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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

A STORY is told of an Oxford undergraduate to whom, at the Scripture Examination, the question was put: 'Canst thou speak Greek?' Instead of giving the context, which apparently was what was expected of him, he replied with simple frankness that he could not. One of the problems of theological education to-day is the number of students who have to confess that, far from being able to speak Greek, they cannot even read it. Whether by their misfortune or their folly, they are becoming 'priests of a religion who cannot read their own sacred books.' (Is Professor ROBERTSON right, by the way, in ascribing this gibe to Carlyle?)

How are we to account for the increasing difficulty in vindicating the right of Greek to a compulsory place in the curriculum of a Theological College, and for the complaisance with which young ministers view the fact that the Greek New Testament is to them a sealed book? One difficulty is that New Testament Greek differs so markedly from the Greek taught in our Universities; not only from the language of Plato and Demosthenes, but even from that of contemporary Greek writers.

It is very easy to exaggerate this difficulty; and any excuse it may have offered to unenterprising students has been removed. Last year we had Dr. MACHEN's excellent *New Testament Greek for Beginners*, specially designed for students of the New Testament who had made no previous study of classical Attic prose. Now we have the *Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, by Professor William Hersey DAVIS, M.A., Th.D. (Hodder & Stoughton; 10s. 6d. net). In an introductory note Professor A. T. ROBERTSON of Louisville, Ky., tells us that Professor DAVIS was the most brilliant student of Greek he ever had.

These two books illustrate, among other things, the way in which competent teachers of long experience differ on what seem elementary points of teaching method. In the exercises, both Greek and English, Dr. MACHEN has for the most part deliberately avoided the familiar sentences of the New Testament; while as deliberately Professor DAVIS has taken from the New Testament all illustrations and sentences for translation. Again, Dr. MACHEN frankly aims at producing, not a scientific grammar but a practical introduction to the study of New Testament Greek; while Professor DAVIS evidently thinks that the learning of basal things in the old unscientific way is the root of all evil in things grammatical.

To take two illustrations: Dr. MACHEN accepts the five noun cases that we learned in our youth; Professor DAVIS adds three—the ablative, the locative, and the instrumental. Again, while Dr. MACHEN is just as well aware as Professor

DAVIS that the fundamental point in Greek tense is not the time of action but the kind of action, yet the former attaches great importance to the fact that in the participle the distinction between present and aorist can be learned only through the medium of English 'time' distinctions.

Professor DAVIS, however, is scientific also in this commendable sense of the term, that, whereas the older grammarians were apt to assume that all sentences of standard authors could be parsed, he recognizes that in many cases they cannot. We have in the New Testament the grammatically indefensible: 'And it came to pass and he was teaching,' 'And it came to pass he went away,' 'And it came to pass and behold two men stood by him,' as well as the logically correct: 'And it came to pass *that* he was going through. . . .'

Yet the student who has missed Greek at the University and tries to master even one of these 'elementary' grammars, written as they are by experienced and competent teachers, will 'have no picnic,' as the Americans say. He may well be discouraged when told that even an elementary grammar of two hundred and fifty pages is only an introduction to a 'Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament.' He may then fall back on a second line of defence. The translations are now so good that the average student, with the Authorized Version for pulpit use, and Dr. Moffatt, say, for private study, will know as much about the author's meaning as if he could read the Greek for himself.

This is a far more specious excuse than the other. It seems to become more convincing still when we realize that there is a growing conviction that, in the case of the Gospels at least, even those who read them in Greek are reading only translations from Aramaic. There is of course a good deal of doubt as to the precise point in the story when the translation was made: whether, for instance, only the original sayings were in Aramaic, or whether oral traditions other than sayings passed current in Aramaic; or whether some of our Gospels, in whole or in part, were originally written in that language. If in the most important part of the New Testament a knowledge of Greek gives us the story only at second-hand, is its acquisition worth the effort involved?

Well, at least the Greek takes us vastly nearer the beginning of things. If the original drama was not all played in Greek, that language was from the beginning inextricably intertwined with the story. And in the case of much the larger part of the New Testament a knowledge of Greek does take us to the fountain-head. He who can read it gets the 'feel' of those early days as the English reader can hardly do. He gets the pictures that were in the author's mind as a translation can hardly give them. He can actually see the prodigal 'making the money spin.'

