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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR MCFADYEN is editing a new series of books by well-known writers with the general title of 'The Living Church' Series. The publishers are Messrs. James Clarke & Co. The volumes deal with the life and activities of the Church from an historical and also from a practical standpoint. Professor CURTIS, *e.g.*, writes on 'The Church and the Bible,' Dr. A. J. CARLYLE on 'The Church and Liberty,' Dr. John A. HUTTON on 'The Church and Literature,' Professor CARNEGIE SIMPSON on 'The Church and the State,' Canon LACEY on 'The Church and Union.' Twenty-two volumes are announced, and they are all by competent hands.

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If they are all as good as *The Church at Prayer and the World Outside*, by Professor Percy DEARMER, M.A., D.D. (6s. net), they will be welcome. Two other excellent volumes have been issued immediately after this one, and they will be noticed in 'Literature.' Dr. DEARMER gives seven chapters to the history of Christian worship, but he has also chapters on 'The Man Outside,' on 'Reasons for Church-going,' on 'Methods of Public Worship,' and on 'The Art of Sunday Observance.' The book is interesting and able in an unusual degree. But it is more. It is conspicuously sincere. And this independence gives to the thinking, and even to the style, an originality which is constantly stimulating.

There is nothing better than the first chapter, which expounds 'The Teaching of the Master.' The writer perhaps allows his dissatisfaction with convention too much play in this section, but what he says will at least make his readers think. There is a negative side to Christ's teaching, he says. Our Lord's condemnation of ostentation and vain repetitions seems to prohibit such practices as the daily recitation of the Psalter, long litanies, 'much extemporary prayer, and all long and tedious services.'

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Further, our Lord refutes the very common idea that bulk of prayer is the important factor in religion, that the more a man prays the better he is. In point of fact many religious people have an unpleasant character which does not seem to be affected by their elaborate devotions. Jesus insists on quality, not quantity, in prayer. But, indeed, the whole subject occupies a singularly small place in His teaching. The more primitive the Gospel source the less there is. He was reticent about prayer, and said little about it until He was asked. The more pronounced statements about prayer all belong to the later sections of the Gospels.

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There is a great deal of unconscious insincerity in this matter of praying. People assume that religious folk all spend hours a day in prayer, but

the fact is, God does not seem to have given the power of much prayer to many, even among the best people. And Jesus does not urge it upon ordinary people. To Him prayer when it was truly offered was the exploration of the Divine Spirit, a pressing into the truth and love which are of God. It is on the one hand receptive, and on the other co-operative, an alliance with the will of God.

In our own day it is often said that suggestion is involved in a good deal of prayer, especially in intercession. This is probably true, and in no way lessens the value of prayer. Our Lord freely used suggestion. Indeed, His whole ministry shows that He knew (1) that part of the Divine will is that men should be free from sickness, and (2) that part of the Divine power is employed through suggestion and telepathy. All that recent psychologists have discovered about mental processes in healing, His methods and His words show that He understood.

The two conclusions Dr. DEARMER draws from our Lord's words and practice are (1) that Jesus did not urge on people either devotional exercises or, in particular, intercession (though Dr. DEARMER strongly upholds both habits). Prayer was a privilege, a receiving out of God's fulness, a co-operation with His will. And (2) that when we understand Jesus all our difficulties and problems about prayer disappear.

Difficulties, *e.g.*, arising from the reign of law and the agonizing fact of unanswered prayer disappear when we realize that prayer is not the endeavour to remind God of things which He would otherwise forget, or to persuade Him to do things which He would otherwise fail to do. God is always there, knowing all things, always doing the best that can be done for His children. And to pray is to give up our wills to be used as means for the fulfilment of His.

Reception, the prayer which is Experience, and Co-operation, the prayer which is Dedication, are necessary for a right human life. All men have

some capacity for them. But this capacity varies. Jesus loved and understood ordinary people. He neither despised them, as the Pharisees did, nor made unnatural demands on them, as preachers have always been prone to do. And this is why He succeeded with them.

