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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Editor of *The Record* has probably done a courageous thing, he has certainly done a wise thing, in publishing an article on 'The Limits of Evangelical Unity.'

The writer of the article, the Rev. T. Guy ROGERS, M.C., B.D., Vicar and Rural Dean of West Ham, is an evangelical. What is an evangelical? The answer to that question is given in the second half of the article. We shall take the second half first.

'I take it,' says Mr. ROGERS, 'that we [that is, the evangelicals of the Church of England] are primarily a group of people within the Church who have always, by tradition and personal choice, put the work of the conversion of souls in the forefront of our programme. We prefer the prophetic to the priestly ideal, and we have fought and suffered for the inalienable right of the soul to immediate access to God. Our contribution to the corporate life of the Church may be deficient, but where we have been true to our history we have never failed to preach a Crucified Saviour. The glamour of the Westcottian teaching has not diverted, and does not divert, us from the Cross as our primary aim.'

What does that mean for Church Orders? It means that Episcopacy 'is wholly independent of

the fallacy of Apostolical Succession. The Apostles had no successors and could have none. Our Episcopate emerged and was not handed down—a gift to be enjoyed and rightly used, but constituting in no sense a test of vital union with Christ as the Head of the Church.'

What does it mean for the Sacraments? Mr. ROGERS mentions only the Holy Communion. And he finds it difficult to state the evangelical view of the Holy Communion in a single sentence, 'especially in view of the fact that it has so greatly deepened and become so much enriched.' How has that come about? Mr. ROGERS does not say, but he would probably have said without hesitation, if it had occurred to him, 'through the influence of the Oxford Movement.' One of the signs of that influence is the use of the name 'Holy Communion.'

He has difficulty in putting the evangelical view of the Holy Communion into a sentence. 'But I think I should not be misunderstood if I said that our emphasis on the Sacrament is not on the offering made to God, but on the gifts that we receive from Him, and on the corporate fellowship which we enjoy around the Father's board. We stand for Pauline freedom in the right to have our Eucharist at any hour in accordance with the needs of the parish or the individual.'

The purpose which Mr. ROGERS has before him in this part of his article is not to instruct his evangelical brethren, or even the heirs of the Oxford Movement. It is to give him the right to make an advance in the direction of Church unity. He makes that advance. He makes it towards his Nonconformist neighbours. 'Our "Orientation" is towards the Reformed bodies of Christendom rather than the Church of Rome. Without dismissing from our minds the hope of Reunion on a wider basis which shall include the Roman and Eastern churches, as far as practical politics are concerned, our first objective is to compass reunion with such bodies as share in common with us the faith of the Reformation. We turn longing eyes towards the Nonconformists with whom we have so much in common. Between them and us is no such insuperable bar as is interposed on the other wing by the attitude of Rome.'

But the real purpose of the article is found in the first part of it. Mr. ROGERS is an evangelical, and he wants to be recognized as an evangelical. He wants to be recognized by other evangelicals. He wants to be recognized as an evangelical and treated as an evangelical, by the Church Missionary Society, the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and whatever other body of evangelicals there may be in the Church of England which has the power—not of the keys but of the screw.

Why should he not be recognized? Because he has views about Biblical Criticism, Prayer Book Revision, and other matters which differ from the views of the majority of evangelicals, and particularly of the majorities which rule in the evangelical societies.

Take Biblical Criticism. Mr. ROGERS prefers the title Biblical Research. 'The word "criticism" conveys a suggestion of irreverence to some and of unspirituality to others.' He does not claim to be an expert in Biblical Research, but he 'would not stop it for the world.' 'The

hypothesis of two Isaiahs illuminated Scripture for me with a most welcome light when I first became acquainted with it. I do not pin my faith to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, though the facts, so far as I know, may confirm it. I hold my present views on eschatology subject to revision.'

And that 'is not all. 'I am prepared to admit flaws in St. Paul's arguments and to distinguish difference of altitude and inspiration. St. Paul is so great that he can correct himself. "I suffer not a woman to teach in the churches" may be a temporary direction full of good sound practical common sense based on local knowledge and local conditions, but it is an utterance of very different spiritual value to words with such a Catholic and Christ-like ring about them as these: "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, there is neither bond nor free." You must read the lower by the higher, and subordinate accordingly.'