Take two of the conjectural emendations that Dr. Moffatt's translation has made familiar to English readers. In 1 P 3^{19}, whether we accept with Dr. Moffatt or reject with Professor Peake the correction of Dr. Rendel Harris, according to which it was not Jesus but Enoch who preached to the spirits in prison, it is in any case a brilliantly attractive suggestion. But the explanation of the loss of the reference to Enoch, simple and convincing to one who knows even elementary Greek, must always remain something of a mystery to one who does not. Again, in Ro 12^{3} the same explanation of the same scribal error (namely, the accidental dropping of a group of letters that happened to be repeated) accounts for the translation—'to every one who is *somebody* among you,' instead of the jejune—'to every man that is among you' of A.V. and R.V.

Further, translations give us only products not processes. The student who has only English has no idea of the long, anxious, and learned discussions that may underlie an apparently simple translation. It is interesting to take a single short verse of the New Testament as given by Dr. Moffatt, and note the points on which the translator has had to make

up his mind. Ja 1^3 he renders: 'Sure that the sterling temper of your faith produces endurance.'

'Sure' is a probable guess at the meaning of a word which A.V. renders 'knowing.' Grammatically the word translated 'sterling temper' may mean 'act of proving,' 'means of proving,' or 'proved quality.' The word 'faith' does not mean what Paul means by the same Greek word. The word translated 'produces' has an emphatic prefix which can hardly be reproduced in English. 'Endurance' is an ambiguous rendering of a word which may mean '(passive) patience' or '(active) staying power.' The connecting link with the following sentence, which Dr. Moffatt translates 'only,' may grammatically suggest either 'and' or 'but.'

With all our modern aids, valuable as they are, no one who knows the facts will contend that one who has studied Greek and one who has not have equal facilities for understanding the text of the New Testament. The apologete for 'English only' is therefore driven back on a third line of defence. He may and does use the utilitarian argument that a minister's business is to preach the gospel, and that from the point of view of the preacher, time spent on Greek grammar is wasted. A knowledge of the precise difference between the present and the aorist infinitive will not help a man when he enters the pulpit.

It is to men who argue like this that Professor A. T. ROBERTSON, M.A., D.D., LL.D., Litt.D., addresses *The Minister and his Greek New Testament* (Hodder & Stoughton; 7s. 6d. net). It is difficult to keep pace with the literary output of Professor ROBERTSON, and he is speaking here on a subject on which he is one of the two or three acknowledged authorities. He argues his theme with passion as well as with knowledge, and he is not afraid to face concrete instances on either side. If Moody 'broke grammar and broke hearts,' there are plenty of men who have broken grammar but have never broken hearts. Spurgeon, in spite of insufficient schooling, insisted on learning not only Greek but Hebrew. John Knox studied Greek when over fifty. Alexander Maclaren owed his pre-eminence as an expositor to laborious scholarship as well as to consummate genius.

Professor ROBERTSON carries the war into the enemy's camp and quotes with approval a saying of Fairbairn: 'No man can be a theologian who is not a philologian. He who is no grammarian is no divine.' 'Greece,' it has been finely said, 'rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hands.' Perhaps we of to-day hardly realize the new intellectual and spiritual impulses that stirred Europe when the revival of Greek gave the world once more the Greek New Testament.

When Erasmus published his Greek text and Latin translation of the New Testament, Cambridge and Oxford, Froude tells us, forbade their students to read his writings; nor was it only the anti-priestly notes with which he accompanied the text and translation that irritated the clergy; it was the Greek itself. Sir Thomas More ascribes to the leader of the 'Trojans' (as the anti-Greek party was called) the saying—'The teachers of Greek are full-grown devils; the learners are little devils.' It was at a price our fathers won for us the right to read the Greek New Testament. Shall we not pay the much lighter price demanded to cherish the inheritance they won for us?

Professor ROBERTSON is willing to come down and meet the 'practical' man on his own ground. To the uninitiated the study of the Egyptian papyri, of which so much has been heard in the last quarter of a century, seems dreary and unprofitable. In 'From Egyptian Rubbish Heaps' the late Dr. J. Hope Moulton showed what excellent preaching material lay concealed for him who had the eyes to see. Professor ROBERTSON claims that there is theology in the Greek article, that there are pictures in prepositions and sermons in tenses. How does he make good this 'very bold' claim?

