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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

In Dr. Gore's concluding volume on the Reconstruction of Belief, *The Holy Spirit and the Church* (reviewed under Literature), the most interesting chapter is one near the end on 'The Test of Rational Coherence.' Dr. Gore has come to the end of his argument in which he has dealt with the articles of the 'Catholic Faith' on their merits, showing that they have behind them the whole weight of Catholic authority, of Scripture, and of Christian experience.

But at this point he anticipates an objection from the sensitive modern spirit. It is impossible to be sure of so many theological propositions, says the modern. To which Dr. Gore answers: The propositions are not really many; they are in principle one, so that in accepting one we accept all, or at least we feel that all the rest cohere with it. The whole edifice stands or falls as a whole, as it were. Accept the root doctrine about God and man, and all the rest of the Catholic faith flows inevitably out of this.

The doctrine of God at the root of the Catholic faith is that of a God not only in the world but over it, the absolute Creator of all that is, righteous and good. And bound up with this doctrine of God there is a conception of man. He is not a part of God but a creature of God, absolutely dependent on His will. Man has been highly exalted. He was created in God's image, a rational being with real freedom. He was designed to be a fellow-worker with God in His purposes. This freedom is ambiguous, for it implies not only the power to assist God, but the power to thwart Him. And in point of fact this is what has happened. The lawless rebellion of man has introduced disorder into the moral (and in some degree the physical) world.

Now granted these two Biblical conceptions, all else is in sequence. 'I always experience a slight shiver,' writes Dr. Gore, 'when I read in modern books about Christianity being essentially Christocentric. It is true, no doubt, that God has revealed Himself finally in Christ, but Christ always points us beyond Himself to the Father—to God; and faith in God did not begin with the historical Christ.' The centre of Christianity is its thought of God.

See, then, how everything flows from this. The appalling disorder introduced by sin demands a redemption. Love in God is a category that is bound up with a transcendent and sovereign God. The same Biblical conception of God leads us to the Catholic conception of the Incarnate Person, Jesus Christ, who is the Mediator and Saviour just because He is God and Man. So, further, with the Holy Trinity. This doctrine was the result of experience, the experience believers had of the grace of God in Christ and by His Spirit.

Man, according to the Bible, is an individual with responsibility, but he is also social. Both in the Old Testament and in the New the nation and the race are behind the individual. Mankind is sinful and every individual is born into a sinful world. This carries with it the Catholic doctrine of original and racial sin, and also the Catholic doctrine of a corporate redemption, Christ being the Second Adam, the head of a new race. It is here also the Catholic doctrine of Church and sacraments finds a natural place. And thus the whole range of doctrine is a coherence with two fundamental Biblical truths.

This is made more evident if you consider Modernism. It also is a strictly coherent system. Begin with its dominant conception of a purely immanent God and all else follows—the denial of sin, the refining away of redemption into guidance, the lowering of the place and dignity of Christ into 'Primus inter pares,' and the evaporation of other characteristic Christian beliefs into something shadowy and symbolic.

Consequently the real intellectual problem of belief concerns these two fundamental Biblical truths about God and man. And the obvious duty of apologetic is to busy itself in the vindication of these two truths. If it succeeds in this task the whole doctrinal and moral structure of the Faith will build itself up on this foundation.

Nothing is more significant of the perennial vitality of the Old Testament than the readiness with which it lends itself, age after age, to interpretation in accordance with the prevailing spirit of the age. Except in the case of a few radical thinkers like Marcion, it is never dismissed, it is always accommodated to the current intellectual outlook.

In New Testament times it is regarded as one long prophecy of the Messiah. Philo allegorizes it beyond recognition. Origen finds in it a triple sense—the literal, the moral, and the spiritual. Augustine finds in it a fourfold sense. The Reformers, under the influence of the Renaissance, lay the foundations for its historical appreciation and interpretation. To their successors it is, along with the New Testament, the quarry out of which their dogmatic theology is hewn. To the pietists it is the fountain of their devotional life. To us it is the record of the most significant movement in the history of the world—that, and much more.