It is notorious that in our generation science and religion have drawn closer together and that many of the leaders of scientific thought are deeply religious men. Of none can this be said more truly than of Sir Oliver LODGE, who has done much to break down the misunderstandings that existed not so long ago between the two camps. Sir Oliver LODGE has, however, written nothing more remarkable in this line than the article he contributes to the current number of *The Hibbert Journal* on 'The Larger Self: Being an Application of the Doctrine of the Subliminal Self to Theology and especially Christology.'

He begins by saying that Myers' doctrine of the Subliminal Self has stood the test of time very well, and as a hypothesis explains a great many facts, like Genius, Telepathy, changes of Personality, and others. In this article LODGE proposes to apply the same doctrine a little more widely.

'The doctrine is roughly that we are, each of us, larger than we know; that each of us is only a partial incarnation of a larger Self. The individual, as we know him, is an incomplete fraction; a portion only of the whole Self is brought, at any one period, into intimate contact with matter and close association with a material body. The incarnate fraction varies in different individuals, from something almost insignificant to something rather magnificent and striking; but in no case is the whole Self manifested in any given individual.'

This involves the idea of pre-existence. But we need not boggle at that idea, for everything has pre-existed, literally everything; and 'the association of Spirit with Matter, the Incarnation of some-

thing pre-existent, is a reality, whether we understand it or not. . . . We see gradual incarnation, and the utilisation of Matter by Life or by Spirit, going on all around us. . . . During infancy the pre-existing unindividualised spirit—or whatever it ought to be called—only appears in minute proportions, the body being unfitted to receive any more. . . . Incarnation may be said to begin even at the moment of conception, and to have proceeded a certain distance before birth.' Heredity is far more easily explained in this than in any other way.

We enter on an earthly career often, perhaps, by compulsion, but sometimes, it may be, by choice, through a desire to contribute in some way to the progress of mankind. So it may be that higher spirits than our own at times descend into generation, and show us the light of their countenance, laying on us the responsibility of recognition or denial. And so, the Subliminal Self may be a really large entity and may contain the potency of great incarnations, of transcendent genius or goodness.

Thus, if ever an infinitely large and comprehensive Self allowed any portion to take human form and associate itself with Matter, that portion would recognize itself, and be gradually recognized by others, as in close touch with the Infinite and Eternal. And humanity would perceive that something far above their own grade had dwelt among them, and by origin and personality was essentially Divine. It may be that only through such an incarnation as that could we get any knowledge or perception of that higher, but otherwise inaccessible, Being.

Deity, indeed, is not a thing which we mortals can conceive. All that we can apprehend during our sojourn in Matter is something in human form. 'And though we may have qualms at suggesting that any spirit inhabiting a material body of human shape can be anything more than man, yet if the doctrine of the Subliminal Self be true, and if a Self of Divine magnitude, if in fact Deity, allowed Itself or some portion of Itself to become In-

caruate—humanity would recognise the Kinship and the Identity, and would realise that in this exceptional Manifestation there was as much as it was able to grasp of the Infinite Existence, and would be right in speaking of such an Individual as the Son of God.'

No one can suppose that the Ruler of the universe, the Maker of heaven and earth, no one who has saturated himself with the intricacies and beauties and incomprehensible magnitude of Creation, can suppose that the Regulator of all this could be incarnate in Totality in the matter of any single planet. Such an idea would be heresy, easily confuted from the New Testament. But, if we face the doctrine of a subliminal Larger Self belonging to each of us, then those who are able to attribute Personality to the Deity ought to have no insuperable difficulty in realizing that here is a close analogy with the Divine Incarnation; save that the Larger Self in that case, of which a portion became incarnate, was Pre-eminent, Supernal, and Divine. The Christian belief thus becomes, as it were, rational.

'Leaven or explosive'—in this striking antithesis Professor A. S. PEAKE, in his most recent book, *Brotherhood in the Old Testament* (Hodder & Stoughton; 2s. 6d. net), characterizes the two possible modes of operation of the Christian principle in its application to the problems of society. He is thinking more particularly of the problem of slavery as it presented itself in the Græco-Roman world which Paul addressed, but the antithesis holds over the whole area of the social problem.