In the story of the quarrel between Paul and

Barnabas about John Mark (Ac $15^{37f.}$), Barnabas wanted 'to take' John with them (the aorist of a modest proposal), but Paul persistently declined (imperfect) 'to have (this unstable brother) with them all the time' (present of a continuous grievance). 'He did not want to have a quitter again on his hands.' Or again, take Jn 11^{47}, where there are two 'presents of linear action.' 'What are we doing because this man is doing many signs?' 'The point is that they are doing nothing while he is doing everything.'

The main contention of Mr. HERFORD's essay on Pharisaism (reviewed elsewhere) suggests an interesting historical parallel. That contention is as follows. The two great Jewish religious parties split on the question of what was Torah. The Sadducees were the conservatives. They held by the written word. Nothing should be added to this. The Pharisees were the liberals. They believed in a perpetual inspiration. How were people to know what was their duty in present circumstances? The Torah said so and so. But what did this mean for them in their present condition? What did the Torah mean here and now?

The Pharisees believed God gave adequate guidance on such points through the authorized religious teachers. They held that this guidance, the opinions of the Scribes on definite points of duty, was also Torah. Tradition was part of the Divine will as well as the written 'Teaching.' This tradition was the light given by a living God to living men and women who wanted to know what the written Word meant in any emergency. This difference in principle was the origin of the division and dissension between Sadducees and Pharisees.

This inevitably suggests the cleavage between Protestantism and Romanism on precisely the same ground. Romanism justifies many of its obvious departures from the New Testament by its doctrine of Tradition. 'It is true that we have many doctrines and practices which are not found in the New Testament. But then we have had the continuous guidance of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's promise, and these doctrines and practices are the result.' In other words, Protestants are the Sadducees of Christianity and Romanists are the Pharisees.

This idea of a living and continuous inspiration giving guidance from a fresh source of light and grace is a very fine one, but a very dangerous one also. So long as it is used with modesty and reserve it will hold a valuable truth. Many an individual believer, *e.g.*, will testify that he receives help, and especially guidance, from this living fount of inspiration. But whenever he begins to think that *all* his actions and judgments are inspired in this way he lands himself in a terrible quagmire of delusion. It is the same with a Church. As soon as this idea of a spiritual tradition is *systematized* it becomes a snare.

It was so with Pharisaism. No doubt many individual Scribes received true guidance from God about duty and in perplexing conditions. But when this individual experience was extended and, as it were, codified, made into a system, it became a falsehood. A man who thinks all his opinions and judgments are right and inspired by an inner Divine light is a crank. The case is no different when a body of men make the same claim.

Is the New Testament the revelation of the will of God for our salvation? Is it the norm? If so we have only to understand it and apply it with the help of the Divine Spirit. But we have to remember two things. One is that *all* our conclusions are unlikely to be right. It is easy for us to mistake our own bias or preferences for the will of God. It is easy to make mistakes here. And the other thing is this, that any judgments we may form have to be tested by the plain facts and truths in the New Testament.

This is the point emphasized by Dr. Gore in his

excellent chapter on 'Tradition in the Roman System' in his latest book. He admits the reality of continuous Divine guidance, but he insists that Tradition can never go beyond, or be inconsistent with, the facts and truths of the New Testament. When we examine the actual system built up by the Scribes as a Tradition which was as authoritative as the original Torah, we see how this principle of theirs can lead men into error.

Their applications of the Sabbath law are a notorious instance. These are absolutely out of harmony with the whole spirit of the Torah of Jehovah. This was the heavy yoke they laid on men's souls to which Jesus referred. The same thing holds true of the system built up by Romanism on the same principle. It is as absolutely out of harmony with the New Testament. The place given to the Virgin Mary, the Confessional, the invocation of saints, the infallibility of the Pope, the 'no salvation outside the Church,' and other 'developments'—what can one find of all this in the New Testament? It is the result of a process which was put into practice earlier by the Pharisees and later by the Church of Rome and with identical results.

Is the Sermon on the Mount practical politics? This oft-debated question is raised anew by Count Léon L. Tolstoi's *The Truth about my Father* (John Murray; 6s. net). The book is an important contribution to the world's knowledge of the great Russian moralist. It is written with sympathy and insight by one who was not only a dearly loved son but also, in early life, a whole-hearted disciple of his father. The story leaves an impression of sadness and futility. In his last days Tolstoi prepared a summary of his doctrine under the title of *The Way of Life*, but it does not appear that he found the way of life himself or succeeded in directing his people into it.

