was to be emancipated from Judaism, and he was prepared, as they were not, to carry things to a logical conclusion; but the difference between them was not fundamental.

Was St. Paul the founder of Christianity? That is the next question. WREDE heads the School which answers Yes. Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah. It was St. Paul that gave Him that title and outlined His Messianic functions. And this he did out of his own thinking, which was the more his own that he did not know anything of Jesus personally and boasted that he did not.

WREDE lays much stress on the passage in which St. Paul disclaims knowledge of Jesus 'after the flesh.' Dr. HEADLAM believes that he misunderstands it and so makes an entirely illegitimate use of it. But the best reply to WREDE is to show that St. Paul's hand is nowhere to be recognized in the Gospels. Says Dr. HEADLAM, 'The most striking characteristic of the Synoptic Gospels, and, for that matter, of St. John also, is the complete absence in them of any of those features which are commonly described as Pauline.

In almost every point they represent simpler, more primitive, and I believe higher, traditions. There is no sign of Pharisaic thought. There is no trace of the influence of Pauline categories. They represent the source, and not the result, of St. Paul's teaching.'

Last of all there is the modern eschatologist. How short a time it is since the eschatological idea seemed triumphant! How many of us are eschatologists now? Dr. HEADLAM is scornful of the eschatologist and of no other. The modern eschatologist is 'so proud of having brought us back to the historical standpoint that he cannot see anything else. He is not quite so irrational when he is studying St. Paul as when he is examining the teaching of Jesus, but he finds it very difficult to recognize the limits of his theories. He is far too certain that his formulas will explain everything; he is determined to carry out a narrow theory logically, and therefore becomes irrational.'

There is eschatology in St. Paul. The eschatology in St. Paul is fundamental to his thinking. But it is not his only mental equipment. Old Testament Judaism is there, and Pharisaism; the transformation effected by his own religious experience is there, and his strong ethical interest; above all, the uniqueness of the teaching of Jesus is there, 'the sweet and blessed figure of Jesus of Nazareth.'

Who was the disciple that was 'known unto the high priest'? The text is, 'And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and [so did] another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter' (Jn $18^{15.16}$ R.V.). Who was this 'other disciple'? It is commonly understood that it was John. Dr. Edwin ABBOTT believes that it was Judas Iscariot.

The belief is not entirely new. One at least, HEUMANN, made the suggestion many years ago, as any one may see by referring to ALFORD. Any one may see also what ALFORD thought of the suggestion. His words are: 'surely too absurd to need confutation.' He adds, 'The whole character of the incident will prevent any real student of St. John's style and manner from entertaining such a supposition for a moment.' Yet it is just the character of the incident and St. John's style and manner that Dr. ABBOTT relies upon for his evidence.

Dr. ABBOTT has issued another of his ever welcome and ever surprising studies in the Gospels (Cambridge: At the University Press; 2s. net). He calls it *Miscellanea Evangelica* (*I*). It contains three discussions, one on the words 'Nazarene and Nazoraean,' one on 'The Disciple that was "known unto the High Priest,"' and one on 'The Interpretation of Early Christian Poetry.' These discussions are to form part of the appendixes to Section II. of 'The Fourfold Gospel,' which is itself to be Part X. of Diatessarica. It is the second of these discussions that we are to look at now.

Dr. ABBOTT thinks that the disciple who knew the high priest could not have been John; the character of the incident and St. John's style and manner are against it. He says: 'The more we reflect on the consistent conception of the quiet, thoughtful, and retiring character of the beloved disciple in the Fourth Gospel, the more difficult shall we find it to believe that he was an intimate friend of Caiaphas, or that he was made the instrument of plunging Peter into temptation by his impulsive conduct, or that the author of the Fourth Gospel intends us to believe this.'

But let us begin at the beginning. One reason —Dr. ABBOTT says it is the main reason—for the belief that this disciple was John is the fact that a little later John is spoken of as 'the other disciple whom Jesus loved.' That disciple, says Dr.

ABBOTT, is undoubtedly John. It was natural, therefore, to infer that 'the other disciple' who knew the high priest, and who is brought into close connexion with Peter, was also John.

