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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

“LIFE,” said a gaunt widow, with a reputation for being clever—“life is a perpetual toothache.”

‘In this vein the conversation went on: the familiar topics were discussed of labour-troubles, epidemics, cancer, tuberculosis, and taxation.

‘Near me there sat a little old lady who was placidly drinking her tea, and taking no part in the melancholy chorus. “Well, I must say,” she remarked, turning to me and speaking in an undertone, “I must say I enjoy life.”

“So do I,” I whispered.

“When I enjoy things,” she went on, “I know it. Eating, for instance, the sunshine, my hot-water bottle at night. Other people are always thinking of unpleasant things. It makes a difference,” she added, as she got up to go with the others.

“All the difference in the world,” I answered.

‘It’s too bad that I had no chance for a longer colloquy with this wise old lady. I felt that we were congenial spirits, and had a lot to tell each other. For she and I are not among those who fill the mind with garbage; we make a better use of that divine and adorable endowment. We invite Thought to share, and by sharing to enhance, the pleasures of the delicate senses; we distil, as it were, an elixir from our golden moments, keeping out of the shining crucible of

consciousness everything that tastes sour. I do wish that we could have discussed at greater length, like two Alchemists, the theory and practice of our art.’

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The quotation is from *More Trivia* (Constable; 6s.), Mr. Logan Pearsall SMITH’s new book. It will serve as introduction to that book.

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It might serve also as introduction to the new volume of poems by Thomas HARDY, if that volume had not already been noticed among the Poetry. For HARDY is the gaunt widow. To him also life is a perpetual toothache, though he would express it more originally.

I sat. It all was past;  
Hope never would hail again;  
Fair days had ceased at a blast,  
The world was a darkened den.

The beauty and dream were gone,  
And the halo in which I had hied  
So gaily gallantly on  
Had suffered blot and died!

I went forth, heedless whither,  
In a cloud too black for name:  
—People frisked hither and thither;  
The world was just the same.

So with the man. And so also with the woman.

There was a singing woman  
Came riding across the mead  
At the time of the mild May weather,  
Tameless, tireless;

This song she sung: 'I am fair, I am young!'  
And many turned to heed.

And the same singing woman  
Sat crooning in her need  
At the time of the winter weather;  
Friendless, fireless,

She sang this song: 'Life, thou'rt too long!'  
And there was none to heed.

But the quotation with which this Note began will serve best of all as an introduction to a most agreeable little book on *Emile Coué, the Man and his Work* (Methuen; 2s. net), written by Hugh MACNAGHTEN, Vice-Provost of Eton College. For Mr. MACNAGHTEN is the little old lady who placidly drinks her tea and takes no part in the melancholy chorus.

He was not always so. When first they spoke to him of M. Coué and his cures, cures wrought by his own incurable optimism, he laughed them to scorn. But when he discovered that M. Coué cured his patients of their selfishness, when one lady 'every day, of her great kindness, devoted at least one hour' to his instruction, he was persuaded, and went.

It is a journey of a day and half from London to Nancy, though the return journey may be made in a day. M. Coué was at home. He was to lecture at 9 a.m. in a distant part of the town. 'There was time for bath and breakfast; we were too excited to feel tired, and we were among the first to reach the little cottage consisting of one room on the ground floor and one upper room where M. Coué usually sees his patients, or (shall we not say?) his friends. The meetings are held in the upper room, which is quite small: if used as a dining-room, a table to hold six would be as

much as there is room for. As a matter of fact quite twenty-four people are accommodated somehow, either on chairs and camp-stools or on the floor. In addition to the room itself there is a half passage, half ante-room, which holds perhaps eight, and this also is usually full. Ventilation is a difficulty; a door must be open so that those in the ante-room may not be excluded; consequently, to avoid a draught, which people generally but unwisely imagine to be dangerous, the window is relentlessly shut. M. Coué himself is, of course, thanks to self-mastery, almost indifferent to any atmosphere, stifling or otherwise. I suppose he says to himself, "I shan't mind this, I shan't mind this at all, indeed I shall rather like it," and his mind so readily falls in with the suggestion that he would emerge from the Black Hole of Calcutta itself quite unharmed.'

