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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

AMONG the things that in our day puzzle the reader of the Bible, one is the way it deals with dreams. Practical persons have long ago come to the conclusion that there is nothing in them. Was there ever anything in them? If there was not, what is the modern practical person to do with the story of Joseph?

An answer has been offered by a great German pathologist, Professor FREUD. He believes in dreams. He believes also in their interpretation. He believes that any skilful and patient physician can lead you to tell your dream in such a way that you see there is something in it. He himself has done this over and over again. And in his little book *On Dreams*, just translated into English by Dr. M. D. EDER (Heinemann; 3s. 6d. net), he gives many examples.

Are his examples convincing? Do they convince the ordinary dreamer that his dreams have a meaning, and that it is possible to discover the meaning of them? That depends on the dreamer. What is of more consequence, they have convinced skilled pathologists and experienced psychologists. Dr. W. Leslie MACKENZIE has written an introduction to the English edition of the book, and he says that hitherto, as observers have increased in experience of Professor FREUD'S methods, they have gained in conviction. 'It looks'—these also are his words—'it looks as if once more the "interpretation of dreams" had become a reality.'

The latest form of worship is called *The Cult of the Passing Moment*. Its priest is the Right Rev. Arthur CHANDLER, Bishop of Bloemfontein. A full account of it will be found in a book with that very title which has been published by Messrs. Methuen (3s. 6d. net).

The Cult of the Passing Moment is an emotional worship. Its devotee gives attention to the immediate impressions which are made upon his feelings, and to these alone. He lives in, and he lives for, each moment as it passes. He believes that the passing moment and the passing feeling are all that he has to count upon, and he makes the most of them.

Yet it is a worship that demands self-culture. The worshipper must educate himself to understand the messages which come and go so quickly; to catch the value and significance of the sound before it has died away; to appreciate the effects of form and colour which each turn of the ever-turning kaleidoscope brings before his eyes; to decipher the faint stamp of the feeling before it has been obliterated or obscured. But there is

no painful monotony in this education. The experience is of particular concrete impressions, together with the anticipations and surprises of which they are the occasion. And they never fail to furnish inexhaustible interest and delight.

The impressions come and go, but they do not pass for ever. They survive in a fashion as ideas in the memory. They thus form a link with the past and secure a certain amount of continuity to our lives. Not only so, but they are often taken possession of by the artist, who confers immortality upon them. For to the artist general impressions are of no use. They are dull, drab, uninteresting. The element of difference and individuality, the unexpectedness of things, the lights and shades and contrasts, the subtle characterizations which make up the life and beauty of the visible world —all these, which are found in immediate perception, which are matter of impression and feeling, and which belong to the passing moment—all these are the materials with which the artist works.

Thus the Cult of the Passing Moment, which is so much in itself, receives much encouragement from culture and from memory and from art. It has just one defect. The more exquisitely the things of the passing moment are enjoyed, the more quickly they pass. And when the worshipper turns to memory for a prolongation of his pleasure, he finds the bitter mixed with the sweet. He finds the bitter greatly predominate over the sweet. It even becomes a ghoulish thing to haunt in memory the scenes of past delights. And though art is undoubtedly able to arrest some particularly exquisite moment and make it ours for ever, as the Greek potter arrested the moment of passionate love—

> And ever shalt thou love and she be fair,

yet the pleasure is not arrested with it. There is always some artificiality about the statue or the vase. The boy in the Capitoline Museum cannot be always extracting the thorn from his foot; the discobolus cannot be for ever balanced in that perfect poise; they cannot always be young and strong; they too must be passing into other phases of anxiety and failure, and age and decay. 'All things pass, and nothing abides'; culture and memory and art are alike powerless to soften the hard fact, or to deal with the depressing sense of the futility of things which it brings with it.

And so the Cult of the Passing Moment has broken down. It has broken down already. As mere sensation, as the determination to seize the pleasure of the moment and make the most of it, there is no doubt that it is an utter failure. The 'pleasure of the moment' is too transitory and elusive to make life worth living. Archippus and his Cyrenaics tried it long ago, and had to discard it in favour of 'a life pleasant on the whole,' which of course they could nowhere find.

