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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

HARDLY any book of the New Testament has had in recent years more attention from scholars of the front rank than 'Revelation.' To say nothing of earlier interpretations like that of Dr. Moffatt, scholars like Charles, Peake, Case, and Welch have recently given us their views on the principles of interpretation. If we ask for an explanation of this renewed interest in the book, no doubt the once familiar '*c'est la guerre*' will be heard once more. There is nothing strange in the use made of 'Revelation' by professional mystery-mongers and their dupes; but that a book which through so large a part of its content is so hard to interpret, and the interpretation of which, when we have reached it, seems to have so little importance for the life of our day, should exercise such fascination over the minds of scholars is not a little remarkable.

Is it partly just the Anglo-Saxon determination not to be beaten? Is it a survival of the old childish love of a riddle? Or is it a half-acknowledged suspicion that, with all our rationalism, this puzzling book may after all give us some clue to the puzzling world in which we live?

Harnack has told us that when he read Vischer's suggestion that 'Revelation' is really a Jewish work with a Christian introduction, a Christian appendix, and some Christian interpolations, 'there fell as it were scales from my eyes.' It might have been supposed that the day of thrilling discoveries or suggestions about the last book in the Canon is over, but apparently not. The Rev. C. E. DOUGLAS, S.F., is so convinced that, if men will listen to him, he will revolutionize their thinking on this subject, that the very title of his book is an 'eureka'—*New Light on the Revelation of S. John the Divine* (Faith Press; 6s. net).

Mr. DOUGLAS frankly confesses that he does not expect his 'new light' to have much effect on the 'conventional critic,' but it does not appear that his pessimism is altogether due to modesty. The real trouble is that the conventional critic moves in a little circle whose main object is to bar the door against outsiders. He has almost nothing but scorn for the work of all previous commentators on 'Revelation,' including Dr. Charles. These, it seems, are not 'genuine students'; consequently there is a 'curious superficiality' about learned commentaries on this book.

Mr. DOUGLAS regards it as a product of the school of the Baptist, whose importance he is not alone in thinking has been underrated. The two principal symbols of 'Revelation' (the Lamb and the Bride) are both, according to the Fourth Gospel, directly derived from the teaching of the son of Zacharias. The author makes considerable play with a theory of 'buried sevens,' for 'the most cursory survey

makes it clear that' the author of 'Revelation' 'is thinking largely, though not exclusively, in sevens.' If we ask how his plan, if he had a plan, remained undiscovered till our own day, the answer is very simple. Hitherto critics have approached the subject with their minds closed to the truth. 'From Irenæus' notes to Dr. Charles' million-word commentary, *every writer has sought to use the book rather than to understand it.*' (The italics are Mr. DOUGLAS'.)

Another beam of this author's new light reveals that even the lightest words of the Divine have very real significance 'when our information enables us to reconstruct the background of mysticism against which his apocalypse stands out.' 'Revelation takes account of a far wider field of myth and legend than any one in the western world has ever realized since the Greek element in the Church suppressed the Semitic.' In support of this thesis he employs much curious learning. We have not been accustomed to think of 'Revelation' as almost the earliest book in the New Testament, but Mr. DOUGLAS dates it about A.D. 50. He conceives that the object of the Jewish Christian author is to show that the Kingdom of God 'is present here and now, an actual eternal fact, not a dream of the future, and that the old order has passed away.'

Principal OMAN has also been at work on the book of 'Revelation.' He expresses himself much more modestly than Mr. DOUGLAS, but he also has made a curious discovery which he hopes and believes will mark an important stage in the history of the interpretation of the book. Students who expect to find in the action of the 'visions' any kind of logical or temporal sequence are perplexed at the topsy-turviness of some of the proceedings; as, *e.g.*, in chap. 21, where the unclean and idolaters and hypocrites have to be kept out of the holy city in v.[27], though they already seem to have been sufficiently disposed of in v.[8]. Even the layman is now familiar with the idea that any want of consecutiveness in the books of the New Testament may be due to accidental displacement or deliberate rearrangement of the material.

