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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

MANY books have been written since the War about the failure of the Church, and many reasons have been given for the failure. To do the Church justice, it has read these books and considered the reasons. And not without result. There is probably not one Church in Christendom that stands exactly where it did when the War began. Another book has been written. It has reasons also. We shall read it and consider.

It is an unlovely book to look at. The publishers have missed their opportunity. For the author, Mr. Joshua HOLDEN, is no ordinary author. He has the welfare of the Church of Christ right honestly at heart. He speaks the more boldly on that account. And he has reasons that are worth attending to.

Take him in the middle. 'The question at issue is not whether religion should be sacramental or non-sacramental in type, whether priestly or prophetic. It would be futile to limit the ways in which men may approach God, and to reduce the churches to some common factor of uniformity in ritual or belief would be equally useless. The paralysis from which all churches are suffering does not arise from what is distinctive in each, but from defects which are common to them all. Three in particular may be specified, namely, their materialism, professionalism and sectarianism.'

What does he mean by materialism? Not philosophical materialism. No philosophical or other theory is in his mind at all. Not worldliness even. By materialism he means the influences that come from the possession of wealth.

But take his concession first. 'Wealth is still one of the conditions of a complete intellectual and social training. Jesus chose His disciples from men who were neither rich nor poor. They had enough wealth for their ordinary needs but not enough to secure more than an average education. It was the greater wealth of Paul's family that permitted him to go from Tarsus to Jerusalem and sit at the feet of Gamaliel. Had Paul been poor, he would probably not have displayed so wide an intellectual range or so great a power of adaptation. Further, a vow of poverty is not essentially Christian. Arbitrary limitations of circumstance, that do not arise from the actual needs of our individual or communal life, are a travesty rather than an expression of the spirit of Jesus.'

Again, he does not refer to the unfair advantage over a Church which the man of means sometimes exercises. There are two ways in which money is materialism for a Church. One way is to make its members too comfortable. While life is easy outwardly, it is scarcely possible to make it

spiritual within. The other is the open way in which the raising of money is made an end in itself.

'Take for example the work of foreign missions for which money is indispensable. Every missionary society has for one of its objects the raising of money. Local efforts are made, and the local results achieved are obvious to every member; but the purpose for which the money is subscribed is only dimly realized. It often happens that very successful financial missionary efforts do not lead to a wider or more intelligent interest in mission work in India or China or Africa. There is no real missionary enthusiasm; the success is limited to finance. And this failure to distinguish between means and ends is typical of much of the work of the churches. Their main efforts and interests are financial. If money was not needed for the ministry, buildings and church funds, many churches would not have much work left for them to do. But this indicates a materialistic conception of church work and an entire misunderstanding of the meaning of Christian discipleship.'

Pass to Professionalism. What is that? If you will read the quotations which are made in 'Entre Nous' from a sermon by the Bishop of Nassau you will understand at once. But listen also to Mr. HOLDEN. And again take the concession first. 'In the interests of order and the competent administration of the churches, specialization of function such as is involved in the establishment of a definite class of ministers and lay officials, seems to me to be inevitable.' That is the concession.

'But in the larger interest both of the churches and the world every liability to officialism should be carefully reduced. Every church needs to foster the spirit of adventure and to leave room for experiment so that alongside or, it may be, springing out of the old, the spirit of Jesus may find expression in new ways suited to the new times. If this is to be done the churches must be careful to free both ministers and officials from any selfish interest in the maintenance of the existing order of things. In the Free Churches this is the more needful because ministers often find their hopes frustrated by the timidity, ignorance or selfishness of the laity. Free churchmen are losing their zest for spiritual freedom, and it is often the congregation rather than the minister that is responsible for the humdrum and stereotyped life of the church.'

Lastly, Sectarianism. And once more consider first the concession. 'The divisions that separate the churches are often regarded as a serious cause of offence, and no taunt is more frequently flung at the churches than that of their bigotry and sectarianism. A clear distinction, however, needs to be drawn between the sections or sects into which the Christian Church is divided and the spirit of sectarianism. The idea of heresy and schism in the Roman Church sprang from a belief in the right of the church to fix the standards of orthodoxy, both in faith and practice. Heresy, therefore, was unavoidable wherever men had courage to think for themselves, and schism was a possibility the church had vigorously to guard against.'