On the Revision of the Prayer Book Mr. ROGERS is just as outspoken and astonishing. He longs for 'a less mechanical use of the Psalms, a shorter and more edifying lectionary, and freedom from the metaphysics of the Athanasian canticle.' It is intolerable to him to have to live his life under the dead hand of an unchangeable past. He believes in inspiration; but believes in the inspiration of the new as well as in the inspiration of the old. To deny the Church of to-day the right to amend the old-fashioned Liturgy is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

'Candidates who hold such views must be accepted honestly and in the light of day by the Church Missionary Society, and not smuggled in by the back door with as much secrecy as possible. The type of worker supplied by the C.P.A.S. to our home parishes must not exclude people who would be in sympathy with us, and the preparation of ordinands must not be conducted in such a way as to deprive the parishes for which we are

responsible of the hope of reinforcements. Younger men who want to think, we hold, ought not to be suspect and regarded as marked men by Evangelical Trustees. Let us be delivered from the reign of terror which prevails with regard to the free expression of opinion. Let us set more value upon sincerity and the love of truth; and if we prefer the leadership of Evangelical Bishops to the leadership of Protestant Societies, let us be considered no worse Churchmen for our choice.'

The Faculty of Divinity in Harvard University recently began the issue of Harvard Theological Studies. The third volume has been written by Professor William R. ARNOLD of Andover Theological Seminary. Its title is *Ephod and Ark* (London: Humphrey Milford).

What was the ephod? What was the ark? And what is the meaning of 'the Lord of Hosts'? These are the questions which Professor ARNOLD answers. The title 'the Lord of Hosts' is considered in an excursus at the end. The ephod and the ark are discussed throughout the volume. The conclusions are enough for us here and now. First of all, What was the ephod?

The ephod was simply the primitive loincloth. As civilization advanced, the primitive loincloth was transformed into a ceremonial apron. It was worn by all persons, old or young, priestly or lay, when they entered into the presence of God and were engaged in religious exercises. This is all that can be said about the ephod until we reach the period of the Exile.

After the Exile, in the ritual of the second temple, it was a more elaborate garment and was worn by the High Priest alone. For the High Priest alone had now the right of entrance into the presence of Jehovah, and on an occasion of such ceremony as the Day of Atonement an ornate garment was befitting. But neither before nor after the Exile, neither as a loincloth nor as the elaborately adorned High Priest's apron, had the

ephod anything whatever to do with the consultation of oracles.

With the ark it was otherwise. What was the ark? It was a box. It differed from other boxes in being an instrument of divination. Other religions had their divination boxes. 'The ark of God' was the box of the Israelites. Whether it was known to the Israelites before their settlement in Canaan we have no means of saying. But if so, it was under another name. For Professor ARNOLD rejects at once and almost contemptuously the story of the Ark of the Covenant in the Wilderness. The earliest historical sacred box of which we have any record, he says, dates from the period of the Judges.

What did the ark contain? Not a pot of manna, not Aaron's rod that budded, not the tables of the Law—all these belong to the theoretical construction of the tabernacle. The ark contained the sacred lots. When a worshipper came to consult the oracle and donned the ephod because he was now in the presence of the Lord, it was from the ark that the lots were drawn which declared the will of God.

But if the ark of God contained nothing but the lots for divination, was it not needlessly large? Sometimes a single priest could carry it by means of a strap passing over his shoulders and round his neck, but usually it required two persons to carry it comfortably. Professor ARNOLD believes that it 'was conceived of as a miniature temple, which actually housed the spirit of the divinity at the moment when the disposition of the sacred lots was being effected—a sort of shrine or refuge within which the numen could work its mysterious spell upon the lots while shielded from the scrutiny of the human eye.'

The ark of the Lord 'was consulted by all sorts of people under all sorts of circumstances. But of course its counsels were most highly prized in connection with military enterprises. Accordingly

we find a sacred box with its attendant priest regularly accompanying the royal forces on their military expeditions, both in the reign of Saul and in the reign of David. And early in his career, while leading the life of an outlaw chief, David had eagerly welcomed the accession of a fugitive priest with an ark, which he never thereafter omitted to consult.'