But observe the phrase 'known unto the high priest.' Is 'known' an adequate rendering? The Greek word, as applied to persons, is extremely rare. In the New Testament it occurs only here and in other two passages. In one of these the parents of Jesus are described as searching for Him among their kindred and 'acquaintance.' In the other we are told that all His 'acquaintance' stood afar off round the cross. Now, the same Greek word is used in the Septuagint at Ps 55^{13}, and it is translated 'acquaintance' in the Authorized Version. The Revisers, however, felt that 'acquaintance' was not sufficient, and rendered the word by 'familiar friend.' This, says Dr. ABBOTT, and nothing less than this, is its meaning in the Septuagint and the New Testament—'intimate friend,' a person 'in one's bosom' or 'in one's counsels.'

What is said, therefore, about 'the other disciple' here is that he was the 'intimate partaker of the high priest's counsels.' Could that be said of John? The verse immediately follows that in which we are reminded that 'Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.' 'Is it likely,' asks Dr. ABBOTT, 'that a Gospel written in the name of "the disciple whom Jesus loved" should say, in effect, that that disciple was "in the counsels of" the High Priest who was plotting the death of Jesus—and this on the very eve of His crucifixion?'

It is true that John is often brought into relation with Peter. But so, once at least, is Judas Iscariot. The first Johannine mention of Judas Iscariot follows the Confession of Simon Peter. Is it not possible that St. John is bringing him into relation with Peter here and calling him 'the other disciple,' not to suggest identity, as has been assumed, but contrast? 'How could you suppose—he might perhaps say to us, complaining of our dulness of comprehension—that I intended you to identify another disciple who was the bosom friend of Caiaphas, the murderer of Jesus, with the other disciple whom Jesus loved?'

Again, it is clear to Dr. ABBOTT that Peter was led into the high priest's palace on this occasion to be tempted of the devil. Christ had warned him that it was Satan's desire to have him that he might sift him as wheat. The sifting is at hand, and Judas is the instrument. Peter had come up to the door that he might learn the earliest tidings of the result of the trial and carry it to the rest. Judas is within. He comes out, finds Peter and brings him in, with the disastrous consequences we know of. An early interpreter of the incident, the poet Nonnus, says that he 'took him by the hand, and brought him in,' as if Peter were unwilling to run the risk. Be that as it may, it is clear to Dr. ABBOTT that 'if the friend of the High Priest had not taken Peter into the High Priest's hall, Peter—humanly speaking—would not have denied his Master.'

The Epistle to the Colossians and its Christology.

BY THE REV. JAMES IVERACH, D.D., PRINCIPAL OF THE UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

IT is acknowledged on all hands that the Epistles of the Captivity have a distinctive place in the literature of the New Testament, and that, if they are Pauline, they have a peculiar place in the Pauline literature. So distinctive is their peculiarity that it has formed the ground for a denial of the Pauline authorship. In many ways they indicate a development of conceptions familiar

to the reader of earlier Pauline Epistles. The doctrine of the Person of Christ, of His place, and of His work is set forth with a greater fulness, and with more detailed reference to God, to man, and to the world than in the former Epistles. May this fuller development be regarded as the work of the Apostle himself, or is it to be reckoned the work of a school of disciples? This is not the place for a full discussion of the theology of St. Paul, or for an inquiry into the various influences that moulded his thought and guided his life. What we wish to deal with are the Epistles of the Captivity, and their significance for the student of Pauline doctrine. It may be asked, however, whether there is anything in these Epistles inconsistent with the thought and doctrine contained in the Apostle's acknowledged writings.

