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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Old Testament was much read at the beginning of the war. It was probably read by men who were not at all in the habit of reading it. For some good arguments could be got out of it in favour of a righteous war. It is true there were passages which seemed to disapprove of war. But they were confined to the prophets. One could leave the prophets alone for the present, and in the good old way of the 'proof-text' find arguments for war that were of unmistakable meaning and emphasis.

At the end of the war men are returning to the Old Testament. They are in search of arguments again. But not for war. Now they are in search of arguments for the bearing of the ills that war has done. They have returned to the Old Testament to find out how the men of the Old Testament times understood the meaning of suffering and of death.

Now there are two books of the Old Testament which have much to say about suffering. We cannot add 'and about death.' For on that, the only inescapable fact in human experience, there was never an Old Testament writer who had anything certain to say, and for the most part they left it alone. But the Book of Psalms never gets far away from the thought of suffering. And the problem of pain is the very reason for the existence of the Book of Job.

It cannot be said that the Rev. John Edgar MCFADYEN, D.D., Professor of Hebrew in the United Free Church College in Glasgow, has returned to the Old Testament. He is never away from it. But it can be said that he has recognized the necessity of contributing something to the understanding of suffering in the world—suffering that is sometimes deserved, and again as often undeserved—and that he finds his contribution in a scholar's careful and considerate study of the Book of Job. He calls his book *The Problem of Pain: A Study in the Book of Job* (James Clarke & Co.; 4s. 6d. net).

What solution has Professor MCFADYEN found in the Book of Job for the problem of pain? He has found no solution. That is a sore disappointment. Nor does it remove the disappointment, or even relieve it, to tell us that we ought not to have looked for a solution. What else do we read his book for, at a time like this? If there is no solution of the problem of pain in the Book of Job, why should we spend our time in the study of it? Surely we had better go to some other book where we shall find the problem solved.

But Professor MCFADYEN says there is no such book. There is no such book, he says, either in the Bible or out of it. For the problem of pain is insoluble. He studies the Book of Job, and

studies it on our account, not that he may solve the problem of pain for us, but that he may help us to bear our suffering and to wait.

Now that is not satisfactory. It is never satisfactory where there is no satisfaction. But we may restrain our impatience for a little and ask Professor McFadyen what he has found in the Book of Job that is likely to be of any use to us.

The first thing he has found is that suffering is not a punishment for sin. He does not say that it is never a punishment for sin, though perhaps he means that. What he says is that that is not its meaning. You cannot explain the existence of suffering in the world by saying that it is sent to punish the world for its sin against God. You cannot even point to any single case of suffering and say 'that man suffers because that man has sinned.' Against that conception of suffering, says Professor McFadyen, the whole Book of Job is an indignant protest.

But the Book of Job seems to say that though suffering is not meant to be the punishment of sin, it may be meant to do good to the sinner. Though it has not a penal, it may have a disciplinary, mission. The text which supports that idea is, unfortunately, a saying of Eliphaz. The words are, 'Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. For he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole' ($5^{17.18}$). It is unfortunate, we say, that these are words of Eliphaz, not of Job or of the Almighty, or even of that unimaginative but earnest young man Elihu. It is more unfortunate that they do not apply to the case of Job. Nevertheless Professor McFadyen finds 'real illumination' in them. For, Job or no Job, he is sure that 'suffering, in the providence of God, may have a disciplinary value. If resented, it will harden and embitter the man whom it visits; but, when borne with meekness and uncomplaining faith, it has been recognized by many a sufferer to be a veritable gift of God, cleansing the character of its dross, developing in it unfamiliar graces and virtues—tenderness, patience, humility, sympathy, refinement, strength, beauty — and bringing with it a revelation of God, of His presence and sustaining power, which without it would have been in that degree impossible.'

We said the saying is a saying of Eliphaz, and not even of the young man Elihu. But Elihu says something that is very like it. And although we have no opinion either of the disinterestedness of Eliphaz or of the discernment of Elihu, and, moreover, are not at all sure that this idea is more than a part of the dramatic furniture of the Book, yet we think that Dr. McFadyen is now as near to a solution of the problem of pain as he is ever likely to come.

Let us leave the Book of Job and come to the Gospels. Again the problem is the problem of suffering. And, more even than in the Book of Job, it is the suffering of the righteous. The penal idea is emphatically dismissed: 'Neither did this man sin, nor his parents.' But not the possibility of the righteous having to suffer. On the contrary, when the possibility of the righteous having to suffer is rejected by one of the typical comforters of the day — for the Jews had learned little from their greatest literary treasure — he is answered in words of most astounding warmth: 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' For the Son of Man, the Righteous One, came to suffer.