There are two ways—the way of leaven and the way of disruption—and both have been advocated by men of genuinely Christian spirit. There are gentle souls who abhor abrupt and spectacular methods, and who believe that the nobler human society for which they long can be most surely and effectively achieved by the gradual diffusion of the Christian spirit, which can be trusted in the end

to effect an inevitable transformation ; and there are the robust, violent, revolutionary spirits who, provoked almost to madness by some essentially anti-Christian institution or custom, seek to end it at a blow.

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But wisdom not infrequently dictates the slower method as the surer ; the way of the leaven may be in the end more effective than the way of explosion. There is such a thing as Christian expediency. It was our Lord Himself who said, ' I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' And as there are things that cannot be wisely said till later, so there are things that cannot be wisely done till later.

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Slavery, for example, we can now see in the light of the Christian gospel to be a radical wrong done to personality. But what if Paul had urged the Christian slaves to translate immediately and boldly the freedom which they had found in Christ into its social and political consequences ? Would Christianity have been the gainer in the end ? Surely Professor PEAKE is right when he argues that ' had Paul attempted prematurely the work of emancipation, so noble an error might have been fatal to the Gospel itself, and, after drenching the Empire in blood, would have left the slaves where it found them. So he urges the slaves, for Christ's sake, to be industrious and obedient. He even sends Onesimus back to Philemon, and offers to make good what he may have lost through him.'

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In another part of this most suggestive book Professor PEAKE discusses the interesting question, ' Were the prophets socialists ? ' It is a question not unnaturally raised by people who have a certain superficial acquaintance with the prophetic message. There are certainly aspects of that message which have a truly democratic ring ; there is an implacable hostility to men of wealth and position who abuse their power to exploit the defenceless. So much so, indeed, that the prophets have by some scholars been regarded as political agitators.

But here again Dr. PEAKE puts the facts in their true perspective when he reminds us that the question alluded to above ' betrays a radical misapprehension of the whole situation.' Ancient Hebrew society, while very like, was also very unlike our own ; and the temper and outlook of a Hebrew prophet confronting the social problems of his time were very different from the temper and outlook of the average modern socialist. Wealth may be a peril ; it may lead to irreligion, just as poverty may : but the Old Testament, as a whole, is very far from regarding it as, in itself and inevitably, an evil thing.

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The truth is, as Dr. PEAKE reminds us, that ' socialism arises in a complex state of society, and a highly developed civilization, such as the Hebrews had not attained. It implies a view of society alien to the Semitic temper, which looks at the existence of social distinctions and inequality of wealth as the ordinance of God. Hebrew legislation is based on the existence of private property ; and the proposition that it is an evil or a wrong would have been quite unintelligible to an Israelite.' The prophets believed that the reformation of society would be achieved, not primarily by the transformation of circumstances, but by the transformation of the men, a transformation impossible, or at any rate impermanent, without religion. They were not economists but preachers who sought to bring men back to God.

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One of the many excellences of Dr. PEAKE'S book is the wisdom with which he keeps continually before us the difference between that ancient world and our own, and the consequent wrong that we occasionally do the Bible when we tear some of its great words from their original setting and apply them to some modern situation to which they have no real relevance. Let us take two illustrations.

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The Old Testament condemnation of interest, he reminds us, is irrelevant to our own conditions. Without the payment of interest on invested capital

the manifold enterprise of the modern world is all but inconceivable. But what the Hebrew legislator is protesting against is interest 'charged for money lent to those in extreme poverty,' to those who were driven to borrow 'only by the most cruel necessity.' Interest exacted under those conditions is 'sheer brutality'; but it would not be just to infer from such a provision as this the wholesale condemnation of interest.

Another example is to be found in the words of our Lord, 'Give to him that asketh thee.' These words have seemed to many intensely, and almost even cruelly, unpractical; and they certainly would be, if they are to be regarded as justifying, nay, even enjoining, indiscriminate charity. The recipient of such charity is injured, and society is injured in him. But that is not the meaning of the words at all. They refer 'to the most elementary needs of life in a country where, while poverty was abundant, there was no organized system of poor relief.'