Every kind of interpretation has been applied to it, and it has survived them all—survived, perhaps, because of them all: for each interpretation kept the book alive for its own age. It is not quite inconceivable that the Old Testament might have gradually disappeared from the Church, had it not been preserved for it by allegorical interpretation; for, in the absence of a genuine historical method, this was the only interpretation that could have reconciled the Church to what seemed the unworthy or objectionable features of the Old Testament.

The mystic, too, has made his contribution to the interpretation of the Bible in general and of the Old Testament in particular; and a very strange contribution it seems to eyes accustomed to the historical method. An estimate of its nature and value can be made by any one who will take the trouble to read the recently published *Mysterium Magnum* (reviewed under Literature) of Jacob Boehme, which is a mystical exposition of the Book of Genesis.

Let us give one or two illustrations of his method. The three men who were so hospitably entertained by Abraham in the plains of Mamre (Gn 18^{2}) are a 'type of the triune Deity,' and the tree under which he bade them rest (18^{4}) 'signifieth the Tree of Life, under which God's children should sit down.' One wonders what Boehme would have thought of such an exposition as that of Gunkel, who calmly suggests that in the original form of the 'legend' the three men were three gods—not of course in

Boehme's sense—and that the story is just the Hebrew counterpart of the Greek tale of the friendly visit paid by Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes to the old man of Tanagra.

Again, in the story of Abraham and Isaac, Abraham said to his young men, 'Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship.' On this Boehme comments: 'This points at his ascension according to the humanity; when he had finished the sacrifice he went thither and worshipped in our assumed humanity, unto God his Father; that is, our assumed soul, in divine power and property, doth pray and intercede for our weaknesses and ignorances, unto and before God.'

The seven fat kine of Pharaoh's dream 'signify, in the inward ground, the seven properties of the eternal nature in the holy, good substance or essence, viz. in the kingdom of heaven, where the divine power is substantial. And the seven lean, ill-favoured, meagre kine signify, in the inward ground, the seven properties of the eternal nature in the wrath of God, viz. in the kingdom of hunger and thirst, where nature is without the divine substance of the good power of God.'

The five years which the Egyptian famine had yet to run (Gn 45^6) are interpreted to mean that 'the divine hunger will yet remain in thy five senses of the earthly reason.' The Testament of Jacob in Gn 49 is 'a figure of the whole time of the world, from Adam to the end.' And, more explicitly, Boehme can tell us that 'with *Gad*, who should be the leader of a host, beginneth the time of the universities and schools among Christians, about eight hundred years ago, when men readily set Antichrist with power and might of armies in the chair of Christ, and with babbling, disputing, and perverting prevarication, maintained him against all opposition; when men made the tail to be the head, and forced the power of Christ into human traditions and canons, and made a worldly kingdom of Christ's kingdom.'

These few quotations, which fairly represent the spirit of the whole book, are enough to show what a great gulf is fixed between the mystical and the historical interpretation of the Bible. The modern student begins with the assumption, which seems to him so natural and inevitable, that the Bible means just what it says. If it does not mean that, who is to tell us what it means? The moment the primary meaning is abandoned for some so-called 'inward ground,' the door is left open for illimitable caprice. A mystical interpretation of Scripture may tell us much about mysticism, but it can tell us little about Scripture. We still read books like Boehme's, not for the light they throw upon Scripture, but for their revelation of the human soul in its profoundest experiences of God.

The January number of the *Modern Churchman* begins with an article entitled 'Signs of the Times,' in which three events are brought under notice—the Malines Conferences, the Fundamentalist Movement in America, and the Revision of the Liturgy. On the first topic, as might be expected, the Modernist writer expresses himself in a hostile fashion. He points out that the Church of England separated from Rome on the interpretation of three passages in the Gospels.