Then follows the meaning of it. Its meaning could not be apprehended at once. But afterwards when the Righteous One had endured the Cross, one of those who saw most clearly why He had to endure it, said, 'It became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings' (He 2^{10}).

That was the meaning of suffering for Christ. It had what Professor McFadyen calls 'a disciplinary value' for Him. It made Him perfect. But in what way 'perfect'? Perfect as the author of men's salvation. Perfect as a bringer of many sons to glory. So the discipline was not for Himself, but for us in Him. At least it was not for Himself alone, but for Him as the head to whom the body grows up by discipline, by the discipline of suffering, of the very suffering which He suffered, until every member of it is in Him presented perfect before God.

The Book of Job is not the last word on the problem of pain. It is not the last word even in the Old Testament. For it knows nothing of the contribution made by another Old Testament book under the title of 'the Suffering Servant of the Lord'—a contribution that carries us a long way nearer its solution. No doubt we are in danger of reading into the passages about the Suffering Servant, which are astonishing enough in themselves, the still more astonishing things which we find in the Gospels. But it is certain that the Book of Isaiah has taken a great and momentous step beyond the Book of Job.

For in the Book of Job the problem is why the righteous man should suffer. But the writer of the Servant passages sees that the righteous man suffers because he is righteous. In Job he suffers in spite of his righteousness, and there is no accounting for it. In Isaiah he suffers because of his righteousness, and just therein lies the explanation of it. 'They made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death [not 'although' but] because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth' (Is 53^9).

That, we say, was a great step to take. And until it was taken it was not possible for men to understand the meaning of suffering. Have we taken that step? Or is the problem of pain still the mystery of the suffering of the innocent? Let us think of the children who were, some of them killed outright, and some of them maimed for life, in the recent raid on London. They had done no violence, and yet it pleased—the Germans?—yes, but the Germans can do nothing in spite of the will of God—it pleased the Lord (we are only at Isaiah's attitude yet), it pleased the Lord to bruise them. And why? That together with their Saviour they might be made perfect through sufferings.

The pain was not for punishment. Neither had they sinned, nor their parents. It was for discipline. Was the children's death for discipline? Yes, their death was for discipline. Was it not by the suffering of death that the Author of their salvation was made perfect? And are they not made perfect in Him?

And so, here is the heart of it. The children who suffered, suffered in Him. In all their affliction He was afflicted; and besides that, in all His affliction they were afflicted. Can we not believe that in His death on the Cross He embraced those little ones who were done to death in the German raid? Have we not imagination enough to conceive it? Have we not faith enough to receive it? He was made perfect in bringing many sons to glory. These sons might be sinners, and so need repentance and faith in order to die with Christ to sin and rise with Him to righteousness. They might, however, be little children, already His, in death as in life, for of such *is* the kingdom of heaven.

The innocent suffer because they have done no violence. That is the way of the world. From the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Nurse Cavell, it is the very superiority of innocence that is the offence. But it is also the way of God. 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him'—remember that. 'Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf'—and remember that. Now there is no unrighteousness with God. If the innocent suffers, he suffers in the behalf of others. But that is not enough. There might be unrighteousness

in that. He suffers also in his own behalf. It was in bringing many sons to glory that the Saviour was made perfect. But *He was made perfect* in bringing many sons to glory.

In plainer but not bolder words, we ask, Would He have been what He is if He had not suffered? And we answer, No. Bolder words? The New Testament is full of it. How is it that He is a faithful and merciful High Priest? It is because He was tempted. It is 'in that he himself suffered, being tempted,' that 'he is able to succour them that are tempted.' Now if suffering was a discipline for Him, it must be meant to be a discipline for us. That which is good for the Highest must be good for the less high. It *is* a discipline for us, *if we suffer with Him.*

Therein lies the whole pith and marrow of the matter. If we do not suffer with Him suffering may do nothing for us. And then the problem is not suffering but sin—the sin of unbelief. But if we are found in Him, dying in His death and rising in His resurrection, suffering and death are the way by which we travel to our perfection: they are the very angels of God sent to take us by the hand and lead us home to God.