Whether we have regard to the accounts of St. Paul's activity as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, or to the statements of his acknowledged Epistles, there is one consistent outcome of such a study of his life and activity. It is one gospel he has to preach, one testimony he has to give. In this gospel he knows no change. The burden of it, in its simplicity, independence, and exclusiveness, is the fact that Jesus Christ is the witness and the bearer of the historical revelation of God to the world. God has revealed Himself in Christ, and has in Christ made provision for the need of the world. In the earliest accounts of the activity of the Apostle, as in the latest, this is the centre of his teaching. From it he always starts, to it he always returns. But the unfolding of this fundamental thought proceeds along lines of development which can be traced. Sometimes it is developed (shall we say?) out of the meditation and the reflexion of the Apostle, as he strives to make clear to himself the implications of the fundamental thought of the fact of Christ, and His significance for the world. On this endeavour we may conceive him exhausting all the stores of his knowledge, ransacking all the resources of his reading to find fitting expression for the meaning of the great fact which had taken possession of his mind, to wit, that Christ was the final revelation of God to the world. How far this speculative satisfaction impelled the Apostle we may not say; for it was ruled by his own practical need, and the needs of the churches he had founded. What aspects of the fulness of Christ were to be set forth at any moment were determined by questions which emerged in the course of his work. In the course of his missionary activity, while he always preached Jesus Christ, the aspect he set forth varied. Yet all the aspects were aspects of the one Christ. Thus, he set forth Christ as Him who delivered men from the coming wrath, as we find it in the Thessalonian Epistles. Other aspects were presented in relation to the polemic against his Judaistic opponents. But in every case we gain the impression that Christ is more, and means more, than that aspect of His person and His work which St. Paul laid stress on at the time of writing. For every question which arises, whether doctrinal or practical, is answered by a reference to the mind of Christ, or to the person of Christ, or to His example. One part of the work of the Apostle was to set forth Christ so as to commend to the heathen the gospel of the living God and the redemption that was in Christ, in order that they might be set free from false notions of God, inadequate thoughts of how man was to be made just with God, the false conceptions of the ideal of human life. In the polemic against Judaism he had occasion to set forth Christ as the rule and meaning of the O.T. dispensation, and to show how believers in Him were delivered from the self-righteousness of the Jews, and from the false notions of the mystic conceptions of religion current among this people in Corinth and elsewhere. In the course of his apostolic activity new questions arose and new circumstances emerged which called for a fuller statement of the contents of the gospel entrusted to him. He had to set forth the reality of it, to free it from unclearness, from misrepresentation, and from misunderstandings, and to come to a clear understanding of the meaning of the gospel, its place in the Divine economy, and its sphere in the history of humanity and in the evolution of the Divine purpose of love. Already in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Corinthians there are significant lines of thought, which indicate that the gospel had a universal meaning, that it was the meaning and the goal of the Divine purpose, and the culmination of God's way of salvation for men. Many of these lines of thought indicate clearly the way in which the Apostle was walking, and point towards the goal of his thought, but the goal itself is not yet in sight. In the Epistles of the Captivity we find these undeveloped thoughts taken up again, worked out afresh, and brought to their legitimate

conclusion. Especially is this the case with the doctrine of the Person of Christ, the doctrine of the Church, and the new significance given to the doctrine of redemption in opposition to the incipient Gnosticism of Colossæ.

It is not necessary to spend time on questions of introduction. The evidence for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Colossians is ample, and need not be repeated here. Nor shall we raise any question as to the precise time in the Roman captivity when the Epistle was written. It is generally acknowledged that it is Pauline, that it was written during the Apostle's captivity at Rome, that it is a whole, free from interpolation, and that it represents the mind of St. Paul at the period when it was written. Here we shall confine our attention to the contents of the Epistle, and the relation of its teaching to the earlier Pauline Epistles. We shall have occasion to inquire into the circumstances which called forth this new exposition of the doctrine of Christ, what led to this development of the doctrine of the Church, and the new description of the fact and meaning of redemption. It is to be remembered that, along with the letter addressed to the Church at Colossæ, St. Paul had sent a letter to Philemon, in which he had discussed matters personal to Philemon. The personal matter had, indeed, given occasion to the setting forth of principles of world-wide interest and application — principles which were to have abiding results in all the ages of men. It is of interest to observe that one of the Epistles of the Captivity was addressed to an individual, another to the Church at Colossæ, while a third, now known as the Epistle to the Ephesians, seems to have been addressed to all the churches of the valley of the Lycus. This appears to be the most probable view, and that which best fits all the facts.

Three of the churches in the valley of the Lycus are mentioned in our Epistle. Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis appear together as churches where Epaphras had laboured, and for which he had had a special care and affection (Col 4^{13}). But the connexion between Colossæ and Laodicea was closer than the bond which united the three. Similar conditions appear to have existed in Laodicea and Colossæ, and they seem to have been liable to similar dangers. For, when the Apostle passes from the more general statements to special conditions, he couples the two churches in a remarkable way: 'For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh' (2^1). Again he conjoins them in the injunction that 'when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea' (4^{16}).