These passages are (1) the *Tu es Petrus*: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church'; (2) the *Ave Maria, gratia plena*: 'Hail, Mary, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee'; and (3) the *Hoc est corpus meum*: 'This is my body.' The first, according to Rome, justified the Papacy, the second, Mariolatry, and the third, Transubstantiation. There is no indication that Rome has modified in any degree her former conviction. Why, then, discuss reunion with her, unless the Church of England has modified *her* conviction?

The knowledge that discussions are taking place can only be detrimental to the English Church, because they give the impression that that Church

is willing to reconsider her former attitude. The duty of the English Church at present is to try to come to terms, not with the mediæval mind but with the modern mind, to stretch out her hand not to Rome but to Geneva. It is therefore to be hoped the Malines conversations will be decisively terminated.

The notes in the *Modern Churchman* on the American Orthodox Movement are valuable because the statements on both sides are printed *in extenso*. The House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church met in November last and adopted an elaborate statement which was fundamentalist in tone and attitude. The American Modern Churchmen at once issued a counterblast in an able and moderate 'Statement.' And these two documents present a more or less complete exposition of the two positions.

The Bishops' pastoral, it must be confessed, is the more impressive of the two, because it is straightforward and simple. It demands honesty in the attitude of the clergy towards creeds which are recited every week. The main burden of the pastoral is an insistence on belief in the Virgin Birth and bodily Resurrection of our Lord. There is no demand for a belief in the inerrancy of Scripture.

The Modern Churchmen's statement has two features of interest. It claims a definite freedom in regard to the Virgin Birth, asserting that there is a double tradition in Scripture on the point, and clergymen should be at liberty to select the more probable, *i.e.* in this case the tradition of a natural birth. The second feature of the statement is the claim that as some clauses of the Apostles' Creed are allowed a non-literal interpretation (*e.g.* 'He descended into Hell') the same liberty should be allowed in the case of the other clauses.

The situation is much more acute in America than it is in Great Britain. But the issue is the same. Is the Modernist position to be allowed a recognized place within a Church which professes the Catholic Faith? So far as the American Episcopal Church is concerned, apparently no particular view of the inspiration of Scripture is exacted, but a loyal adherence to all the tenets of the Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed is laid down as a condition of office in the Church. And the issue appears to be recognized on both sides to be the question of the Virgin Birth.

When on the 'Contents' page of a new book you come upon such headings as these: 'Numen' and the 'Numinous,' 'Mysterium Tremendum,' the 'Wholly Other,' you naturally conclude that this is another crank writer so familiar to editors and reviewers. And probably in nine cases out of ten you would be right. In the tenth case you would be wrong, and fatally wrong.

The tenth case happens to be one of the most famous books of our generation. An English translation of *Das Heilige*, by Dr. Rudolf Otto, Professor of Theology at Marburg, has just been published under the title *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational.* The translator is Mr. John W. Harvey, and the publisher Mr. Humphrey Milford at the Oxford University Press (7s. 6d. net).

Das Heilige has had a remarkable reception in Germany. In the six years since its publication in 1917 it has passed through ten editions. In post-war Germany, where conditions are quite unfavourable to book-buying, this is a sufficient indication of the importance attached to Professor Otto's essay. There are other indications that the book is having a widespread influence on thought. It comes at a favourable moment when there is in full flow a tide of reaction against the purely rational standpoint in religion. The tendency of the time is to concentrate on religion as an experience, and this is confirmed by the new movements in psychology.

The central feature of Dr. OTTO's contention is his emphasis on the elements in religious experience which are non-rational, *i.e.* which cannot be embodied in 'concepts' and yet are not only real but fundamental. There is an apprehension of the Divine which is not rational in the first place, but is a response to the Divine in the Beyond. It is an awareness which is real knowledge and yet not conceptual knowledge. It may be variously described as a 'creature-feeling,' a feeling of dependence and littleness, or a feeling of awe in the presence of a supreme majesty, an overpoweringness, but along with these a fascination, an attraction, a drawing up of the soul to the Divine Being.