The innocent suffer *because* they have done no violence. It is God's way as well as the way of the world. For how otherwise could they suffer with Christ? How otherwise could they share with Him the burden of the sins of the many? And not only so but this also—*the more innocent the more they suffer.*

Is that not so in experience? Is it not the most mysterious of all the mysteries belonging to suffering? But it must be so. For who are the innocent? Now we see that innocence is not merely righteousness of life. We have journeyed a long way beyond the problem of the Book of Job. Innocence is identification with Christ. And how can we be identified with Christ without sharing Christ's burdens? By our death in His death and our life in His life we fill up that which is lacking in His sufferings. We carry with Him the burden of all this unintelligible world.

And the more we are identified the more of the burden do we carry. The same man who said, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' said also, 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'

And there is no injustice in it. If it is pain it is disciplinary pain. The more searching the suffering, the more intimate the fellowship; the heavier the load of sorrow, the heavier also the already exceeding weight of glory.

The Head Master of Kingswood School, Bath, has published a volume of sermons preached in school. The title is *Kingswood Sermons* (Kelly; 3s. 6d. net). Now school sermons are for the most part of little service out of school. If they are of service out of school it is probable that they were of little service in school. It is only rarely that a Head Master comes who can preach at once to boys and to men.

Mr. W. P. WORKMAN is such a preacher. The secret of his double success is that he never condescends. His thought is clear and his language is simple, but it is at the same time high thought, as high as the Christian religion calls for, and the language is appropriate to the thought. We should not have known, from reading the sermons, apart from an occasional reference, that they were preached in school. For the texts are the great texts of the Bible. And the treatment is expository, doctrinal, ethical—one or all of these as the text itself and not the audience requires.

One of the texts is the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. It is not an easy text for boys or men. And Mr. WORKMAN does not make it easier by a prolonged discussion of its

meaning. Yet the discussion is so lucid and progressive that it is possible to think of the boys of Kingswood School attending to it. It is possible to believe that when it was over they understood what faith is.

Of the first part of the verse, to which Mr. WORKMAN confines himself, there are four translations. First there is the translation of the Authorized Version: 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for.' Next there is the translation of the Revised Version: 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.' Then there is the translation of the margin of the Revised Version: 'Faith is the giving substance to things hoped for.' Lastly there is the translation, which we suspect is Mr. WORKMAN'S own: 'Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for.'

He dismisses first the margin of the Revised Version: 'Faith is the giving substance to things hoped for.' 'Hopes are insubstantial, shadowy things. Faith takes them, this translation would say, and clothes them and makes them real. Hopes are castles built in Spain; Faith gives them bricks and mortar, and turns them into solid realities. The idea is magnificent and well worth developing; but I cannot think that it is the writer's meaning here, and there does not appear to be a shadow of evidence in Greek for this use of the word as an act.'

He takes the Authorized translation next. It deserves a little more consideration. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for.' That word 'substance' does not mean, as we are apt to take it to mean, the material out of which hope is made. It means much more than that. Substance—it is a literal rendering into Latin of the Greek word used here—is 'that which stands underneath,' that which is the reality at the bottom of things. And Mr. WORKMAN admits the possibility that the writer means, 'Faith is the reality, the real self, which lies at the bottom of hopes.' But 'I can only say that I cannot convince myself that this meaning fits into his use of the word "faith" in this chapter. The Greek may forbid us to render the word as an act, but there can be no doubt to me that it is something more nearly allied to an act than this meaning would show.'

We now find that we were mistaken in thinking that 'title-deed' was to be Mr. WORKMAN'S own translation. For he takes that translation next and dismisses it. He is tempted to adopt it. There is about it that peculiarly attractive flavour which belongs to the very latest word in scholarship. The Greek word here employed has been found among the Egyptian papyri with the meaning of title-deed. And the meaning is not only new but beautiful. 'Faith is the title-deed of our hopes.' 'Hope builds for herself "cloud-capped towers" and "gorgeous palaces" and "solemn temples." But what right has she to dwell there? Faith is the title-deed which Hope will wave in your face if you ask her the question. It is Faith that confers upon Hope the right to live in her palaces. It is the hope of all, when the long day's work is done, to rest in the many mansions of the Father's house; but it is Faith alone which establishes a title. Faith is the title-deed of Hope. A very beautiful meaning for the text. But again, I cannot persuade myself that any such meaning can be read into the word "faith" when it reappears, verse by verse, in this chapter. In any case it does not justify the existence of Faith, nor render it easier to reach it, however much we long for it.'

So he comes to the Revised Version. It is the only translation left. 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.'