While trying to introduce a more satisfactory order into the apparent confusion of the present text, Principal OMAN discovered that the sections with which he was working were of almost exactly equal length. He hit then on the happy idea that what had happened to the book of 'Revelation' was not a disarrangement of sections but a disarrangement of the original leaves. Continuing to work on this hypothesis he found that it verified itself with astonishing accuracy. His rearrangement of the original pages makes 'Revelation' for us in large measure a new book. He has published it with the story of its discovery and some account of its bearings on the whole problem in *The Book of Revelation: Theory of the Text: Rearranged Text and Translation: Commentary* (Cambridge University Press; 7s. 6d. net).

Principal OMAN agrees with Dr. CHARLES that the book as we have it is not the author's work, but that work as it left the hands of an editor; and his opinion of that editor's intelligence is hardly higher than Dr. CHARLES'. His 'misinterpretation of his author' is 'profound,' and 'the constant result of his editing is confusion.' The editor, however, though the author has suffered so much at his hands, is only in a very minor degree responsible for the disarrangement of the sheets. The mischief had been done before he saw the book.

Two of the editor's misinterpretations are serious. In the first place, he believes he is dealing with a mysterious prophecy about the future, whereas in fact the 'prophecy' is prophecy in the Old Testament sense, 'a revelation of the divine aspect of things.' John in exile is pondering the situation of the Church and realizing the peril in which it is placed. In true prophetic style he thinks it his duty to warn those who may fail in the trial. But he is led to a broader conception of his task. He must show the persecuted Christians that 'the present conflict is only part of the agelong conflict between the Rule of the World and the Rule of God. To this end he must prophesy once more of the principles upon which God rules the present

and determines the future, as the prophets had done before.'

John shares Paul's view, at least the view which Paul once held, of the seriousness of compromise. It may be true that an idol is nothing in the world, yet accommodation to pagan demands is the acknowledgment of another king than Jesus, the transference of loyalty from the kingdom of light to the kingdom of darkness. We cannot understand the book without visualizing to ourselves the prophet struggling to find the mind of God on this all-important question.

The other great misunderstanding of the editor is that he makes the mistake of identifying the Holy Millennial Jerusalem with the New, the Heavenly Jerusalem. He thinks the coming of Christ is for the final end, whereas in fact it is only for the establishment of the Millennium. If it was for the final end, naturally nothing could happen after that, and so all the material he found after that he put at the beginning of the book.

The visions of John are not in fact visions as we understand the word. He may have had one memorable ecstatic experience. His lonely brooding life gave his thoughts a vividness which made the visions of the inward eye seem hardly less real than those of the outward eye. The prophet was gifted with a singularly vivid imagination, and in the world of his day fact and symbol were not sharply distinguished. Yet when all this is acknowledged, the 'revelation' is in the form of a vision only because that was the recognized literary medium for prophetic teaching, just as philosophy retained the dialogue form when the discussion had ceased to be aught but a literary convention.

There is space for only one or two illustrations of the results Principal OMAN gets by his rearrangement of the text. In the present context the meaning of the white horse of 6^2 is completely hidden; but let that verse come in its proper place after a section made up of 19^{11-16} $14^{19,20}$ and 19^{17-21}, and it becomes clear that its rider is the 'victorious word of God or his representative who sends out the other horses of war, famine, and pestilence.'

What about the 'number of the beast'? The suggestion is offered that we have erred in taking the number to be 666. Probably it should be 1260, which on certain suppositions may represent the numerical value of the letters of Cæsar written in Hebrew characters. We have then the same idea that we have in the messages, that the imperial cult is only one form of the agelong idolatry of the whole era of the world empire. Any compromise with it, even as a temporary concession, is a 'passing over from the Rule of God to the Rule of the World.'

In the well-known passage beginning 17^{10} the reference is not to Roman emperors or to kings of any kind but to kingdoms. The five that have fallen are Egypt, Sodom, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. The sixth, which now is, is Rome. The seventh seems to be the three kingdoms into which Rome is to divide. The eighth accordingly is not Nero *redivivus*, but an incarnation of world empire, a 'pure Satanic rule of anarchy.' 'The Nero myth did not say he had died and would come to life, but that he was still alive and would return to work further disaster.'