But the Bishop of Bloemfontein has not become the priest of this new cult for nothing. He has seen that it will be all right if it obtains a permanent moral background. He has come to give it that background. That background is religion. That background is God. If the Cult of the Passing Moment accepts God and becomes religious—and how else can it truly be called a cult? —then it will overcome all its obstacles and retain its own ever exquisite delights and ever fresh surprises.

And the gift is twice blessed. For if religion enriches the cult of the moment with a permanent background and a moral character, she receives from it an element of vivacity which she sometimes lacks, and gets rid of much dead wood of formalism and stiffness. This, indeed, can readily be recognized as the natural result of such a union; but what is less obvious is that her acceptance of the doctrine of flux will also endow religion with a quality of restfulness and tranquillity—a quality due not directly to the sensationalism of that doctrine, but to the inter-action between sensationalism on the one hand and belief in God on the other.

First, with God at the back of it, the Cult of the Passing Moment offers its devotees rest, such restfulness as they will find no other where. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.' When? Every moment, and every moment as it passes. When God's will is recognized in everything that happens; when every passing moment is regarded as charged with a message which comes from Him, tells us about Him, and is a bond of union between Him and us. God is a permanent Being; the passing moments are the infinitely various expressions of His will; the simplicity which treats them as such is the most perfect reliance upon Him, and therefore an unfailing source of restfulness and peace. The man who really trusts God waits upon Him for His orders day by day. When God says, 'Come,' he comes; when God says, 'Go,' he goes; when God says, 'Do this,' he does it. And in this simplicity of obedience he finds the acme of happiness and peace.

Does the Bishop of Bloemfontein mean that a man gets the highest measure of peace and happiness by refusing to form his own plans, and weigh reasons and propound different lines of action? That is just what he means. He means that God's guidance comes to us in the things that happen from moment to moment. And we recognize it as God's guidance more and more surely as we grow in the power of insight which results from simplicity of heart. For as we thus live in the moment we live in eternity. As we catch the passing impression we are in touch with the Permanent. Other people try to ignore the momentariness of the passing moment; they try to carve the flowing stream into solid 'things' which they can keep and for which they can live; like the Israelites, they try to store up the manna which is given for each day's separate needs; like the Apostles on the Mount, they try to build enduring tabernacles for fleeting manifestations of divine glory. But these 'things' dissolve before their eyes and return to the fluidity which is their natural and proper state, and their owner finds himself left desolate.

But if the Cult of the Passing Moment is so blessed, who are the worshippers? They are the saints. It is the saints who have pre-eminently practised this cult. And that is how we are to understand their characteristic happiness. It is the cult of the moment that has made them saints. Their sanctity has come from their taking each moment as it comes, with its call to prayer or suffering or action, and obeying each such single call whole-heartedly as a call from God. In other words, the saints have regarded the moment *sub specie eternitatis*; each moment has had for them an infinite value and an infinite significance and an infinite claim on their attention. And so it comes to pass, as it has been truly said, that the saints are the people who do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

In *The Constructive Quarterly* for March there is an article by the Bishop of Oxford on miracles. The article is entitled 'The Place of Symbolism in Religion.' Dr. GORE'S purpose is to show that the Modernists (it is an ugly word, but he is fond of it) carry the use of symbolism too far. They explain, and explain away, some of the miracles of the New Testament by means of it. Dr. GORE proposes to show that they are not entitled to do so. And if by the use of symbolism they explain away such miracles as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, he holds that they are not entitled to be called Christians.

Dr. GORE does not deny the use of symbolical language in the Bible. 'I agree that symbolism must be admitted to apply to the language of religion in general and of the Christian religion in particular.' St. Paul uses symbolical language when he says of our present Christian 'knowledge' that it is a seeing 'through a glass darkly'—that is, a blurred reflexion of reality 'in a mirror,' or truth conveyed 'in a riddle.' Such examples are numerous, and they are understood by everybody.

He admits also that much of the language used

of God, especially in the Old Testament, is symbolical. God is spoken of as 'walking,' and 'coming down to see,' and riding upon clouds—all evidently anthropomorphic, language applied to God which belongs properly to man. Not only so, Dr. GORE admits that to speak of God as merciful or just or compassionate or angry is to use metaphorical language, at least if it is meant that He is in one of those states at one time and in another at another.