To indicate this Dr. OTTO invents the adjective 'numinous' from *numen*, the most general Latin name for supernatural power. 'Numinous,' then, stands for the religious non-rational awareness of the Divine Object of religious experience. Dr. OTTO in this remarkable book sets himself to establish the worth, the reality, and the essential place in religion of this 'numinous' experience. God is utterly beyond our comprehension, yet we have a real knowledge of Him and may have a personal communion with Him. The Beyond and the Familiar in God are harmonized in the experience of worship.

Two of the most interesting chapters in the book are devoted to 'The Numinous in the Old Testament' and 'The Numinous in the New Testament.' Dr. OTTO, in a fascinating exposition, shows that the fundamental thing in the Old Testament is the apprehension of a supreme majesty. This is never lost, but it is gradually rationalized and moralized, until it becomes 'the holy' in the full ethical sense. And this is an enrichment. For Dr. OTTO is not indifferent to the rational elements in religious faith or opposed to their introduction. Indeed to him the supremacy of the Christian religion lies in the way in which Christianity has combined the rational interpretation of experience with its central 'numinous' element.

He traces the enrichment through both Old and New Testaments. Its culmination is found in the prophets and in Christ. Isaiah is the capital instance of the 'intimate mutual interpenetration of the numinous with the rational and moral.' But we never get away from the background of the Mysterious, the Majestic, the Tremendous in the Divine. This is found in Ezekiel as in Moses, in Isaiah as in Exodus. It is found in Job perhaps most of all.

In the Gospel of Jesus we see the consummation of the process which tends to humanize the idea of God. The result is the faith in the Fatherhood of God. But it would be a mistake to imagine that the 'numinous' is excluded or superseded. The first petition in the great prayer is 'Hallowed be thy name.' And all through the Gospels we hear in Jesus' words the 'dark and awful ring' of awe and reverence. Above all, the Agony in Gethsemane can only be understood as a numinous experience with its mystery and awe.

Paul is full of the same pervading feeling. His conception of God's greatness, his teaching about the Flesh, his doctrine of predestination, all reveal that attitude to the Divine which is apart from reason, which is the characteristic fact in all religious experience, the factor that unifies the religions of the world and affords the basis for justifying religious experience in general. It may be rationalized and moralized and humanized, but this is the deepest and most universal and most real feature of all religious life.

In the *Church Quarterly Review* for January there is an article by the Rev. H. Maurice RELTON, D.D., Lecturer on Dogmatic Theology in King's College, London, on 'The Idea of Revelation.' The article is an exposition and criticism of Dr. W. R. MATTHEWS' book on the same subject. One of the most interesting parts of the article deals with the idea of Revelation in the Bible. Two

features are found in all religions that profess to contain a revelation. One is that it always comes through persons, and the other that it tends to become depersonalized so that the revelation comes to be thought of as contained in a book.

In the Bible the Prophets hold a place of central importance. And in regard to them we find that in the first place they deliver, not abstract truth, but guidance for a concrete moral situation. They declare, not doctrine, but the will of God. They contain, not revealed theology, but revealed religion. And, further, it is in the Prophets that we first find the idea of the revelation of God in history.

When we come to the New Testament it is clear that the consciousness of Jesus was in the line of the prophetic experience, but there is in our Lord a difference of emphasis in two respects. First, there is a more explicit recognition of the revelation of God in nature; and, secondly, the conception of a revelation of God in history falls into the background.

Paul recognizes the disclosure of God in nature and in history. But there are two other elements in his outlook which are new. One is the idea of the Old Testament scripture as authoritative (the tendency to depersonalize the Old Testament revelation is already here). The other is his 'Christ-mysticism.' The revelation of God is for Paul an immediate experience of his own soul, but it is Jesus now exalted who speaks to him and fills him with Divine power.