This then is a theory, not to be accepted or rejected, but to be studied. One aspect of its importance is that it attributes the insertion of 'Revelation' in the Canon largely to the editor's misconception of its nature. Had the Church realized that in the author's view the coming of Christ was only for the establishment of the Millennium and not for the final end, she might have lost interest in this book when the millennial view passed. Or had the Church understood that the author gave a full and clear account of the destruction of the Roman Empire before the Eastern barbarian, Christians might well have hesitated to call attention to his work at a time when every persecution

was based on the charge of disloyalty to the Empire.

One of the advantages which the Sunday School possesses as compared with the day school is Atmosphere. This is really the *raison d'être* of the Sunday School. In the day school the attitude of the scholar is compelled. In the Sunday School it is voluntary. The relation is personal and the atmosphere is religious. This is what makes it possible, and even easy, to teach religion and not facts. And in the religious training of the child one of the most important elements is the education of the spirit of worship.

One of the commonest delusions about the Sunday School is the idea that it exists only to teach the children the Bible facts. That is part of its function, but only a part. Its main business is to bring the child to God and to develop his innate spiritual instinct. And therefore one main part of its duty is to train the child to worship. He needs training. The instinct is there, but it needs fostering care and direction. We have to teach the child what worship is, and how great an act it is and how sacred.

This is important for two reasons. In the first place, the child of to-day is the Church member of to-morrow. Can we wonder that the mental attitude of the adult is so defective when we remember the carelessness and futility of the 'devotional exercises' to which he was accustomed in his Sunday School period; when we recall the casual, unsuitable, tiresome, and irreverent treatment of this great act in so many schools?

It is important also because we wish to create in the child an attitude towards God in his life, an attitude of trust and reverence and love. We wish to help him to practise the presence of God in his daily life. And if this sense of the greatness and nearness and reality of God is not quickened in his educational period how can we expect him to realize it later on? If the approach to God and the thought of God are treated in any way lightly we do an almost indelible injury to the child's soul.

Let us then realize that this matter of worship is first and foremost in the conduct of a Sunday School. If a leader realizes this, then the necessary means will probably come to him of themselves. But some points of special importance may be stressed. One is the necessity of taking the conduct of worship seriously. Preparation should be made for this as carefully as, and more scrupulously than, for the teaching of a lesson. Nothing should be left to the moment, either the choice of hymns or the wording of the prayers. Everything should be in its place and entirely suited to its purpose.

And if this attitude is adopted then nothing in the conduct of the leader or of others must lessen the concentration and solemnity of the act. If a leader carries on a conversation with the secretary under cover of a hymn he is teaching the children a lesson in unreality and irreverence. There must be the outward conditions for the inward attitude. There must be no moving about and no business done during the period of worship.

Two characteristics ought to be found in the worship of the Sunday School, and both are important. One is variety. It is desirable that every Sunday's service should be different in its details as far as possible, in order to keep alive the interest in the minds of the children. The other characteristic is the use of externals. Whatever be true of adults, children at least are born ritualists, and their worship should be surrounded with all the circumstances of ritual. Much should be made of the offering, *e.g.*, to which a brief prayer should always be devoted.

Nothing, however, is more urgent than the matter of prayer in the Sunday School. There are several perfectly clear and final rules here. No prayer should be more than two minutes long. That is the limit. Every prayer should be definite and concrete. All prayer should be in simple language.

And finally they should be the children's prayers and therefore repeated by the children. Alternatively the leader may utter brief prayers and the children say (or sing) responses.

The main thing, however, is to exalt this element of worship into the first place in the Sunday School discipline. When that is done we shall see a generation of reverent worshippers in our churches, and perhaps a wider sense of the reality of God in common life.