Now the thing that impressed Mr. MACNAGHTEN most immediately was not the cures which M. Coué wrought—did he work any cures at all?—it was the kindness which he made his patients show to one another. 'We all of us seemed to be inspired by one spirit and that spirit was M. Coué's.'

And he seems to say that this kindness was the occasion of the cure. For there were cures, but not startling, not even, or very rarely, on the spot. Improvement took place. It took place day by day in almost every one. And 'this all-embracing sympathy and universal goodwill were, I believe, no unimportant factors in the improvement.'

This first then, all-embracing sympathy and universal goodwill. And then? Then optimism—M. Coué's optimism. But not in himself. He never says, 'I can cure you.' He only says, 'You can be cured.' But he says that so optimistically that he persuades his patients to say it. And when they have said it once, he persuades them to say it fifty times. And it comes to pass that as they say it they are cured.

Miracles? No, there are no miracles. 'M. Coué is never tired of affirming that he works no miracles, all he claims is that he is able in most cases to help us to cure ourselves. "I cannot help you," he would say, "if you have broken an arm or a leg; in that case you will go, if you are sensible, to a surgeon; but I may be able to help you to recover the use of a limb or an eye which from the mere fact of long disuse has ceased to act as a limb or an eye in being." It is true that at times he has seemed to achieve much more than this. A helpless cripple carried into the room has left M. Coué's presence on his own feet, cured and triumphant; but the explanation is simple; the cripple had long ceased to believe in the possibility of walking, and therefore the disbelief had translated itself into a real inability. The moment that he believed M. Coué, who had told him that he had the power of walking, that moment he was able to walk. As he first walked, shouting, "Je marche, je marche," and presently ran round the room, doubtless he seemed to himself a living and walking proof that miracles do happen; but to M. Coué he presented only one more example of the truth that, what you think, in the sphere of possibilities of course, tends irresistibly to become true for you.'

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When we read the familiar passage in the Book of Job, 'I know that my redeemer liveth,' or hear it sung, our minds are tossed with the thought of Job's aspiration after immortality. Did he, or did he not, believe in a life to come? And may we? The music for a moment may carry us away from thinking, and so may the melody of the spoken beautiful English words. But the thought returns. It is never far away from us.

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Now the thought certainly never occurred to Job in the form in which it occurs to us. We look for a heaven above to which we hope to go. Job never imagined such a thing. The heavens belonged to God. The earth He had given for man's possession. If Job hoped for a vision of

God and a vindication of himself after death, it was here upon the earth that he hoped to have it.

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The thought of heaven has come to us, with other things, from Christ. The Book of Enoch touches it. Christ made it actual and ours. For He Himself came from God and went to God. When He went to God He went as man—the first man certainly to enter heaven and dwell there, for Enoch and Elijah were too indecisive to be considered. Now, where He is, there shall also His servants be. The thought of heaven, so familiar to us, so penetrating throughout our hymns, so delicious to our hopes, came quietly into the possession of the world when the Man Christ Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high..

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But some of us are willing to return to Job. Professor Adam C. WELCH, of the New College in Edinburgh, has written a book on *The Visions of the End* (James Clarke; 6s. net). It is a study in Daniel and Revelation. We wish it had been possible to give him space for two books. He has to leave so much unsaid. But, as it stands, you may safely go to this book of his for the simplest and most successful introduction to both Daniel and the Apocalypse that you are likely to find. It is Dr. WELCH's book that has led us to notice the difference Christ has made in men's thoughts of heaven, and the curious fact that some men are ready to go behind Christ and return to Job's idea of a kingdom of saints after death here upon the earth.

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They call it the Millennium. And they claim that they have Scripture authority for it. Professor WELCH does not deny the claim. In the Book of Revelation it is found unmistakably. For the author of that book was an apocalyptist. And being an apocalyptist he used apocalyptic thought as well as apocalyptic language.