What became of the ark? Was it carried away by any of the foreign kings or captains who captured Jerusalem—Shishak, or Hazael, or Tiglathpileser, or Sennacherib, or Nebuchadnezzar? It had not sufficient intrinsic value to tempt the cupidity of any of them. 'If it survived the ravages of four hundred years—which, for a plain wooden box at least fifty years old at the outset, housed in a damp stone building not seldom out of repair, is rather doubtful—it will have perished in the flames when the temple of Solomon was finally destroyed. But more probably it fell into decay before 586 B.C., and was not replaced.'

The ark was often called the ark of Jehovah of Hosts. What does that title mean?

Professor ARNOLD believes that it has nothing whatever to do with the angels in heaven. It is simply a designation of Jehovah when He goes out to war on behalf of His chosen people of Israel. Strictly, it ought, he says, to be rendered 'Jehovah on the War-path,' or 'Jehovah Militant.' For there never was a nation that believed more implicitly in the necessity of the presence of God on the field of battle. They may not have distinguished clearly between a righteous war and an unrighteous; but they believed in their own divine destiny. Their God was therefore a God of power. And when the Greek translators came to the phrase they preferred the idea of power to the idea of militancy, and translated the 'Lord of Hosts' into 'the Lord Almighty.'

Who gave us the story of the Woman taken in Adultery? It now stands in the Fourth Gospel,

but it was not written by the author of that Gospel. That is as certain as anything in textual criticism can be. For it is found in only one of the great manuscripts (the Cambridge Codex D). And its style is not the style of St. John.

It is the style of St. Luke. And so distinctive is St. Luke's style, so unmistakably his own, that many a student of the Gospel text has held that St. Luke must have been its author. The latest is Professor Henry J. CADBURY of Haverford College, in an article in *The Harvard Review* for July.

To argue that the story was written by St. Luke is not to argue that it is not true. There are few who doubt its truth. For if Christ did not say to the woman, 'Neither do I condemn thee,' who would have dared to say that He said it? The style may be the style of St. Luke, the story is certainly a story of Christ.

But if St. Luke wrote the story down in the form in which we now have it, how did it get into the Gospel according to St. John? Nobody can tell us. The only conjecture worth considering is that it was cut out of St. Luke's Gospel by some early scribe—no doubt because he was afraid of its moral tendency—and then, some later scribe, finding it floating about, inserted it either in the eighth chapter or at the end of St. John's Gospel—for it is found in both places in the manuscripts.

But when we have proved that the Pericope Adulterae, as it is called, is written in the style of St. Luke, we are not out of the wood. A serious and insurmountable dilemma arises. Either the Pericope Adulterae was omitted from St. Luke's Gospel at a date earlier than all the great manuscripts and versions, and without leaving any trace of its omission, or it was written by some one who could imitate St. Luke's style very closely.

What is the result if it was written by St. Luke

and was then omitted from his Gospel? The result is that we can no longer depend with any confidence upon our present New Testament text. If it is possible that a considerable section has been omitted from one of the Gospels, 'then certainly many of the most radical theories of interpolation and the most unsupported textual conjectures are also possible. Even radical scholars have often declared for the probable integrity of the best texts. Here, however, we should have a flagrant case of primitive tampering, for the omission could only be intentional. And so our confidence in the transcriptional accuracy and in the doctrinal primitiveness of the earliest available text of the New Testament would be considerably shaken.'

On the other hand, if the narrative is not by St. Luke, 'then some one, whether another author, a translator, or a scribe, intentionally or unintentionally, wrote a style that is indistinguishable from the most distinctive of New Testament styles. In this case style proves to be a most unreliable criterion, and all critical arguments drawn from identity of style—such as the common authorship of John and 1 John, of Luke and Acts, of the Pauline letters, and even of the separate parts of a single work—lose some of their weight.'

One conclusion especially, a conclusion that has lately seemed to be assured, will have to be reconsidered. For if another man can imitate St. Luke's style so successfully, why may not another man than the author of the Acts have written those portions which differ from the rest of the book by being written in the first person? The 'we passages,' as they are called, have all the characteristics of the style of the Third Gospel and the rest of the Acts. But now the 'we passages' may have been written by one person and the rest of the Acts by another.

The dilemma is at present insurmountable. All that is certain is that the story is true and that it

is written in the style of the author of the Third Gospel.

There is an article in the *Constructive Quarterly* for March which ought to put to shame the preacher of the gospel who is ignorant of the comparative study of religion.