These reflections have been suggested by the receipt of a little book in which the ideal we have sketched is fully realized—*Intermediate Department Orders of Worship*, by C. W. BUDDEN, M.D. (National Sunday School Union; 4d. net). The beauty and variety and fitness of these services are beyond praise. They will help to propagate a high standard of excellence in this matter. We hope they will be widely circulated. A special service on the life of Christ by the same author is issued by the Pilgrim Press (4d. net)—*The Life of Christ in Picture, Poetry and Music.*

Canon Oliver Chase QUICK, M.A., is one of the outstanding personalities in the Anglican communion of to-day. He is certainly one of its leading thinkers. He reminds us in some ways of Dr. Gore, in the firmness of his intellectual grasp and in the clearness of his vision. But he has a more philosophical mind and a broader outlook. These qualities were exhibited in a marked degree in his Bishop Paddock Lectures, published in 1922. And they receive even more attractive expression in his latest book—*Catholic and Protestant Elements in Christianity* (Longmans; 6s. net).

The book may be regarded as an eirenicon. Its central idea is that, while Catholic and Protestant stand for different and clearly recognizable principles, these principles may be fused in a higher unity. 'To grasp the central idea within a system of thought to which one is opposed, is to cease to desire to destroy that system altogether, and to seek rather to preserve and to vindicate the essential value wherein its real strength lies. The real values within opposed systems of thought, belief, and practice are often themselves apparently opposed and antithetical to one another. But it is the faith of reason that such real values can nevertheless be rationally reconciled and combined. . . . Synthesis is only reached through antithesis.'

Accordingly Canon QUICK proceeds to elicit and define some of the values for which Catholicism and Protestantism stand, to set them first in opposition and then to suggest a ground of reconciliation. It is a noble endeavour and it is accomplished with admirable insight and skill. The two opposing systems are tracked down in the regions of the Historic Faith, the Sacraments, Religious Experience, and the Kingdom of God, and it becomes amazingly clear that in all these regions we have the same attitudes to truth and to life expressed in the two great religious beliefs.

Take the Sacraments. What are the fundamental differences in idea here? The popular theory that Catholicism stands for sacramental religion and Protestantism for the religion of the spirit is false. Both agree that the essence of religion is spiritual life, and also that outward things can express and minister to the inward and spiritual. What divides the two systems is the kind of relation that connects the outward with the inward element.

Sacramental signs may be either 'declaratory' or 'effective.' In the first case the outward is regarded as the expression of a spiritual reality already existing. In the second case the outward is used to bring about a spiritual reality which comes into existence only through the outward means. The best general example of the former is the relation of words to their meaning. An assertion says something about what exists

('London is a great city') but does nothing to bring about the truth. So a symbol, like a flag on a ship, declares something about it but does nothing to create the reality.

The best general example of the latter is the relation of acts to a purpose. Countless human actions have made London a great city. Armaments are the actual means whereby a ship may continue to exist. Now these are the two views characteristic of the two great systems of religious belief. But the difference is one really of emphasis, in the main. A symbol is never merely a symbol; an instrument is never merely an instrument.

Yet there is a difference of idea too which is important. The Protestant stresses the declaratory as primary, the Catholic the effective. Hence in the administration the Protestant attaches most importance to the words, the Catholic to the acts. The administration in Latin, which is unknown to many worshippers, matters nothing if the acts be rightly done. Protestantism minimizes the importance of what is done because it desires to appeal to the intelligence. The declaration of God's permanent relation to His people which the sacrament makes is the main thing, not anything the sacrament effects.

The same difference exists in eucharistic doctrine. To the Protestant the sacrament commemorates a sacrifice once offered. To the Catholic the sacrifice of Christ is continued in the sense that the offering of Christ in the Mass is one with His heavenly self-offering. The same contrast is found in other directions, for example, in the doctrine of the Incarnation, and even in divergent views about reunion.

Now the two views are not really mutually exclusive. 'It is plain to see that both are right.' But each side needs to recognize the limitations of its own view and the value of the other's. It is so in the case of sacramental theory. It is so also in that of religious experience. It is so in that of the outlook on the unseen. Canon QUICK points the way, and if his leadership is followed the Anglican Church may well realize its greatest ambition, to be the Reconciler of the world's religious opposites.