The religious crisis through which he passed did not make him a more loving husband and father or a better man. The contrast is painful between his early and later married life. His son writes: 'I remember that I worshipped and adored my mother and her baby. My heart was filled with that *joie de vivre* that permeated the house. I remember that the door opened and my father came in, with his light but firm step. How strong he was! how happy! and how good! He came towards us and bent down and kissed my mother.' Later we read: 'During the last months of his life my father was indescribably unhappy.' His disciples who thronged about the house were not an attractive company. 'They were tedious. They ate more than other people, and they drank more tea and *kvass* than others. They chattered a good deal, but with rare exceptions they were not very interesting people.' There seems to have been a singular absence of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How did Tolstoi miss the great secret? For one thing he was more of a prophet than an evangelist. He had more power to denounce the rottenness of modern civilization than to bring healing and help. He had a low ideal of womanhood, and was a ruthless enemy of the Church. His son rightly repudiates with indignation the suggestion that Tolstoi was 'the great inspirer of the Russian Revolution,' and that Bolshevism is 'the same thing as Tolstoism, but with the worst side out.' But it was easier for the Russian peasant to drink in his denunciations than to accept his spiritual teaching, and the relation of Tolstoism to Bolshevism may be said to resemble the relation of Ghandi's pacifism to the Indian riots.

Above all, Tolstoi, while striving to follow the law of love, never seems to have been captured and subdued by the spirit of love. There is no evidence that he ever tasted of the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. The law of love remained to the last an external thing, not an inward joy and inspiration. He never knew love as Francis of Assisi did. He did not consistently practise the simple life which he preached, and

when, on occasion, he went to work with the peasants in the fields it was as a task, or even a penance. A great, sincere, truth-seeking soul like Luther, he never found peace where Luther did. 'Notwithstanding that he appeared to have found for himself and for others perfectly clear answers to the great questions of life, Tolstoi was far from being happy, far from being radiant with light at the close of his life. He was still in doubt, and more than ever, during the last months of his life, he sought for something that would give him—not inwardly but outside of himself—a moral and religious support.'

The Reports presented to the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship at Birmingham, familiarly (and unpleasantly) known as 'Copec,' have now been published in twelve volumes. They are on: 1. 'The Nature of God and His Purpose for the World'; 2. 'Education'; 3. 'The Home'; 4. 'The Relation of the Sexes'; 5. 'Leisure'; 6. 'The Treatment of Crime'; 7. 'International Relations'; 8. 'Christianity and War'; 9. 'Industry and Property'; 10. 'Politics and Citizenship'; 11. 'The Social Function of the Church'; 12. 'Historical Illustrations of the Social Effects of Christianity' (Longmans; 2s. and 3s. net each).

We hope these volumes will be widely read, for they contain the real message of this great Conference. Some of the public debates at the Conference have given a somewhat false impression of what it stands for, but this impression will be corrected by a perusal of these reports which contain the results of a great deal of investigation and discussion to which experts of all kinds have largely contributed.

The main principles that have guided the promoters of this movement may be said to be two in number. One is that an urgent need exists to-day to test our whole corporate and social life by the mind and teaching of Jesus Christ. The other is that this can only be done by a 'conjunct view.' The defect of past attempts is that they have been sectional. What is needed is not a number of isolated efforts to reform and Christianize this department of life and that, but an ideal of corporate life based on broad consistent principles, and applicable to every sphere of national and international relationships. This explains the comprehensiveness of the 'Copec' aim. It also accounts for the fact that there is a good deal of repetition or overlapping in the treatment of separate subjects.

One of the most interesting volumes is that on Education. It contains an intelligent review of the whole situation to-day. Its criticisms are in the main sound, and its suggestions (with one exception) are helpful. In particular we commend the treatment of the religious problem, and especially the attitude taken to the task of religious instruction. The whole treatment is based on two facts, the emphasis on which would alone make the Report of great value. The first is that right living depends on right thinking, and right thinking means ultimately thinking rightly about God. The second is the essentially religious nature of the child. The fundamental thing in a child is its religious instinct, and as education is the development of personality, the religious element in education is of vital importance.

