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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

BISHOP CHARLES GORE is as conservative in the New Testament as he is liberal in the Old. And he has reasons.

He is liberal in the Old Testament because the application to the Old Testament of the historic method compels him to be liberal. He is conservative in the New Testament because it compels him to be conservative. There is no inconsistency between *Lux Mundi* and *Belief in God*.

Belief in God is the title of Dr. GORE'S latest book (Murray; 7s. 6d. net). It is the first of three books which he proposes to write. The second will deal with Belief in Jesus Christ, the third with Belief in the Holy Spirit and in the Church. The series of three will form his contribution to a 'Reconstruction of Belief.'

Now the arresting thing about this book on Belief in God is that Dr. GORE has gone no distance into it when he is discussing Jesus of Nazareth. The reason is this. He cannot reconstruct a belief in God that would be worth reconstructing without the aid of the Hebrew prophets. But Jesus was a Hebrew prophet. To offer the God of the prophets for our acceptance while leaving out the contribution made by Jesus, seems to him a ridiculous thing to do. It were

more sensible to write a book on the circulation of the blood and leave out Harvey.

But when he comes to the contribution which Jesus makes to our knowledge of God he finds it necessary to consider who He was that made it. For Jesus claims an acquaintance with God which is altogether different from the acquaintance claimed by the prophets of the Old Testament, and it is necessary to test the truth of that claim before His contribution can be estimated. If Jesus called Himself the Son of God, then God has to be thought of as the Father of Jesus. If Jesus said 'My Father and your Father' but never 'Our Father,' then it is necessary to consider how that distinction in God's Fatherhood is to be understood.

Bishop GORE tests Christ's assertion of a peculiar relationship to God, as he tests everything else, by the historic method. And so far as one can see he is as rigidly just in applying that method to Jesus as to Jeremiah. He is therefore not a little astonished, and he is entitled to be astonished, when he finds his conclusions different from the conclusions of some other men who profess to apply the same method with the same impartiality.

He says: 'We are assured by Dr. Glover that Jesus did not call Himself the Son of God, though

there is no fact better certified in our foundation documents than that He did; and by Dr. Rashdall that He probably did not proclaim Himself the final judge of all men, and that He never spoke of His death as to have an atoning or ransoming value for the souls of men—again in spite of the fundamental records; and by Dr. Inge and others that He founded no Church and instituted no sacraments. Dr. Kirsopp Lake will not allow it to be probable that He even called Himself the Christ (in the specific sense) or the Son of Man, or was so called during His lifetime, though here, I think, most of the other critics whom I have named would dissent from him. But Dr. Glover, again, assures us that St. Paul was the first to call Him "the Lord." More than this, though He is represented so plainly as speaking with infallible authority, we are constantly warned that He was plainly under a delusion about the immediate coming of the kingdom, and shared the popular superstition about devils and their possession of men; and others of the left wing warn us that we cannot rely upon His sinlessness in any strict sense.'

These men, we say, use the same method of study as Bishop GORE; they have no other to use. And they believe that they use it as impartially. What is the reason of the difference? The reason is that they determine before they begin that no miracle in the New Testament will be accepted; Bishop GORE hampers himself by no such preliminary condition.

We are in the backwash of the scientific arrogance of the nineteenth century. And the backwash is always more confusing than the rushing torrent. At the very time when science is declaring that Darwinism is out of date and Evolution discredited, certain theologians are assuring us that miracles do not happen.

In the Gospel records, and throughout the rest of the New Testament, we find the belief that our

Lord Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead. The greatest religious and moral reformation in history was due to that belief. On that belief the Church of Christ has done its work and is to-day the greatest force for righteousness in the world. The historical evidence for it is not less or less reliable than the evidence for other great and unchallenged events. And yet, in the name of a struggling scientific hypothesis, it is declared to be impossible and untrue. Theologians, professional and unprofessional, approach the study of the New Testament to find out, not what it trustworthily contains, but what can be made of it after that and every other 'miracle' is rejected.