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Dr. WELCH believes that he used apocalyptic thought sometimes when he had not altogether

accepted it. 'John was trying to combine the Jewish and the Christian kingdoms of the end. He knew that the Christian conception, because of its deeper sense of the close relations between God and man, was the higher. Accordingly he made it the final and the eternal state. Heaven, not earth, was the ultimate goal of the saints. But he felt compelled to find an uneasy place for the earthly kingdom which he inherited from the Jewish thought. He made it temporary, but he retained it as real. The position was simply a half-way house between a fully developed, purely Christian view of the future state and the view of a Church which was still struggling out of the Jewish swaddling clothes. Instead of fusing the more primitive thought in the higher, men tried to keep both and unite them in time. What they failed to realize was that by so doing they were still dealing in terms of time, while the consummation was beyond time. Being consummation, it must mean that time was no more.'

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'Does this involve that the insertion of a millennial kingdom was a mere blunder on the part of the prophet, or a clumsy method of uniting incongruous ideas which has only resulted in bringing about confusion? It does not seem just to utter so sweeping a verdict. John may have been influenced in clinging to his Jewish tradition, not merely by the fact that it was tradition, but by its having supplied him with ideals which he loved and desired to retain. Now the earthly kingdom of the Jew brought into all ideas about the eternal future an element which Judaism was peculiarly fitted to supply—what may be called the sense of reality. One of the grave risks of the nascent Church was that, growing up in a Greek-speaking environment, it should adopt with its new language the Greek world of thought. And many to-day have been able to insist that it did precisely this thing in its conception of Christ and gave the world a Neo-Platonic *logos* instead of Him who lived among men full of grace and truth. There was the same risk attendant on the ideas about the future. As men learned to believe in

the immortality of the soul, there might have come merely the expectation of the soul's continued existence, an existence empty of real content. The Jew, however, had believed, not in the immortality of the soul, but in the resurrection of the life; and he had taught it, not as a natural endowment of the spirit, but as a gift of God. Into this new life, made real in the consummation, was to pass everything which made life worthy and sweet here. It was a life which could be renewed on a renovated earth, and into it were to come and in it were to continue all those things which brought joy to men who lived now in the presence of God. Judaism had never been ashamed of the body. To it the body was no prison-house of clay which cribbed and confined man's spirit, it was the means through which the soul functioned. Body and soul were almost inseparable concomitants. What, then, the body made possible for the soul, the sweet intercourse of men, their mutual helpfulness, their kindly courtesies, all the relations which make courage and patience and gentleness and helpfulness realities instead of empty phrases, were assured for continuance in an earthly kingdom. John rescued much for our Christian life, when he refused to break with his Jewish tradition.'

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'John did no miracle.' Why not? Because he did not belong to 'the last days.'

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You will be led to see that that was the reason if you read the Cunningham Lectures of Professor A. G. HOGG. The Lectures have been published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, under the title of *Redemption from this World*, with the sub-title of 'The Supernatural in Christianity' (7s. 6d. net). They offer us the latest thought of a man who, by means of quite a small book, published some years ago, has been steadily and profoundly influencing the theology of his time.

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This book also is for thinking men. Its chief title, 'Redemption from this World,' although it

means redemption not out of the world but out of the evil that is in the world, poorly expresses the fulness of the book's contents. The sub-title is necessary. It is in the sub-title, 'The Supernatural in Christianity,' that we find the reason why John did no miracle.

For how is miracle done? It is done by the Spirit of God. And how is the Spirit of God loosed to do it? By our faith.

So these two are necessary—God's Spirit and man's faith. And John the Baptist had neither at his command. For he did not belong to 'the last days.' He was of the old dispensation, as we say in our fashion of speech. Of the old dispensation, that is to say, of all the days that went before 'the last days,' he was the greatest. But so much greater are 'the last days' than all the days that went before that Jesus is constrained to say: 'Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.'