What the conditions common to Colossæ and Laodicea were may be gathered from the fresh development of the doctrine of the person, place, and work of Christ, which in this Epistle attains to a fulness not exhibited previously in any Pauline Epistle. It may be gathered also from an examination of the specific errors in doctrine and practice against which the Apostle warns his readers. These two things, however, are closely connected. As each fresh difficulty emerged, and as each new danger arose, St. Paul thought of Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In dealing with the practical errors of the Corinthians, or with their speculative difficulties regarding the Resurrection, the Apostle found the answer to both questions in a fresh unfolding of the significance of Christ. The advance in his exposition of the person and work of Christ and the added fulness of his exposition arose out of his further reflexion on Him, and this reflexion was called forth by the pressing nature of the situation, as disclosed to him by Epaphras, regarding the speculations and the practice of the Church at Colossæ. As remarked above, the thought of St. Paul with regard to Christ was really one, from the first Epistle to the last. But that thought and its contents became clearer to him as the years passed, and more particularly that clearness was attained under the pressure of the need of the time, and the necessity of finding principles of guidance for the thought and action of the churches. Nor can we forget the influence of the growing experience of fellowship with Christ, of the experience in particular of the grace of Christ flowing in on him in all the critical situations of his life, and of the constant help received from Christ in all these emergencies. Through all his life Christ was the ruler of his thought, the guide of his conduct, the centre, source, and goal of all his striving, and daily he had fresh experience of the infinite resources of Christ and of His ability to meet his intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs. His knowledge of Christ was always a

growing one, even if his felt dependence was absolute throughout.

Thus we should expect that the particular exposition of the doctrine of Christ set forth in the first chapter of the Epistle should be directed towards the special circumstances of the Church at Colossæ, and that the errors indicated in the second chapter were such as needed the special unfolding of the riches of Christ. The two hang together.

The doctrine set forth is such as to meet the situation, and the errors are such as needed that form of exposition. Underlying both is the persuasion of the Apostle that Christ is sufficient to meet all difficulties, whether speculative or practical, and that if men could only learn Christ and know Him, they would be safe from every danger, and secure in every situation.

(To be continued.)

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF ACTS.

ACTS v. 31.

Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.

IT is interesting to trace the rapid development which took place in St. Peter after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. He stood out at once as the foremost of the Apostles, not only with a new courage of faith, but also with gifts of speech hitherto latent. His first sermon showed how clearly he had grasped the gospel, and how firm was his conviction of its truth. But from this start he made remarkable progress in fulness of Christian knowledge, in strength of assurance, and in courage of spirit.

1. There is a progress in his view of Jesus Christ. In his first sermon he spoke of Him as a man approved of God, and closed by saying, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.' In his address to the people at Solomon's porch, he spoke of Jesus Christ as the Holy and Righteous One, and as the Author of life. Now he advances still further and declares that He is exalted by God to be a Prince and a Saviour. St. Peter's belief in Jesus Christ expanded and took in new elements through the inspiration of the Spirit.

2. There is also a growing assurance. From the first he did not hesitate in his avowal of faith in the risen Redeemer; but as his thoughts of Jesus Christ were heightened and enlarged, his conviction gained strength, which no authority of Sanhedrin, or tradition of the fathers, could shake or disturb.

3. With growing assurance his courage also grew. It was strengthened partly by opposition and partly by the manifest help and interposition of God. He fearlessly addressed the assembled multitude who listened eagerly to his words; but afterwards, when brought before the Sanhedrin, and again, on his release from prison, he said boldly, 'We must obey God rather than men.' Thus he justified the name which His Master had given him, and proved himself to be the rock-like disciple.

How can we grow in faith? It begins very simply, when we believe in God's existence, but it develops on all sides, till it embraces the following splendid elements:—

Assurance of God's pardon and love;
Unfailing confidence in His providential wisdom;
Perfect assurance that He answers our prayers;
Utter repose in His guardianship to all Eternity;
The disappearance of fear;
The ability to do all 'in God.'

'There is the same glow,' says the great philologist, Max Müller, 'about the setting sun as there is about the rising sun; but there lies between the two a whole world, a journey through the whole sky and over the whole earth.' The child's faith is the rising sun; the faith of the dying saint is the setting sun.[1]

I.

THE EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

'Him did God exalt.'

In our text the Apostle reaches the highest note he has yet struck, and says, 'Him did God exalt

[1] J. A. Clapperton, *Culture of the Christian Heart*, 46.