If any one should doubt the accuracy of the reference to the present state of opinion on Evolution, it is enough to refer to the addresses which were made at the meeting of the Royal Society in Edinburgh last year. The addresses of certain of the Presidents of sections have already been quoted in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, and need not be repeated. But let us suppose that the present attitude of scientifically trained men to the theory of Evolution is quite respectful and submissive. And let us then see whether it is easier, *as a mere matter of credibility*, to believe in the doctrine of Evolution than in the doctrine of the Resurrection.

What is the doctrine of Evolution? It is that somewhere, and sometime, in the inconceivable distances of space and of time, a germ cell came into existence. No question is to be asked as to how, why, or by whom it came there and came then. Its coming into existence has to be taken on trust. All that we are told is that it must be put as far back as possible—away among the nebulae perhaps and among the nebulous æons of time.

Out of that cell has come the whole universe. It had the potentiality of the universe in it, and when the time came, every thing evolved, non-living and living. There was no interference with the germ cell. Whether God created it at first

seems scarcely to be considered. But it is positively affirmed that God had nothing to do with its evolution. There were no gaps. There were no leaps. The time came when life appeared: there was no interference from without. The time came when intelligence dawned: there was no interference from without. The time came when moral responsibility was felt: there was no interference from without. That primordial germ cell had in it all matter and all mind, just as the acorn has in it all the parts of the oak. And as the acorn needs only sun and rain and soil to produce branches and leaves and fruit, so the germ cell needed only its own natural conditions to bring forth mineral, vegetable, and animal, the beauty of the earth and the glory of the sky.

This germ cell theory is called 'a working hypothesis.' Let us call the story of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead a working hypothesis. Does the theory of the germ cell work better than the story of the Resurrection? We know how the Resurrection story has worked in history. Scientific observers are telling us how the evolution theory is working now.

We are accustomed to look upon the narrative in Genesis of the Fall of Man as early-Israelite. We do not believe that we can go much behind it, and we do not try. But Assyriologists now tell us that it is comparatively late. One proof of its lateness is irresistible.

The text, transliteration, and translation of *An Old Babylonian Version of the Gilgamesh Epic* has been published at the Yale University Press (London: Humphrey Milford; 16s. net). The editors are the late Professor Morris Jastrow, Jr., and Professor Albert T. Clay. In a long and interesting Introduction they tell the story which the newly deciphered tablets contain. It is a narrative of the way in which Enkidu, uncivilized but heroic, becomes civilized and much less heroic, through the good offices of a woman.

The woman addresses him admiringly:

I gaze upon thee, Enkidu, like a god art thou,
but she chides him for his rudeness:

Why with the cattle

Dost thou roam across the field?

She appeals to him to allow her to lead him to Erech where Gilgamesh dwells. 'Enkidu consents, and now the woman takes off her garments and clothes the naked Enkidu, while putting another garment on herself. She takes hold of his hand and leads him to the sheepfolds, where bread and wine are placed before him. Accustomed hitherto to sucking milk with cattle, Enkidu does not know what to do with the strange food until encouraged and instructed by the woman. The entire third column is taken up with this introduction of Enkidu to civilized life in a pastoral community, and the scene ends with Enkidu becoming a guardian of flocks.'

Now the editors of these Babylonian tablets are not concerned with the early narratives in Genesis. But how could they help being reminded of the story of Adam and Eve? They turned to it at once. Clearly the two stories had one and the same original story to start from. The Babylonian story is not dependent on the Hebrew, nor the Hebrew on the Babylonian. We must give up the idea, though it seemed so settled, that the Biblical narratives of the Fall and the Flood are purged and purified versions of the Babylonian narratives. That both came from one and the same original source is evident. It is equally evident that they are independent developments of that source. Starting from the same early 'traditions of men's primitive life on earth, the Hebrew and the Babylonian writers diverged, each group going its own way, each reflecting the particular point of view from which the evolution of human society was viewed.'

There are two remarkable differences between them. In the first place, the Biblical writers 'look

upon primitive life, when man went naked and lived in a garden, eating of fruits that grew of themselves, as the blessed life, in contrast to advanced culture which leads to agriculture and necessitates hard work as the means of securing one's substance.' And in the second place, they look upon woman not as bringing a blessing to man but rather a curse. The woman encourages Enkidu to rise to the higher life; Eve tempts Adam to his fall.