Summing up, Dr. MATTHEWS finds two essential elements in revelation of all kinds. It is an interpretation and a fact. It is, on the one hand, an insight into the nature of life and the world. On the other hand, it is Reality standing over against the mind, challenging the mind to take account of it. It is objective datum. In Christianity this is the fact of Christ—not His teaching, but Himself. Revelation is the Logos immanent in human mind, and also the Word made flesh in Christ.

The development of Christology in the early Church is a topic which can never lose its interest for the Christian mind. A very fresh and striking contribution to the subject has been made by Professor A. C. MCGIFFERT in a short series of Yale Lectures, now published under the title of *The God of the Early Christians* (Scribners; $1.75).

Professor MCGIFFERT confesses that his views in regard to Jesus' idea of God have undergone a radical change since he published his 'History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age.' It is, however, in his treatment of Christology in the Gentile Church that he becomes most suggestive. 'It is commonly taken for granted that the original object of worship in the primitive Gentile communities was the God of the Jews—the one almighty God, creator and ruler of the world—and that after a time there was associated with him the Lord Jesus Christ, a subordinate being, who was gradually raised to the rank of Divinity, and finally declared to be true God, one in substance with the Father. This, however, I believe is seriously to misunderstand the course of the development.'

What was the course of the development? Converts drawn directly from the Gentile world did not begin with the God of the Jews, but with the Lord Jesus Christ. His worship did not follow the worship of the God of the Jews; it was primary and original. To the simple believer in the early Gentile Church Jesus was the God of salvation, and continued throughout the primary object of faith and worship.

But the theological problem could not be avoided. Philosophic minds felt compelled to give the new religion a world-wide setting, and relate the personal Saviour to the Divine Power that made and ruled the world. 'Hitherto historians have confined themselves to the problem: how to explain the

addition of the worship of Christ to the worship of God. If my reading of the early situation is correct, another problem equally pressing is how to explain the addition of the worship of God to the worship of Christ.'

In a searching analysis of the early Christian writings Professor McGIFFERT shows that Christian piety was particularly sensitive to anything that might seem to imperil the Divinity of the Saviour Christ. 'The exponents of the doctrine of the Trinity were interested always to show that it did not make Christ less and lower than God.' He concludes, 'It would seem that the real God of the theologians as well as of the common people was Jesus Christ. So far as they had a God over and above him, he was a philosophic being required only by speculative considerations. The need of bringing Christianity into a universal setting led the theologians of the second century to associate Christ with the God of all the earth; but except for the exigencies of philosophy he might himself have been recognized as the God of all the earth, and no other God have been required.'

The Rev. Dr. Charles Ryder SMITH is undoubtedly right when he says that among the numerous volumes being issued to-day from the press on the history of property and labour there is room for one on the history of these subjects in the Bible. And he has himself given us a first-rate history of them in *The Bible Doctrine of Wealth and Work in its Historical Evolution* (Epworth Press; 6s. net). Dr. SMITH has already proved his competence to discuss such a subject, both on its economic and its Biblical side, in a previous volume on 'The Bible Doctrine of Society,' published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark.

He articulates his discussion under six heads—The Patriarchal Story, Israel before the Kings, Israel under the Kings, Israel after the Kings, The New Testament Ideal, and The New Testament Practice. Any one who thinks that Old Testament experience and thought have been entirely superseded by the New, may be tempted to turn at once to the last two chapters. This would, however, be a profound mistake: for it is part of Dr. SMITH's business to make us feel that the social problem has a history, that the New Testament has the Old for its background, and that, as to-day conditions to-morrow, so it is in turn conditioned by yesterday.

Among other things he shows that, even within the same age, the Hebrew standard of morality was variable. That standard condemned Jacob's deceit of his father and brother, but justified his trickery of Laban. It was strictest with a brother, lax with an alien, and laxest of all with an enemy alien. Israel was right in despoiling the Egyptians, for they were outside the pale. So thought the early Hebrew.