Why is he ignorant? Professor H. TH. OBBINK of the University of Utrecht, who writes the article, gives two reasons. One reason is that scholars who were hostile to the Church entered upon this study first and used it to discredit Christianity. The other reason is that Christian preachers themselves, more enraptured of novelty than of accuracy, 'instead of preaching the gospel truth, have treated their hearers to "the wisdom of past centuries" taken from the sacred books of the Chinese, Egyptians, Indians, and so forth. Anthologies have been collected, in good or bad translations, from sentences of Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, and other "great masters," and these have been put on a level with "aphorisms of Jesus Christ." A minister of the gospel in Holland even expressed a wish that Buddhistic teachings might penetrate the Christian dogmas and practice, and that Christian pulpits should proclaim the names of the great heroes of mankind, Buddha, Confucius, Christ. Babylonian penitential Psalms are said to breathe the same spirit as the Biblical Psalms, and many events in the life of Christ are said to be recastings of incidents in the life of Buddha.'

Professor OBBINK does not wonder that men have distrusted the new science and remained ignorant of it. Did it not put the Bible on a level with 'other sacred writings'? Did it not sweep away the distinction expressed in the Confessions between a special and a universal revelation? He does not wonder that men left the comparative study of religion alone and clung tenaciously to the old formulas. He does not wonder, but he does not excuse them.

Now Professor OBBINK is ready to admit that many of the things hitherto considered most characteristic of the Bible and Christianity are found in other books and other religions. 'The forms of law-giving in which the deity acts as legislator and the whole law gets a divine sanction, the piety of the Psalms with the lamentations for sin, the priesthood, the ark, the prophets, the religious ceremonies—Babylon is proved to have possessed them all. The Christian dogmatic terms borrowed from the Bible: sin, remission of sins, faith, atonement, justification, chosen people, saviour, mediator, new birth, eternal life, resurrection, and so forth—these were known in pre-Christian heathendom.'

What then? Is the Bible less because it is less singular? Is anything taken from the glory of Christianity because the hell from which it offers escape has been universally dreaded, or because the heaven which it opens as a Paradise of God has been universally longed for? It is the comparative study of religion that has proved the world-wide need of salvation and the world-wide fitness of Christianity to meet it.

The words which are used in other religions are sometimes the same as the words which are used in Christianity. The Babylonian *kapparu* is identical with the Hebrew *kipper*. You translate them both by 'atonement.' But the Babylonian and the Biblical words do not cover the same idea. In the one case the predominant meaning is physical, in the other it is absorbingly ethical.

Professor OBBINK turns to the New Testament. 'The term "new birth" is used in the Gospels as well as in the mystery religions. Does that imply that this word is used in both religions in the same sense? By no means. In the New Testament "new birth" means the whole renovation of the inner spiritual man and implies a radical change in inner mood, an ethical-religious renewal. In the mystery religions it is a ritual

noun: the undergoing of certain ritual ceremonies, in order to become initiate, whereby the inner feeling is not necessarily concerned.'

Professor OBBINK turns to the Pauline Epistles. 'The Egyptian religion has the well-known judgment seat of Osiris in the "Hall of Righteousness." St. Paul speaks of the judgment seat of Christ (2 Co 5¹⁰). No one can doubt for a moment that the noun "judgment" has in either case quite a different sense. The atmosphere turns the scale. Or take this, an instance of the greatest verbal harmony: The Egyptian as well as the Biblical words speak of union in death and resurrection with Osiris or with Christ. In Egypt Osiris is the firstfruit of them that slept, in 1 Co 15²⁰ it is Christ. Can there be any doubt that the underlying religious ideas are of quite a different order? The distance between them is as great as that between the physical and the ethical.'

'The Bible arose from a Semitic people in ancient times, and the scholar who is not attuned to the deep religious spirit of the Bible is in continual danger of being informed by the words alone. His penetrating sagacity cannot make up for his impotence to enter into the religious atmosphere of the Bible. Many scholars have been the dupes of that mistake. Misled by the external appearance of words and terms they have failed to take account of the special religious character of Scripture. For instance, the ancient world was polytheistic; there were gods of the heaven and of the earth, of the mountains and of the sea, of vegetation and of the rain, and so forth. All these gods had their own attributes; in the Old Testament many of these attributes are also applied to Jahve, the God of Israel, on the principles already mentioned. From this many scholars inferred that Jahve also was a nature deity, a conclusion suggested indeed by appearances, but completely in disaccord with the inner tenor of the Old Testament.'