But what does that translation mean? Does it mean that faith is that which makes us sure of our hopes? That is exactly what is meant by saying that faith is the title-deed of hope, a meaning which has been rejected. Moreover, Mr. WORKMAN now sees that that meaning is too impersonal. Faith,

if it is anything, is a personal relationship, it is a transaction between persons.

Suppose that, in order to secure the personal aspect, we take assurance in the sense of confidence. Or why not take confidence itself as the best translation? The Revisers have three times translated the Greek word here by confidence (He 3^{14}, 2 Co 9^{4} 11^{27}), one of them being in this very Epistle. We have the meaning now.

And, like a wise preacher, Mr. WORKMAN at once offers the illustration. 'The Greek historian Polybius, in describing how Horatius kept the bridge, says that his enemies feared his confidence (the word is the same) more than his strength. Faith is the confidence born of Hope. It is the hopeful men who conquer the world. A man who never doubts that clouds will break will always march "breast-forward." "The war will end disastrously; we shall be beaten," said Napoleon III. to one of his marshals at the beginning of the war with Prussia. "Sire," replied the marshal, "only let your opinions be known to the troops, and your anticipations will be fulfilled." Napoleon's spirit did spread to his troops, and the result was Sedan. Faith is the confidence born of Hope. There is no Sedan for Faith.'

We have come to an understanding with science on the question of miracle. Is it working well? We cannot say that it is.

The understanding is that the province of science is the seen, while the province of religion is the unseen. But two difficulties arise. Science claims to be gradually annexing the unseen region of life, and prophesies a time when it will have altogether appropriated it. That is one difficulty. The other is that there is no room even now for miracle, since that is the intrusion of the unseen into the territory of the scientifically seen.

We need not take seriously the claim that with the progress of science religion will cease to be. Only the scientific apprentice makes it. With larger experience it is found that the more men know the more they find is the unknown. On their own methods they do not contract the bounds of the invisible with the progress of discovery; they enlarge them. But serious enough is the objection that miracle is an attempt on the part of religion to intrude into the recognized realm of science.

For we cannot deny it. Miracle is the entrance of the unseen and eternal into the things of time and sense, or it is nothing. If the working arrangement with science overlooked that fact, a mistake was made, and we must revise the arrangement. But in reality there never was an understanding between science and religion that the unseen should remain for ever unknown—no one from the side of religion could have come to such an agreement. Concession had to be made by religion as by science, but if room was not left for miracle the concession on the part of Christianity was hopeless abdication.

The understanding between Science and Religion is not working well because Science still repeats the old formula of Huxley that miracles do not occur, and with that formula shuts the door. But that formula brings Science into conflict with another enemy than Christianity, an enemy that may be less complacent. It challenges History. The formula means that what is not occurring now never occurred. And History has some very emphatic things to say about that.

Again, Science and Religion are not working so well as was hoped for because Science persists in misunderstanding what is meant by miracle. We say it is the visible and verifiable entrance of the unseen and eternal into the things of sense and time. Just so, says the scientific agnostic; that is what we object to. It is interference in our peculiar province. Interference of what? Not, in the mind of the agnostic, of the unseen and

eternal, but of the disorderly in the sphere of order, of the unruly in the realm of rule.

Now in that sense miracles do not occur and never did occur. The only disorder in the world has been due to man, and man can do no miracle. God, the author of miracle, is a God of order, and has been from the beginning. If, therefore, we are to consider miracle as it has to be considered, we must think of it in two ways—first as befitting times and circumstances, and next as introducing competent personality. The miracle must be wrought by God (the unseen and eternal); that is one thing. And it must be done under such circumstances that it will introduce, not disorder into order, but order into disorder.

The miracles which cause the agnostic most trouble are the miracles of the Gospels. Why do they cause him trouble? Because he cannot explain them and he cannot explain them away. Take an example.

A volume of sermons by the Rev. Henry Gow, B.A., has been issued from the Lindsey Press (3s. net). The sermons were preached at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead, or at Manchester College, Oxford. For Mr. Gow is a Unitarian and an unbeliever in miracle. The title of the book, *Out of the Heart of the Storm*, is the title of the first sermon in it. That sermon is an attempt to explain or explain away two of the miracles of the Gospels, the Stilling of the Storm and the Walking on the Water.

Now it has to be said that more beautiful or more beautifully worded sermons will not easily be found. But their charm is not enough to hide their failure. This first sermon sets out to show that Jesus never did still a storm or walk on water. What happened was simply that His disciples felt within themselves the effects of a storm stilled or a natural element mastered.