Again, 'most church divisions have been due to the failure of an older system to make room for the exuberance of its younger members. Now in so far as these divisions correspond to real differences in belief or to obviously alternative modes of government, it is to be hoped, in the interests of variety and fullness of life, that they will continue to exist. The modern doctrine of religious freedom and toleration implies a diversity of churches corresponding to the variety of beliefs. Sects, then, are a modern inevitability, and should not be an offence to any candid person to-day. The formal unity of the churches would imply a larger measure of agreement in faith and practice, ritual and administration, than is now possible. To expect it would be as foolish as to expect an Esquimaux and a negro to live on the same diet;

and it would be equally undesirable. The truest catholicity lies in the recognition of the spiritual unity of all sections of the Christian Church despite their differences in polity and creed, and those Christians are least tainted with sectarianism for whom the chimera of formal union has no charm because they rejoice in the breadth of the vision of God and in the variety of man's approach to Him.'

More than that—for here the concession is of utmost consequence—'Catholicity of spirit is not inconsistent with an intense fidelity on the part of believers to the particular truths by which they themselves live. Men who have definite opinions about business and politics, literature and art, must grant a similar crispness of judgment in questions of theology and churchmanship. If religion matters at all, it is of the highest importance that men and women should have a reason for their faith, and be prepared, if necessary, to fight for it.'

'But this definiteness of faith often brings with it a dangerous narrowness of outlook that may lead to sectarianism of spirit. The Roman Church, for example, declines to recognize the Anglican and Free Churches as branches of the Catholic Church, and this conviction prevents Romanists from co-operating with churches beyond the pale of their theological recognition. Proselytism becomes a duty, religious toleration a crime. The insistence of many evangelical Christians on a particular doctrine of the atonement and a particular plan of salvation keeps them at a distance from Christians with a different theological belief. Or again, the Nonconformist belief in the necessary severance of church and state has often led to bitter disputes between the Established Church and dissenters. In these and many other instances, the danger lies in an over-emphasis of one truth to the neglect of other equally important truths. It is at their peril that men rest content with less than "*every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"; for otherwise the mind contracts, the heart fails in sympathy, and the spirit of sectarianism enters in.'

'But I repeat'—you see he is back to the concession again, and wisely—'But I repeat, for it cannot be too clearly stated, that there is no necessary connexion between a definite and strongly held faith and the spirit of sectarianism. Paul withstood Peter to the face, for the sake of the truth in Christ as he understood it, but Paul was no sectary. John Howe, who left his living at Torrington rather than do violence to his conscience, breathed all his life an atmosphere of loving comprehension that besought God's blessing on all sections of His church; and Dale, of Birmingham, who at one stage of his career fought the battle for disestablishment with unerring singleness of purpose, was a man of noble catholicity of spirit. Fidelity to the truth men live by can never be forgone, nor can the church afford to lose the spirit of candour.'

The title of the book is *The Spirit of Jesus and the Churches* (Methuen; 3s. 6d. net).

Professor A. Seth PRINGLE-PATTISON, Emeritus Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, has delivered a Presidential Address to the Theological Society of the New College, Edinburgh. Its subject is *The Duty of Candour in Religious Teaching* (Hodder & Stoughton; 1s. net).

There are excellent things in the address, expressed excellently. But as an address to theological students in Scotland it comes to nothing. It comes to nothing because of two vitiating suppositions that run through it. The one supposition is that theological students in Scotland believe just as much of the New Testament as Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON believes. The other is that they do not preach what they believe.

They do not preach what they believe. The

charge is often made. But it has never been made so candidly. What evidence is there? The only evidence referred to is a quotation from Canon Streeter. Now Canon Streeter is no authority here. His knowledge is confined to the Church of England, and even there it means no more than that certain preachers do not preach as Canon Streeter believes. That they believe as he believes and yet preach as he does not believe, there is no evidence whatever. As for Scotland, they who know more preachers than Canon Streeter is in the least likely to know declare emphatically that want of candour in their preaching is the last charge that can be brought against them.

But the other mistake is still more serious. Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON thinks that theological students in Scotland believe no more of the New Testament than he believes. How much does he believe? He believes all that is natural. He does not believe anything in the New Testament that is in any sense supernatural. He does not believe anything that goes beyond the ordinary working of God's providence as we see it in our day.

He does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Why not? Because it is impossible that any one should be raised from the dead? Apparently not. The possibility of miracles he allows. When the believer in miracles argues that 'the belief in miracles does not offend in any way against the law of causation: it introduces a supernatural cause acting directly and interfering for the time with the customary sequence of events,' Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON agrees. For, he says, 'the real question concerns not the abstract possibility of a miracle in general, but the actual occurrence of particular reported miraculous events.'