The most challenging sections of this very interesting book are those in which the author discusses the attitude of the Prophets and of the New Testament to the rich. He says roundly in one place that 'from Nathan to Jeremiah the Prophets uniformly championed the poor and denounced the rich,' and again that in the New Testament there are one or two condemnations of the rich as such. But he very wisely goes on to qualify these statements against possible false inferences by pointing out that what the prophets really denounced was not so much wealth, or even the existence of a distinctly wealthy class, but rather the abuse of wealth. They were in reality pleading for the great social principle of a man's responsibility for others.

Again, in the New Testament he is careful to point out that such condemnations as do fall upon the rich are explained by the fact that 'it was still true that the rich as a class both rejected the gospel and harried the poor.' These texts, he very properly adds, 'are not of universal but of particular application. They were apposite to the immediate situation, and they have often been apposite since, but they are not always apposite.' In this con-

nexion, Matthew's beatitude upon the poor *in spirit* throws a significant light upon Luke's beatitude upon the poor.

There is a suggestive discussion on the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. Those who are provoked or at least puzzled because the men who worked for only one hour received as much as the men who had worked twelve, are reminded that the method of Jesus is to consider not what a man has earned, but what he needs. This is the principle which governs the home: the earthly father supplies his children with what they need, in this like the Heavenly Father, who sends His rain on the just and the unjust alike. Besides, it is only fair to remember that the latest of the labourers had done all that they had had an opportunity of doing: for they could truthfully say, 'No man hath hired us.'

The book contains more than one salutary reminder that we do not find, and need not look for, in the Bible any cut-and-dry solution of our modern economic problems. 'It gives no direct answer to the question, *e.g.*, Are strikes and lock-outs right?' But it obliges us in every contingency to consider how we may best promote the Kingdom of God. It reminds us that there cannot be for Christian men two standards of behaviour—one for commercial men, and another for clergymen and doctors. It is the business of the former, no less than of the latter, to seek first the Kingdom of God. What Jesus did was 'to give men the Spirit of God, and leave them to settle their own problems.'

Some Diatessaron Readings from Sinai.

By Rendel Harris, Litt.D., LL.D., D.D., Manchester.

During a recent visit to Mt. Sinai I came across a fragment of a Latin Gospel and commentary, comprising no more than four leaves and of no great age. It probably attracted my attention on account of the rarity of Latin Texts in the great Library; perhaps one might say complete absence instead of rarity. There is, indeed, a valuable Latin papyrus there, which has often been studied by German scholars, who have found in it fragments of Roman Law, but vellum MSS. in Latin hands are not to be found.

Closer examination showed that the four leaves to which I refer were a series of Sunday lessons, in which the text of a Vulgate Lesson was accompanied by an edifying commentary; the original book, of which the leaves formed a part, was designed to cover the Sundays throughout the year.

There was nothing in such a scrap of Latin Vulgate with annexed commentary to invite study, but when I ran my eye over it some curious textual features presented themselves to my attention; the first of these was, that in a lesson taken from the seventh chapter of Mark, in which our Lord goes from the district of Tyre by way of Sidon into the region of Decapolis, the writer of the commentary remarked that it was the city *which at that time* was called Tyre, and another city *which at that time* was called Sidon.

At this point I remembered that in the Dutch Harmony to which Dr. Plooij has recently drawn attention,[1] as containing a text based upon a very early Latin Diatessaron, there were traces of an attempt to substitute for Tyre and Sidon certain modernized forms *Surs* and *Sayette*, which appear to represent *Sur* and *Saida*. It was natural to examine the Sinai fragments somewhat more closely. Suppose we transcribe the first lection.

Dominica xii. (Mk 7^{31}).

Exiens Jesus de finibus Tyri venit per Sydonem ad mare Galilee inter medios fines Decapoleos: et adducunt ei surdum et mutum, deprecantes eum ut imponet ei manum. Duo pariter miracula in uno homine fuisse per saluatorem nostrum,—hodierno narrante euangelio cognouimus; quae verba ad

[1] *A Primitive Text of the Diatessaron.* (Leiden: Sijthoff.)