Is the one story earlier than the other? The editors do not say. They say only that the stories belong to different developments of the narrative once common to them both. But of one thing they are sure. Both are comparatively modern. For the story of Adam and Eve, as the story of Enkidu and the woman, *is told with a purpose*. So the rude Sunday School boy who interrupted the speaker with 'Never mind the moral, mannie, gie's anither story,' was more primitive than he knew.

Psycho-analysis is come in upon us like a flood. Already there is the beginning of an International Psycho-analytic Library. Three volumes are issued. The third is entitled *The Psycho-analytic Study of the Family* (Allen & Unwin; 10s. 6d. net). Its author is Mr. J. C. FLÜGEL, B.A., Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Psychology in University College, London.

It is come in upon us like a flood. And like a flood it is carrying everything away. The meditations of our own hearts, the intimacies and even the decencies of our family life, our religion and our God—the flood is up and is carrying them all away.

But we must discriminate. For there is great gain from Psychology, even from the New Psychology. And Psycho-analysis itself may yet leave grains of good behind it. At present, however, it is so fully occupied in explaining everything, and

so confidently, that it does not stay to consider what havoc its explanations may work. In the pursuit of science it sometimes happens that 'in the examination and testing of certain complicated, organic, living chemical compounds, the reagents destroy the very body which it was proposed to examine and all that is obtained is the products of its decomposition.' That danger attends Psycho-analysis. Mr. FLÜGEL's book has not escaped it.

It contains a chapter on Religion. This is the end of the chapter: 'The conceptions which religion has formed as to the nature and working of the Universe have arisen as products of the human emotions, having no necessary counterparts in the real world; much the same indeed in this respect as the inventions of the fairy stories and imaginative games of childhood or the day-dreams, romances and novels of a later age. In adult life such phantasies must either be abandoned or, if indulged in, recognised for what they are—productions of the mind which, apart from objective evidence, have no valid claim upon reality. They may indeed guide us in our ideals and aspirations and so lead ultimately to the reconstruction of the outer world through our own efforts, but in themselves they must be held distinct from the order of reality belonging to this outer world. Only so will Man achieve his full stature and be able to play that part in Nature's scheme of things to which, in virtue of his intellectual powers and his moral aspirations, he appears to be entitled.'

That is the conclusion of Mr. FLÜGEL's study of Religion and God. How has he arrived at it? Chiefly by a sweeping and not quite up-to-date employment of the Comparative Study of Religion. He begins by taking Religion to be a reflexion of men's fears—a theory of the origin of Religion which has almost disappeared. He proceeds by an interpretation of the Gospels which sometimes makes one shudder and sometimes makes one smile.

We shudder when we read that the relation of Christ to His Mother was that of Attis to Cybele, of Tammuz to Ishtar, and that, to avoid evil, Christ kept Himself aloof from His Mother, just as 'Attis unmans himself on discovering the incestuous nature of his affection.' We smile when we read that the proof of His aloofness from His Mother, 'and through her towards all women,' is found in the words, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee,' spoken at the marriage in Cana.

Many a Scottish minister of ability and consecration has died and been forgotten. Dr. John HUNTER left behind him a son who was capable of telling the story of his father's life. The biography of *John Hunter, D.D.*, written by Canon Leslie Stannard HUNTER (Hodder & Stoughton; 12s. 6d. net), will be read with increasing interest to the end.

Dr. John HUNTER was a Congregational minister: his son is a Canon in the Church of England. The difference in ecclesiastical attachment is explained in the biography, but is no significant part of it. What is significant is the fact that it is the biography of one Christian minister written by another, and yet Jesus Christ has a quite unessential place in it.

Dr. HUNTER did not need Christ. He came to God early in life, and he came directly. When well on in life he said, 'Ever since I can remember, God has been to me the one great reality of life.' He was able to hold communion with God, he was never able to hold communion with Christ. During his ministry in Glasgow a Conference was held in Bradford on 'The Indwelling Spirit and the Living Christ.' Dr. HUNTER was present, and asked some questions. Writing afterwards to the *Independent* about these questions and the way in which they had been received, he said: 'Mr. Herbert Stead was the only speaker who met my questions frankly and naturally and

in the way I wanted them answered—by a statement, simple and most impressive, of his own experience. The personal and special manifestation which Christ gave of Himself to Mr. Stead represents, I have no doubt, some real and profound experience in his private history, but it is an experience—at least, in the way he expressed it—of which I know absolutely nothing.' And then he added: 'Not at any time of my life have I been conscious of holding any communion with the living Christ as an experience separate and distinct from communion with the living God.'