So it is a matter of evidence, of evidence for the particular miracle. What evidence is there for the resurrection of Jesus? To Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON there is evidently none at all. He does not believe that even our Lord's disciples believed in it. He does not believe that it was believed in by St. Paul. But we must quote his own words.

'In the case of the Resurrection,' he says, 'we have to distinguish between the belief in the continued existence and spiritual activity of the Risen Lord and the account of the Resurrection as it stands in the Gospels. The former belief undoubtedly prevailed soon after the death of Jesus in the circle of his disciples and followers—based apparently on his "appearances" to individuals and to gatherings of the faithful. For this we have the testimony of St. Paul, who, it will be noted, includes in the list of such appearances his own vision on the way to Damascus, and draws no distinction between it and the earlier cases to which he refers. This belief and the phenomena on which it was avowedly based have to be distinguished from the circumstantial story of the Empty Tomb and its sequel, which we find in the Gospels. If St. Paul had known anything of such a story, it is impossible, laying the stress he does upon the Resurrection, that he should not have referred to evidence so remarkable. But not only does he not mention it: his own distinction, in the context, between the natural and the spiritual body is inconsistent with the resuscitation of the physical body of Jesus as implied in the narrative. St. Paul's theory belongs to a higher level of thought. As for ourselves, we no longer believe (any more than St. Paul) in the resurrection of our own physical bodies, and it is impossible for us to think otherwise of the physical organism of Jesus. But if the belief in our own continued spiritual existence remains unaffected by our abandoning the idea of a "resurrection of the flesh," *a fortiori* its abandonment in the case of Jesus does not affect belief in the living Lord.'

Now it is easy enough to explain why St. Paul does not refer to 'the circumstantial story of the Empty Tomb and its sequel, which we find in the Gospels.' He never refers to anything of the

kind. He takes it all for granted. He has a certain foundation to build upon. That foundation is laid, and he simply proceeds to build upon it. Nothing is surer in criticism than that, and it is surprising that Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON should not have known it.

But if St. Paul did not believe in the physical resurrection, what sort of resurrection did he believe in? That he believed in a resurrection of some kind is evident enough, and Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON allows it. That he, and not he only but all the writers of the New Testament, believed in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and not only believed in it but built up the New Testament on that belief, is beyond the possibility of dispute. What resurrection did they believe in if it was not the resurrection of their Lord's body?

Does Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON believe in a resurrection of any kind? He does not. There lies the difference. And no arrangement of words will bridge it. He says it is all a matter of evidence. But that is a mistake. As he himself says on another page, 'The view taken will always be found to depend on foregone conclusions of the reasoner as to the general nature of the universe.' And when the reasoner begins with these foregone conclusions no kind or quantity of evidence will affect him. He says that 'logically,' that is, scientifically or philosophically, he cannot deny the possibility of such a miracle. All the same it is just its possibility that he does deny.

Bishop Charles GORE has published a sermon on *The Fall of Man* (Mowbray), which he 'preached in substance' in Balliol College Chapel on January 30th, and in St. Paul's Cathedral on February 13th, 1921. Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON, in the Address already referred to, also touches the Fall. Let us hear Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON first.

'There are three sources, three layers of tradition, more or less loosely woven together in Genesis, and in the first chapter, which represents the latest of the three, the story moves with a simple dignity which is not without a certain sublimity, however out of touch it may be with scientific fact. But when we pass to chapters ii. and iii., and come to a Creator who "forms" man out of clay and then breathes into his nostrils, and by a subsequent operation extracts one of the man's ribs and makes a woman out of it, who walks in the garden in the cool of the day, and eventually turns tailor and makes coats of skin for Adam and his wife—when we meet a snake that talks and an apple-tree that is taboo, it should not be necessary to say anything more as to the kind of world in which we are moving. It is folk-lore undiluted, and anthropology furnishes countless parallels.'

Now let us hear Bishop GORE. 'If it means that as we read the great story of the Garden of Eden and the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve in the third chapter of Genesis, we are to recognize that this, and indeed all the early chapters of Genesis, are not history, then I would wholly agree. I can never imagine how people so long supposed that these early chapters were a historical record of actual events as they occurred. They are plainly folklore such as mostly lies behind human history. There was no garden in Mesopotamia at a particular date with a particular man and woman, and a serpent and certain wonderful trees. But can we be so ignorant as not to know that mankind has been taught through myth and fable and legend, at least as often as by accurate history? These early stories of Genesis have their root in a folklore which is found also recorded on the Babylonian tablets.'