The greatness of 'the last days' lies in the possession of the Spirit of God and of faith. And these two possessions came to them in one gift, the gift of the Redeemer. Until the Redeemer came there was none to exercise the fulness of faith. And without the active exercise of faith in its fulness the Holy Spirit of God had no opening for the entrance of His power. John did no miracle. Jesus did. Jesus did miracles because He had unbounded faith, and the Spirit was bestowed upon Him without measure.

But He is not only the faithful one. He is 'the pioneer and perfection of faith.' The Greek words so translated are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews (12<sup>2</sup>). The happy English translation is Professor Moffatt's. The writer of the Epistle, after referring to some men who were conspicuous in the earlier dispensation for their faith, proceeds—how unhappily are our chapters divided—proceeds to the name of one who excelled them all in faith, and who, just by the excellence of His faith,

was the inbringer of a new order of things. It is the new order called 'the last days.' The phrase is apocalyptic. It was chosen by our Lord Himself and passed on to others because it was familiar to the thinking of the day. Call the new order the Kingdom of God, if you will. Call it if you will Christianity. The point is, first, that Jesus had faith enough to be able to use the power of the Holy Spirit in the working of miracles; and, next, that the same faith is open to us, the same Holy Spirit is at our command, the same working of miracles is in our power.

Which is the most daringly religious book in the Bible? Which book makes the most daring affirmations about God? Is it not the Epistle to the Hebrews? Which is the most daringly religious chapter in that book? Is it not the eleventh? And which is the most daringly religious verse in that chapter? Is it not the thirteenth?

'These all died in faith, not having received the promises.' It is a history of God's ways with men throughout all the ages till Christ came. And what is the point of it? It is that the promises which God made to these men were not realized.

The statement is staggering. We are familiar enough with the idea that the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets were not always fulfilled—or not fulfilled in the letter. But this writer goes far beyond that. What he says is that not one of all the promises of God made to the fathers was realized. These *all*—every man and woman of them—these all died in faith, not having received the promises.

He takes Abraham for example. God called Abraham out of Ur and sent him to a new country. He induced him to go by the promise of a better country than that in which he was living, and by the further promise that he would obtain possession

of it. So entirely was it on God's promise that Abraham migrated that it was henceforth called 'the Land of Promise.'

Was the promise realized? That it was a better country there is at least no evidence. We know that it was to be a land flowing with milk and honey. But was it? That may pass unanswered. What is quite certain is that the promise of possession was never translated into fact. On that the writer of the Epistle is emphatic. 'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country'—no, that is not so emphatic as he wrote it. Take the Revised Version: 'By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own.'

But his descendants obtained possession of it? They did not. 'Dwelling in tents,' he goes on, 'dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.' And that he does not mean to say that after Isaac and Jacob the promise came true is evident. For in another place he asserts that though under Joshua the descendants of Abraham entered the promised land again, they never settled in it, they never were at home in it, they never had it as their own. If they had had it as their own they would have been at rest in it. His whole argument, you remember, is that they never were at rest.

These all-died in faith, not having received the promises. That is his conclusion in regard to the promises which God made to the men who were before his time. Not one of them received the things which God had promised to give them.

Turn to the New Testament. The promises now are made by Christ. They relate chiefly to His second coming and the end of the world. If some of them are more general and indeterminate, others are definite and precise, as definite as the promise which was made to Abraham. 'Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.'

Were these promises realized? We know that they were not. If another writer had come at the end of the Apostolic Age—late enough to see that the promises were not to be realized—he would have said of the New Testament saints what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said of the saints of the Old Testament. He would have said of Paul and Peter and John what that writer said of Abraham and Moses and Joshua—'these all died in faith, not having received the promises.'

And the explanation in both cases is the same. It is God's method of education. It is His way of leading us to Himself. In the case of the Old Testament saints we are so familiar with it—thanks to the religious audacity of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews—that we think nothing of it. Yes, we say, it is God's method of weaning men away from the things that are material to the things that are spiritual, His method of encouraging them to set their affections not on things that are on the earth but on things that are above the earth. But the moment our attention is turned to the New Testament, and we are told that Jesus did not mean His promises to be taken literally, did not mean that He would come again soon or in any material visible form at all to the earth, we are staggered. We think the earth is giving way beneath us. We say that we must trust Christ all in all or we can trust Him not at all.