It is curious to note how small a place is given in systems of philosophy to the fact of Christ. Problems of ethics and metaphysics are worked out in complete independence of Him. Students are led straight from Plato and Aristotle to Descartes, Spinoza, and the moderns. Little regard is paid to Browning's dictum:

> I say, the acknowledgement of God in Christ
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it,
> And has so far advanced thee to be wise.

Yet, to Christian faith, Christ is nothing unless He is central and of universal significance. The ultimate truth of things is not to be reached apart from Him. In other words, the Christian view of God and the world must be the most comprehensive and satisfying. On this point Dr. T. B. STRONG, the Bishop of Ripon, has written much that is suggestive in his *Religion, Philosophy, and History* (Milford; 3s. 6d. net), a little book packed full of good things.

He puts forward the view that 'the element in man's effort to interpret the world which expresses itself later as religion is a primary and necessary element in his reaction to his environment; or at least that it has the same kind of claim to validity that is allowed to those elements which express themselves later as philosophy, art, and ethics.' 'I do not think it is possible to say, for instance, that man is first attracted by the problem of causation in its rudimentary form, and proceeds to extend his inquiries in various directions from this basis. I would suggest that his thought is really anthropomorphic from the first: at any stage at which he can be said to think, he finds something like a reflection of himself in the world around him.

He looks to it to satisfy his sense of order, of right and wrong, of fellowship. All the special modes of conceiving the world are, as it were, fused: and it is somewhat of an anachronism to treat them in the early stages either as co-ordinate separate interests or as a logical series. As time goes on, and man's mind develops, different aspects of experience catch the attention of different minds.'

The Greek mind, attracted and vexed by confusion and uncertainty, sought for some one principle which would explain the whole mass of miscellaneous experiences and reveal a rational order. The Hebrew mind moved along quite a different line. Strongly possessed of a 'numinous' sense, that is the sense of a Numen or Presence in things, it conceived the world as the scene of the activity of a Power which governs the whole. The Hebrews showed little or no interest in metaphysical questions. The main development of Hebrew religion lay in the direction of a continual growth in the fullness of the personal idea as applied to God. This is as peculiar and independent a process as that of Greek philosophy.

It is Dr. STRONG's contention that the Christian system comprehends these various lines of thought. 'The philosophic view of things fails to explain the individual experience and the historic sequence of events, all of which are individual. I submit that the Christian scheme of thought, as it covers much more ground, is able to avoid this pitfall. It has room in it for the philosophical method, but it is not bound within these limits. If the Christian point of view is to be trusted the existence and activity of God is the fundamental fact in experience. This fact, if true, must express itself in contact with the souls of men, in the general guidance of history, and the convergence of it on a purpose, only partly fulfilled as yet.'

Zionism.

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ZIONISM A RELIGIOUS QUESTION.

ZIONISM is a political question, but it may be of service to remind ourselves that it is also, and even essentially a religious question, and that our attitude to it will depend, in the last analysis, on our conception of religion. Doubtless historical considerations may be, and have been, urged in favour of the Jewish claim to Palestine. But, the Jews themselves being witnesses, that land had not always been theirs, they won it by the sword. And some of their prophets at any rate did not think this a sufficient justification for their being allowed to remain in it for ever. 'The eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth' (Am 9^8). If, in spite of a thousand subsequent political transformations, ancient conquest is adequate justification for the descendants of conquerors cherishing the hope of a later return to the land they conquered, we may still have to reckon with an Italian claim to Britain, which was for centuries Roman. Is the Jewish claim to Palestine really much more reasonable? We cannot reverse the processes of history. Others are now in the land. The Zionists ask the world, as Professor D. M. Kay in his Croall Lectures has recently put it, 'to reinstate them in a national home, *where others already have a national home.*' History is not of the distant past alone, but the history of all the time since then has also to be reckoned with; and we have to face our modern problems in the light of the world as it is to-day.

But essentially Zionism is a religious question. The champions and the opponents of it alike appeal to the Old Testament. That cannot, however, decisively settle the matter. For the Old Testament is too splendidly human a book to be dominated by any mechanical unity: it speaks with a double voice, indeed with many voices. Doubtless between its constituent parts there is a very real unity; they are all held together by the idea of God. All of it was written by men whose 'God was their