Is there any difference between them? There is none. So when Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON goes on to say: 'It will behove our expositors, in the interests of an intelligent Christianity, to make themselves quite plain as to the stratum of thought to which these narratives belong, stating the case

not as if it were an acknowledgment reluctantly wrung from them, but *ex animo* and *con amore*, as what no trained mind can fail to perceive to be true'—we refer him to Bishop GORE. This is just what one of 'our expositors' does. He does it *ex animo* and *con amore*. And which of 'our expositors' does anything else? But now mark what follows.

Says Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON: 'It will be the more incumbent upon them [our expositors] to be explicit and emphatic here, because so much of Christian theology since the time of St. Paul has been built on the idea of the Fall of man, and has incorporated in its construction the incidents of this primitive story, allegorising the snake in the process into "that old serpent the Devil." St. Paul, it is true, does not go beyond generalities ("As in Adam all fell"), but later theologians, as we all know, have not hesitated to trace the whole "estate of sin and misery into which man fell," the burden of original sin and all its consequences, to the unhappy curiosity of the eponymous mother of mankind, not unnaturally excited by a wholly unintelligible taboo.'

The language is uncomfortably reminiscent of the mob orator at the street corner, but what is the meaning? We may pass the reference to St. Paul's 'generalities'—a man not much given to generalities, if we know him. The meaning is that there is no such thing as original sin. Does Bishop GORE agree with that? His sermon is preached for the very purpose of showing that he does not agree.

The phrase may be open to objection; Dr. GORE does not use it. But what is meant by 'original sin' is that there is more in humanity to be accounted for than the particular transgressions you or I may be guilty of. It asserts—here are Dr. GORE's words — 'it asserts not only that particular men or women have done wrong and reaped the penalty of wrongdoing, but that back behind all these particular sins and sinners, somehow humanity—human nature as a whole—has gone wrong.' Has Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON taken account of that? He has not. And yet he might have taken account of it. Science takes account of it now—nothing more emphatically. Even philosophy has begun to take account of it. And when you turn to literature, the great literature of the world, you find that it has been taken account of all the time.

Bishop GORE turns to Shakespeare. 'No man was ever less of a preacher or a reformer than William Shakespeare. He was a child of the Renaissance. He wanted simply to observe human nature in all its endless and fascinating variety and to present its living image in the forms of his imagination, just as it is, good and bad together, all fascinating, all interesting. Nevertheless we note as we read his plays in order of time, as far as we may, how there grows upon him one awful impression: that somehow the human soul is perverted or obsessed with passions which work its ruin. This conviction is expressed with terrible intensity in the Sonnet on Lust:

"All this the world well knows: but who knows well
To flee the heaven which leads men to this hell."

It becomes the dominant motive of the great tragedies. It may be ambition in Macbeth, and vanity in King Lear, and lust in Antony, and jealousy in Othello, and pride in Coriolanus; but in all it is some perverting or obsessing passion which hands the human soul over to the ministers of its perdition. Shakespeare has no remedy. He remains to the end only the spectator. And this is not the place to ask how at last he found relief from this awful spectacle which at one time seems as if it would be too much for the sanity of even that mighty mind. But when I hear of St. Paul as taking a too severe view of human nature, I cannot but ask, Was it severer than Shakespeare's —or than Shelley's? Do they not both tell us that there is about human nature an awful secret

which experience discloses—a perversion or obsession deep down and seemingly ineradicable?'

'I would say, then, to you'—this is Bishop GORE's concluding message (he seems to hear Professor PRINGLE-PATTISON delivering his address)—'I would say, then, to you as my message to you for Lent. If you are told in the newspapers or by clever men that the Fall of Man is a figment of the imagination of St. Paul or the Middle Ages and the Reformation, look narrowly at experience both in yourself and in the world. Listen to the deepest exponents of human experience—to a Dante and a Milton, to a Shakespeare and a Shelley—and tell your intelligent friends that, whether the story of the Garden is a historical statement or a symbol, either way it speaks a truth which it is folly and blindness to ignore: that your own nature and human nature in the gross, if it is to be saved from failure, needs something more than enlightenment, it needs redemption from sin: and that, as far as you can hear, there is none other name given under heaven whence mankind can look for this redemption than the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.'

There are Jews to-day whom we can look upon and love, as Jesus looked upon and loved the rich young ruler. There are Jews to-day of whom we can say, as He said of a certain Jew in His day, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.'

What hinders them from entering? Two things. First, the Christian claim that the Messiah as conceived in the Old Testament is divine as well as human. And next, the Christian belief that the Messiah had to suffer and die. So says Professor BURNEY.