But let us consider. How otherwise could He have spoken? If Abraham had obtained possession of a land flowing with milk and honey, what would have been the good of it? There would have been nothing religious in that. He must be led to seek God, to seek Him as his final good and be at rest. But no man can leap from the material to the spiritual in one bound. Even Abraham must be educated. When he misses the less he will seek the greater. When he does not find a country he will set his mind on a son. When the son is taken from him he will turn to God. But until he is able to rest in the highest he must be sustained by the hope of the less high.

So was it with the disciples. We know how mighty a power that hope of the Second Advent was in sustaining them, in strengthening them, in drawing out their faith, in enabling them to maintain good works. But what would it have been to them if Jesus had come again in the flesh? There would have been no religion in that. The day

did come in which they knew that they should see the Lord, not in the flesh again, but in spirit and in truth. And when that day dawned one of themselves would have been able to write the history of the New Testament 'heroes of faith' and to say, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises.'

## Modernism and the Person of Christ.

BY THE REVEREND W. J. FERRAR, M.A.(OXON.), COWFOLD VICARAGE, SUSSEX.

A CONSIDERABLE time has passed since the Cambridge Conference of last year. Perhaps it is possible to estimate its importance with greater coolness and detachment now than when its opinions often in garbled form were canvassed in the daily newspapers. One is better able to discriminate between writers who are merely vague and constitutionally anti-dogmatic, and those whose position can hardly be squared with any form of traditional Christianity. The statements of some are better understood as one connects them with previous writings, or with a knowledge of the writers themselves, but the statements of others seem intentionally framed to avoid any loophole of compromise. These writers appear to have aimed definitely at a reversal of the traditional conception of Jesus Christ.

Christian thought started (the word is used advisedly) with a Divine Person living in real humanity. This dogma in Professor Bethune-Baker's words 'tends to begin at the wrong end.' 'God had been born as man,' he proceeds, 'without ceasing to be what He was before. This point of view presents us with a hopeless tangle of problems. We must absolutely jettison the traditional doctrine that His personality was not human but divine. To our modern categories such a statement is a denial of the doctrine of the Incarnation. There is for us no such thing as human nature apart from human personality; the distinction that he was "man," but not "a man" is no longer tenable. He is "whole man" even for Chalcedon; he is also divine for Christian faith and consciousness throughout all ages.' The alternative to the traditional doctrine thus frankly rejected is the human Jesus, Who emerges from the criticism of the

Synoptic Gospels, who by the perfection of His humanity, possesses for seekers 'the value of God,' and acquires, as is here stated, a divinity for faith. The only possible preservation of orthodox formulas with regard to the Divine personality of Christ lies from this point of view along the road of a rigorous insistence on the doctrine of a complete Kenosis, or self-emptying. Professor Bethune-Baker styled this position 'a bridge' between the orthodoxy of the past and the uncharted country in which he is at present journeying. He once used the bridge himself, but can do so no longer. 'We must absolutely jettison the traditional doctrine.'

This seems to be the most candid and radical statement at the Conference. It would be unfair to suppose that all the speakers would concur in it. And yet it seems to represent the pervading spirit and tone of those who spoke. They would agree, I suppose, that the early Church began 'at the wrong end,' and went on 'to allow the manhood to recede more and more behind the Godhead,' until finally, at Chalcedon in 451, a formula was devised which was in reality but 'an acknowledgment of failure,' or, as Dr. Temple said in *Foundations*, 'a confession of the bankruptcy of Greek patristic Theology,' though, as he significantly remarked in a footnote, 'it *did* preserve belief in our Lord's real Humanity!'

With regard to the manner, however, in which the false start was made it is unlikely that Canon Glazebrook would gain the adherence of all his fellow-Modernists. There were two pre-Christian conceptions of Divine humanity, he says, that account for the orthodox and heretical doctrines that were represented in later days by Cyril and Nestorius respectively; the conception of the sons