The words 'separate and distinct from communion with the living God' may seem to deprive the confession of its point. But the biography clearly shows that they have no such importance. They are an unnecessary addition to the sentence. What Dr. HUNTER meant to say was that he had never had communion with Christ as Christ, his communion had always been with God as God. He had come to God directly in youth, he had been in direct fellowship with God throughout his manhood.

Now it is to God that we all must come, and it is with God that we all must be. But can we come to God without first coming to Christ? Can we be conscious of God without being conscious of God in Christ?

Turn for a moment to another book. Turn to *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History*, by the Rev. D. M. Ross, D.D. (James Clarke & Co.; 6s. net), and read this: 'For the first Christians God was God as seen in Jesus. They could no longer think of God apart from Jesus. If the Jews were distinguished by their belief in one God and in one God as righteous will, the Christians were distinguished by their belief in God as God in Christ. Nor did they thereby cease to believe in one God. There is no trace in the New Testament of any approach to a conception of two Gods—the absolute God and God in Christ. They

believed in one God (1 Cor. viii. 6)—the one God they found in Jesus. This God was the only true God.'

The first Christians could not come to God without coming to Christ. Can we? It depends on who we are. In New Testament times there were among the Jews two classes, the righteous and the sinners. Some were, or held themselves to be, right with God. They did not need even to come to Him. Like the elder brother of the parable they had been with Him all the time.

Others were sinners. They were wrong with God. And they knew that of themselves they could not get right with God. It is true that in that same parable the younger son returns to his father. And the interpreters of the parable who take that as sufficient evidence that a man can return to God by making up his mind to do so are too numerous to name. But there are two considerations.

Though Jesus seems to admit the claim of the righteous to be right with God, He never leaves them until He has shown them that they are wrong. That is the first consideration. And the second is that though in this parable He seems to allow a sinner simply to return to God, He shows in all His direct teaching on the matter, and by the repeated declaration of His purpose in coming into the world, that no man can come to God except by Him.

Is it otherwise now? Are there men who are right with God from the beginning and remain right? And are there men who though not right from the beginning can simply arise and go to their Father? Dr. HUNTER would not have said that he was right with God from the beginning. He says: 'When I was a lad often I was deeply moved by the religious revival that swept over the north of Scotland and Ireland in 1859 and 1860.' He came to God then. But he does seem to

claim that when he came to God he came directly. Jesus Christ is not once referred to in connexion with his coming. Jesus Christ is made little of in all his subsequent life. 'We can find no better way of approaching God than the way of the Hebrew prophets and poets—through man to God.' Those are words of his in the very height of his popularity as a preacher.

Two things are to be said. One, that the experience of Dr. John HUNTER was quite exceptional. In all revivals—and notably in the revival that is passing through Scotland at this very time—Jesus Christ is made much of. He is the way, the true and living way, the only way, to God. To 'find Christ' is the expression that is constantly used, to 'find God' never.

The other thing is, that Dr. HUNTER went steadily out of Christianity into theism. In his earliest ministry he challenged the Unitarians and gave a statement of his belief. He mentioned four facts that were to him fundamental. They were: (1) The consciousness of sin. (2) The Bible as a record of human experiences, inexplicable save from the point of view of the belief in Divine revelations to human souls. (3) Jesus Christ as an historical personage, and as a real and living presence known by a communion the most immediate and sacred. (4) Personal spiritual experience.

It is evident that the third of those facts is inconsistent with what he said at the Bradford Conference. It may be, however, that he does not here mean that he himself enjoyed this communion. But the point is that from that time Dr. HUNTER drew steadily nearer Unitarianism. In later years no one was more frequently invited to his pulpit than Stopford Brooke. He lectured for more than one session in Manchester College, Oxford. And the sorest disappointment of his life was when he missed an official and permanent position there.