The Rev. C. F. BURNEY, D.Litt., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford, has prepared a volume of sermons which has been published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark as one of the volumes of the 'Scholar as Preacher' series. Its title is *The Gospel in the Old Testament* (12s.). It is a notable book; in certain ways most significant. For Professor BURNEY is a higher critic of the most pronounced manner, and yet he finds in the Old Testament—he finds throughout the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi—that very truth which he has himself expressed in the title of his book—the Gospel.

Not the Gospel in the full flower of it. But in the seed and in the bud—most unmistakably the seed and the bud which the coming of Christ into the world made to bring forth so abundantly. We see in Professor BURNEY's sermons, as we may never have seen before, what our Lord meant when He said, 'I came not to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.'

It is in the middle of the book that we come upon the objections which the modern Jew has—even such Jews as Mr. Claude Montefiore—to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. They are, as we have seen, these two—the divinity of the Messiah and His shameful death.

Professor BURNEY says little about the divinity. What can he say? There is no doubt that Jesus Himself found in the Old Testament a Messiah who was divine as well as human. What else was the point of His argument with the Pharisees regarding the 110th Psalm? It was a thoroughly Rabbinic argument. To say that it pins our Lord down to the Davidic authorship of the psalm is to miss the meaning of it. And then there is the fact that He knew Himself to be the fulfilling of the Messianic ideal of the Old Testament, and to be divine.

On the objection of the Jews to the death of the Messiah, especially His death on a cross, Professor BURNEY has much more to say. It was the death on the Cross, far more than the fact of death, that caused them to stumble. For they took the words in Deuteronomy (21^{23}), 'cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' to refer to

crucifixion. But the modern Jew, at least the modern liberal Jew, does not interpret that passage so. To him the objection simply is that, properly interpreted, the prophecies concerning the Messiah do not predict His death.

Whereupon Professor BURNEY sets before us and them, in masterly survey, the history of the Messianic conception, from the making of the covenant with Abraham until it is taken up by the author of the great section in the Book of Isaiah which begins with the fortieth chapter. There 'it is applied in the first place to Israel as a body entrusted with a mission to the world at large. Then, as it comes home to the writer how far Israel as a whole is from answering to his ideal conception, it is narrowed down to the righteous nucleus of the nation, the Israel within Israel who has a mission first of all to his own nation, and is then to carry Jehovah's salvation to the ends of the earth. Finally, the conception takes shape in the picture of the Servant in ch. liii. realizing his mission through suffering and death, yielding up his soul as a guilt-offering for the sins of the world, rising again to a glorious future in which he is to be the spiritual father of a renewed community, and the pleasure of Jehovah is to prosper in his hand.'

Missions and the Study of the New Testament.

BY THE REVEREND J. F. MCFADYEN, M.A., PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, QUEEN'S COLLEGE, KINGSTON.

AT the beginning of the War, when our statesmen were enunciating their war aims, it took them some time to realize that the Empire included not only Britain and the self-governing dominions, but some hundreds of millions of coloured citizens, many of whom were making their own application of the official pronouncements; and that if the statements of war aims were not to lead to unfortunate results they must be made with much more circumspection. Has not something of the same kind happened in connexion with the Christian Church during the last century? The Church of the West knows in a general way that Churches have been organized in Asia and Africa, Churches which have been rapidly growing in numbers, in self-consciousness, in a sense of responsibility and spiritual power. Yet so long as these organizations are vaguely described as native Churches and treated as an adjunct of foreign missions, it is difficult for us to realize our essential unity with them and make the necessary adjustments in our whole conception of the Christian Church.

To confine ourselves to one aspect of the subject, let us ask ourselves whether the study of missions and the new Churches on the one hand and the study of the New Testament on the other have been allowed sufficiently to interact on each other. It is not necessary to elaborate the point that the foreign missionary and the leaders of the young Churches are indebted at every turn to the New Testament student; but it is well for the New Testament student sometimes to remind himself that he is now speaking to a larger audience than heretofore, an audience, moreover, with far more varied and complicated needs. It is said that two generations are required for the results of Biblical scholarship to filter down to the non-reading public even of the West. Perhaps it would be safe to allow another generation to take them to the average member of the Indian or the African Church. When we attempt to formulate Christian doctrine or direct Christian sentiment, it gives us pause to remember that our works will live after us in distant communities some generations hence.

It is, *e.g.*, disappointing to see a young Indian Christian, after graduating at an Indian university, and studying theology under Western teachers in an Indian seminary for three years, start off to teach for the measure of his lifetime doctrines which have long since been abandoned even in conservative circles in the West. This is obviously