But while such ideas as that God is just and loving, or that He is Himself love, or that He is Creator or Father, are 'inadequate and only symbolically true (and much more the expressions of them in words),' yet the ideas, Dr. GORE holds, are real ideas, and have been through prophets and the Son divinely revealed to us. It is therefore quite inadmissible, he says, to use the symbolic principle in order to evacuate or weaken the ideas. For the truth of Christianity means the truth (within the limits of human capacity) of those revealed ideas and not of any other ideas.

For example. The New Testament language about the end of the world gives us a picture of a universal catastrophe, of a judgment coming on the whole world in its alienation from God, or forgetfulness of God, a judgment like that which came in turn on the 'giant forms of empire' of old. It tells us of the awful figure of the Christ coming in the clouds of heaven as the judge of the world, of the gathering of all mankind before His throne, of the final overthrow of all the enemies of God, and their condign and terrible punishment. It tells us of a reconstitution of the whole material world to serve henceforth only the purpose of divine righteousness—a new heaven and a new earth 'wherein dwelleth righteousness'—and of the fulfilment of the divine destiny for man in the New Jerusalem. It is one thing, says Dr. GORE, to recognize that all this is symbolic language and is not to be taken literally. It is quite another thing to evacuate the pictures of their moral and practical meanings, and substitute a fundamentally different idea. Such a different idea would be that which represents the world as proceeding on the whole from better to better till it finally issues in universal perfection.

Again, it is one thing to recognize that the language about the devil 'going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour,' or about the 'unclean spirit going through dry places seeking rest and finding none,' and then returning to the empty chamber of the human heart, or about the angels of little children beholding the face of God in heaven, is symbolical language; but it is quite another thing to dismiss from our minds the whole idea of good and bad spirits and their relation to us and influence on us.

Dr. GORE turns for a moment to the Creed. 'He descended into hell'—is that symbolical? Yes, he says, it is symbolical, but it is true. He has no doubt that the early Christians believed that when Christ died and His body was buried, while a really dead man's body lay in the tomb 'the man Christ Jesus considered as a human spirit was no more dead than Abraham or Moses. In His spirit He went where human spirits go, and was indeed active amongst them.' That was all that they meant when they said, 'He descended into hell,' but they meant that; and 'no one to-day need hesitate to recognize symbolism in the language which confesses Christ to have descended into Hades, if he believes that beneath the symbolism lies the fact.'

Then the Bishop of Oxford reaches the matter which prompted him to write this article. Holding still by the Creed, he says that 'our Modernist friends' extend the application of symbolism so as to claim that the phrases, 'He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,' and 'He rose again the third day from the dead,' are symbolical phrases. Do the Modernists really claim this? Well, they claim, he says, that they are symbolical now. They concede that the phrases were originally intended to represent

events which actually happened, but they contend that since we have ceased to believe in physical miracles we may still use these phrases, and sincerely, as expressing *symbolically* realities which for us have only a spiritual value. Thus 'He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary' would be a symbol of the truth that a special divine providence and purpose attended the birth of Christ; and 'He rose again the third day from the dead' would be a symbol of the truth that, though the body of Christ did in fact see corruption in the ordinary course of nature, yet He did really survive death and make His survival known.

Now pass from Bishop GORE to Professor SANDAY.

Dr. SANDAY has published a pamphlet to which he has given this title, *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism* (Longmans; 6d. net). It is an answer to the Bishop of Oxford's 'Open Letter on the Basis of Anglican Fellowship' rather than to the article in *The Constructive Quarterly*. But it includes that article. And indeed the letter and the article are one.

Professor SANDAY has written the reply reluctantly. Not that he has any hesitation in answering Dr. GORE. He sees that an answer is demanded imperatively, and demanded from him. But he would have preferred to wait a little. He is scarcely ready. Within the last two years a change has been coming over his attitude to the miracles of the New Testament. He knew that he must make public the fact of that change and the extent of it. He had made arrangements for doing so in another way than this. But when Dr. GORE'S letter appeared he felt that he must come out into the open at once.