'In the first miracle'—these are Mr. Gow's own words—'Jesus is with his disciples in the boat asleep on a pillow. A storm arises and they find themselves in danger. Then they wake him and say: "Save Lord, lest we perish." He stands amongst them in his quiet calm strength and a great peace comes into their hearts. The load of fear is lightened. In his face, they see the love of God. They are ashamed of their cowardice. The storm is no longer the all-important thing. It seems to vanish into nothingness in the presence of his love. That is a wonder indeed, but it is a wonder that happens every day; that sense of peace when our beloved ones are near us; that influence of courage over fearful hearts, that feeling of calm in the midst of pain, when a strong, loving, fearless man is by our side. How many of us could say to some man or woman whom we reverence and in whom we feel God near: "Let me hold your hand; let me look into your face and I can bear anything. I am not afraid of death with you. The storm is nothing, if only you are near!"'

That is the explanation of the first miracle. 'But the second so-called miracle is different from this. The disciples were alone in the boat. There was no Jesus to awaken; no Jesus whose hand they could hold, whose face they could see, no Jesus by their side, sharing their peril and giving them confidence. The storm falls upon them. They are tossed to and fro; they feel their helplessness and solitude. Jesus is hidden from them by the darkness. And then he speaks to them out of the heart of the storm. Not from the boat, but from the heart of the storm come the words: "It is I: be not afraid." At first, they think him something to be frightened at, a part of the storm, a portent and a thing of dread. And then they feel his presence in the storm itself and realize that in the darkness and the danger, enveloped in mystery, but living and working, love is there. That is where many of us have to look—into the heart of the storm—not in the presence of our loved ones close to us, comforting us by their

words and looks, sharing our dangers in the boat, but out there in the storm and darkness amongst destructive forces, speaking to us by their life and by their death from a distance.'

That is a failure. It does not explain the miracles. It is more than a failure, it is a fault. Not all the beauty of language or charm of sentiment can conceal the ethical delinquency. Mr. Gow knows that that is not what the disciples of Jesus understood by the stilling of the storm or the walking on the water. He knows that that is not what was meant by those who gave the miracles their place in the Gospels.

And what is the occasion of the fault? It is simply failure to recognize the two essential things in every miracle—that it must be the work of one who is competent and that it must be suitable to the time and circumstances.

Mr. Gow does not believe that Jesus was competent to perform a miracle, for he does not believe that Jesus was God. It is none the less remarkable that he should fail in the other respect. He speaks of the disciples of our Lord as if they had lived in the twentieth century. He says: 'The love and reverence of the disciples for Jesus gave them this feeling of his presence in the storm. It is something like the feeling expressed in the well-known lines of *In Memoriam*—

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

Far off thou art, yet ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee, though I die.

But through the influence of Jesus, the perception of the disciples was deeper. They felt his spirit ruling not only in beautiful and peaceful scenes, but in the midst of the darkness and danger round them. That feeling of Jesus in the heart of the storm, in the raging winds and waves, in the destruction and violence which threatened them is the highest perception of love. It is the transfiguration of danger and suffering through love.'

That is all beautiful and true, but not for the disciples of Jesus. Mr. Gow has no more knowledge of them than the Gospels give him. And this is not the picture of the Gospels. The picture of the Gospels is that they were slow of heart to believe. The spiritual presence appeals to Mr. Gow, and the miracles do not. The miracles made their appeal to the disciples and not the spiritual presence. 'This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and shewed forth his glory, and the disciples believed on him.' It was a miracle of the same kind to the Walking on the Water and the Stilling of the Storm.

Principal Denney as a Theologian.

By the Rev. H. R. Mackintosh, D.Phil., D.D., Professor of Systematic Theology, New College, Edinburgh.

By the death of Principal Denney at the summit of his power evangelical religion throughout English-speaking lands has suffered a loss greater, we may say with sober truth, than would have been inflicted by the withdrawal of any other one mind. He seemed to have long years before him. In Scotland he spoke, often with a tongue of fire, to all Churches. He had put them all in debt to his scholarship and his insight, and they listened to him as people only listen to a wholly disinterested man. The cause of Church Union wavered or advanced in no inconsiderable measure according to his judgment. In the Overseas Dominions and in America, particularly of course in Presbyterian circles, his influence went deep and wide. His own Church trusted him implicitly and drew