These are specimens of a book which is stimulating and informing throughout, full of information about the injustice, the exploitation, the hostilities which thwarted the spirit of brotherhood in every sphere alike—in the family, in the nation, and in the world—and full of stimulus to the men of to-day in their search for a nobler and a wider brotherhood. It is sadly true, as Dr. PEAKE says, that 'our civilization is still fundamentally pagan'; it is for the Christian teacher, preacher, and people to redeem it from this reproach.

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*The Pilgrim*, edited by Bishop TEMPLE of Manchester, begins its fourth volume with a symposium, occupying the whole number, on 'The Kingdom of Heaven.' The contributors include Canon STREETER, Lord Hugh CECIL, the Rev. G. A. Studert KENNEDY, and Bishop TEMPLE, and the topics embrace such aspects as 'The Kingdom and Nationality,' 'The Kingdom and the Social Order,'

'The Kingdom and the Church,' 'The Kingdom and the King.'

Canon STREETER leads off with a short article on 'The Kingdom in the Gospels.' We must have another term for it, he says, for in modern English the word Kingdom is primarily a geographical expression, not a term suggesting a supreme magistracy, and the word Heaven in this connection is a Jewish synonym for God—'I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight.' Hence a better translation would be 'The Reign of God.'

This helps to make sense of the texts. It also explains the puzzling fact that in some of the sayings of Christ the reign of God is spoken of as future, while in others it is already present. In one passage it is a leaven, an enlivening influence which interpenetrates and transforms the mass. In another we have the Apocalyptic picture of the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The Apocalyptic school of critics regard the latter conception as of the essence of Christ's thought. He was the child of His time, and this was the characteristic thought of His time. Therefore, if any sayings attributed to Him seem to contradict this, somehow they must be explained away.

It is not easy to do this. It is not easy, *e.g.*, in the case of Lk 17<sup>20, 21</sup>: 'The kingdom of God is within you.' We are told this means 'among you,' but that is precisely a meaning which the Greek words will *not* bear. Then we are told the words are a mistranslation of an Aramaic phrase which does bear the current construction. But, even if this were true, it does not get rid of what is the essence of the passage—the contrast between the kingdom and anything visible which comes 'with observation.' Nothing can explain away the obvious intention of Christ to represent the kingdom as something invisible and spiritual.

Let us, however, frankly recognize that, if we are compelled to take the sayings of Christ

*au pied de la lettre*, there is a contradiction. But are we? There is, for instance, no evidence that it was a regular practice of the Pharisees to have a trumpet blown in front of them when they gave alms; there is still less evidence that they were in the habit of swallowing camels. And, if you go to the Apocalyptic passages in the New Testament, you will find them full of imagery which cannot be taken literally. They have a *meaning* which is represented in the image.

When we consider the Apocalyptic teaching attributed to our Lord, we have one valuable principle to guide us. In regard to the Law, the whole burden of His teaching was to emphasize the spirit while ignoring the letter. It is antecedently probable that He would have done the same by the Apocalyptic hopes of His countrymen. He would intensify the central ideas, and have little to say of the details as to time and place. This antecedent probability is increased when we study the actual text of the Gospels.

Take the thirteenth chapter of Mark. It is so different from the rest of the Gospel in every way that it looks as if it were an early Christian Apocalypse, expanding and adapting to the needs of a later time some genuine sayings of Christ. There is evidence that the tradition of our Lord's sayings has been modified in the direction of a closer conformity to the Apocalyptic expectations of the age. And it is in the highest degree probable that the more spiritual conceptions which prevailed in the faith of the early teachers go back to Christ Himself. The ruling conception in the mind of our Lord was that 'the heart is the throne of the King of kings.'

The problem that lay heavy on the heart of the Church in the early nineteenth century was the rousing of her members to the need of broadcasting her message throughout the world. The question to-day is more fundamental. It is, What is the message of the Church?

There is evidence that theological students are, many of them, gravely perplexed as to what precisely is expected of them in the pulpit. They hear the Church criticised for not speaking out with a clear voice on this, that, and the other social or even international problem. They feel, on the one hand, that they are not expert enough to speak with any confidence on all those difficult and arguable topics. They wonder, on the other hand, if it be their business to do so. The Church to-day has to grapple with a real problem. All agree that Christianity has something to say on social problems, but what exactly is it?—there's the rub.