Now although the reader will be prepared by this preface to find important statements in the pamphlet, he will not be prepared to find anything approaching the statements that are actually made there. His first thought will be, if he knows Dr. SANDAY, that his abounding interest in those who have doubts to wrestle with has simply carried him over to their side. But that will be a mistaken thought and soon cast away. Our Lord came to seek and to save that which was lost. In order to do it He lived with them. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. But who has suggested that He was so carried over to their side as to partake of their sinfulness? Nor for more than one moment will it be said by those who know Dr. SANDAY—the likest to the Master of the men we know on earth — that he has simply offered us another example of the fact that evil communications corrupt good manners. If he has taken to the use of symbolism in order to explain the Virgin Birth of our Lord and the resurrection of His body from the dead, it is not because Mr. J. M. THOMPSON or Professor Kirsopp LAKE do so, it is because he has been led to that position along a painful and courageous pathway of his own.

What is the path he has followed? It is that of criticism. First, he gave himself to the criticism of the text. 'I began,' he says, 'at the foot of the ladder. I first sought to make myself at home in the field of the Lower Criticism, and then to rise to the Higher. I thought that the first thing we wanted was accurate texts, and then to assign these texts to their proper surroundings in place and time. This was preliminary to the construction of an historical background. But everything that could be regarded as *a priori* or philosophical I was content to leave in suspense.'

He knew that this was the method for him, whatever might be the best method for others. And so, when he came to the questions of the literal fact of the Virgin Birth and the resurrection of the body, when he came to consider the questions of the miracles in the Gospels generally, he kept an open mind regarding them, not because he had philosophical or scientific doubts about the possibility of the miraculous, but be-

cause he had learned how easy it is to give to a narrative just that touch which turns it out of the ordinary into the marvellous.

He found in the Old Testament—it is the only illustration he takes from the Old Testament, and we refer to it for its simplicity—he found that one of the miracles attributed to Elisha was the causing of the iron head of an axe to swim. How could that be? 'It is a well-known fact that, owing to the strong specific gravity of its waters, things will float in the Dead Sea that will not float elsewhere. I do not know whether iron is one of these things; but at all events something like iron may have been seen to float in these waters that would have sunk in others. That would be at once regarded as a miracle, and would easily give rise to such a story.'

Dr. SANDAY discovers two kinds of miracles in the Gospels. One kind is above nature, the other is contrary to nature. Of those that are above nature—miracles that are exceptional, extraordinary, and that testify to the presence of higher spiritual forces—he has little to say, for he has little difficulty in accepting them. His difficulty is with those miracles which are against nature, such as the walking on the water, the turning of water into wine, or the feeding of the five thousand. In regard to such miracles as these, he takes his place with those whom Bishop GORE calls Modernists, and definitely declines to call them miracles.

What does he do with them? He chooses the feeding of the five thousand. It is best attested. The evidence for it is peculiarly strong. That is his reason for choosing it. There is no possibility of removing it from the records. Nor is there any occasion for attempting to remove it. That it is the record of a literal fact he has no doubt. He believes that in the course of our Lord's ministry He enjoyed many such meals with His disciples—meals which had a certain sense of consecration in them. He suspects that in this way the last supper was led up to. 'It was not only a last supper but a last eucharist; it was a last dominical eucharist as well as the institution of a eucharist for the Church of all time. The phrase, "He was known of them in breaking of the bread" (St. Luke xxiv. 35), suggests that such solemn "breakings of bread" had happened before. I can well believe that on one (or more) of these occasions the consecrated meal was accompanied by a discourse which supplied the foundation for that of which we have a record in St. John vi.'

With all this Dr. SANDAY has no difficulty. His difficulty is with the miraculous element in the narrative. He has little doubt that that miraculous element comes from the stories of multiplied food in the Old Testament narratives of Elijah and Elisha, and especially from the story of the man of Baal-shalishah in 2 K 4^{42-44}. He would therefore accept the whole story as historical, with the exception of the one phrase, 'and they were all filled,' together with 'the details which go with it.'

What, then, does Professor SANDAY believe? He believes in 'the true Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' He believes that 'our Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly Lord, very God and at the same time very Man.' With that belief held firmly, held with all his heart, he counts himself free to examine all the miracles in the Gospels, and deal with them according to the evidence. For he believes that in that central truth of the God-Man, all lesser truths worth contending for are absorbed.