It is often said that Jesus Himself, who lived in a time that had its own social, industrial, and international problems—in many respects not dissimilar to our own—had exceedingly little, if anything at all, to say about them. Some explain this silence of His as due to a view He shared with His age—that the end of the World was imminent. That consummation seemed so near that really it was not worth while establishing or even sketching a new social order. Most of us, however, will feel that such a solution of the alleged indifference of Jesus to social problems is a somewhat desperate one, which, if adopted, only presents us with other and even greater perplexities.

Is the alleged silence a fact? When we read the records carefully, may we not discover a great deal more in the way of definite guidance than we are apt to notice at the first glance? That point is very well worth looking into. Two women, Grace HUTCHINS and Anna ROCHESTER, have looked into it to some purpose, and the results of their scrutiny are suggestive. They are set forth in a little book, packed full of good matter, entitled *Jesus Christ and the World of To-day* (Allen & Unwin; 5s. net).

America is directly in view, but that is neither here nor there. We can all see that what is true of America is not very different from what holds of our own country. We shall be frank and say that we do not agree with everything the authors

set down. Least of all do we agree with their very weak position on the topic of the League of Nations. On the whole, however, theirs is a book which will be read and pondered with great profit.

One of their points is this. We have taken John the Baptist far too readily at his own modest estimate of himself. He is so overshadowed by Jesus that we have not paid sufficient heed to what he preached. If the question were suddenly sprung on us, What, according to our records, was John's message? it is doubtful how far our answer would do justice to John. We have grown so accustomed to say that John just prepared the way for Jesus. That is quite true; but what kind of a way did John prepare?

In *Jesus Christ and the World of To-day* it is suggested, and the suggestion comes with a thrill like that of a new discovery, that John's call to repent was not only to individuals but to the nation. Further, that questions on social problems were proposed to him, and he answered clearly and definitely.

The really important point, however, is that Jesus in the most public and unambiguous way identified Himself with the movement initiated by John—a movement which had at the very heart of it a call to national or social righteousness and repentance. That identification of Himself with the cause advocated by John is a large part, at least, of the significance of Jesus' much discussed act when He insisted on receiving baptism at the hands of John.

Between Jesus and John, indeed, there were strong contrasts. 'John's preaching was concerned with external righteousness. Jesus, who believed that motives were more important than acts, might well have hesitated before joining a party which did not fully express His own purposes. John and his party seem to have been outside the organized religion of Judaism. Their way of life was so different from the way of Jesus that the methods were sometimes contrasted. Yet Jesus decided to associate Himself with a group of people who were removing some of the obstacles in the way of His Kingdom.'

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## Fact and Interpretation.

BY PROFESSOR JOHN E. MCFADYEN, D.D., UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

MUCH of the perplexity created for reverent minds by certain Biblical statements is due to the failure to distinguish clearly between fact and interpretation. If I say, 'He uttered these blasphemous words, and immediately he fell down dead,' I am making a simple historical statement. It is a fact that he uttered the blasphemy, it is a fact that he died immediately afterwards: the whole statement remains within the realm of demonstrable fact. But if I say, 'He uttered these blasphemous words, and immediately God smote him dead,' I am not making a strictly historical statement. I have passed beyond the realm of fact into the realm of interpretation, I have by implication expressed a theory of the moral universe, I have connected the death with the blasphemy and ascribed it to the

punitive intervention of God. But the truth of this explanation of the man's death can never be demonstrable in the sense that the fact of his death is demonstrable: the one is open to challenge as the other is not. To grasp this distinction clearly is to have the key to many a Biblical riddle.

Take, for example, the well-known story of David's numbering of the people. In 2 S 24<sup>1</sup> it begins thus: 'Again the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, saying, Go, number Israel and Judah.' Is this fact or interpretation? In form, of course, it is a statement of fact; but a moment's reflexion will show that it is in reality an interpretation. The historical fact underlying the statement is that David took a census of the people,