Another point which is brought out with clearness and force in the Report is that the religious element in education is not to be confined to the Bible lesson. It ought to pervade the whole curriculum. It is essential in the teaching of history. It is almost more essential in the teaching of science. There is no part of the school day which may not, and ought not to, be penetrated by the religious spirit.

The one point in the Report on which we are moved to emphatic dissent is the plea for specialists to give religious instruction. This plea is based largely on the undoubted fact that an efficient teacher of religion in the school must know all about the Bible, and especially must be acquainted

with the results of criticism. He must have a thorough training for the whole subject. And such teachers are few. Therefore let us get specialists to do the work.

The answer to this is obvious. It is also important. If you take the religious lesson out of the hands of the class teacher you take from him his greatest opportunity of influence. You strike out of his hands his most powerful instrument. That is fatal to true education. Again, if you commit this subject to a specialist you at once label it as a special subject like cookery or science or handwork. You separate it from the whole regular curriculum. This is fatal to religion. There is already too great a tendency to regard religion as separate from life. And to stamp religion in the school as the business of a specialist is to consecrate this baneful error.

If there are too few teachers competent to give this instruction, what is the inference from that? Make them competent. Train the ordinary teacher to do this. In Scotland this is being done in all the Training Colleges. Three years ago the great Presbyterian Churches combined and appointed four Directors of Religious Instruction, one for each Training College. These men give their whole time to the training of the future teachers for this task. Practically the whole of the students are in their classes.

The training is thorough. It includes, first, a double course on the Bible in which its nature, its authority, its history, its background, its sources, and so on, are discussed; and then its contents, the nature of Prophecy, the worth of its history, the way the Gospels were compiled, the results of modern criticism, and cognate topics are explained. Further, there is a double course on apologetics in which questions and problems of faith are frankly treated in free debate. And finally, there is a course on methods of teaching the Bible with demonstration lessons.

This is probably the most important educational step taken by the Churches in Scotland for a very long time. Its results ought to be very far reaching for religious education in the schools. Every student in preparation for general teaching receives this very complete training, and no student passes through the Training Centres in Scotland without having had the chance of discussing his religious problems freely and fully. Is not this, and not the use of specialists, the real solution of the problem? It will sound incredible to readers that in the Scottish section of the 'Copec' Report on education to which we have referred no reference whatever is made to this important departure in religious education.

So many books have already been written on the Art of Preaching that a cynic might be pardoned for resolving to read no more, or at least for approaching a new book with little hope of adding to his knowledge. Has not everything that can be said been said already, and often well said? But this pessimism has no real root in the nature of things. For countless volumes have already been written on the Art of Life—all great literature deals with that: yet no one thinks he has exhausted it; and he would be cynical indeed who would suppose that there is nothing more to be said. It all depends on who says it, and what is said, and how it is said. So it is with Preaching.

We approach therefore not unhopefully the new book by Dr. James BLACK on *The Mystery of Preaching* (James Clarke; 6s. net). Dr. BLACK is minister of St. George's United Free Church, Edinburgh, a church with famous traditions; and the man who was thought worthy to follow Dr. Alexander Whyte, and who, in his own very different way, is maintaining the old traditions, is a man who has a right to count on a hearing when he expounds, as here he does with such intimate candour, his own ideals of Preaching and Worship, and the methods by which he seeks to realize his ideals.

These chapters were delivered as Lectures to students, but there is in them much ripe wisdom from which many an experienced preacher might well profit. No part of the preacher's task is overlooked; his relation to the Bible and to his people, the preparation of his own life, the length of the sermon, the unity of the service, the choice of the music, the place of a liturgy, the distinction between the morning and the evening service, the arguments for the written and the read sermon—all these topics are discussed with insight and piquancy, and others too—such as the cultivation of the voice—which young students are apt to regard as unimportant, but which, to their cost, they may later discover to be vital.

Apart from his own experience, which is the greatest teacher of all, Dr. BLACK has drawn from many sources, but it is easy to see that the chief sources of his inspiration have been the teachers and thinkers of his native land. The pervasive influence of the late Principal Denney is reflected in several allusions to sayings of his; and over the pages are scattered the names of Dr. Whyte, Principals Fairbairn and G. A. Smith, Professors Forrest and Drummond, and Ian Maclaren.

It is good to see Dr. BLACK putting in so strong a plea for expository preaching. He is unquestionably right when he says that there are few things people welcome more than this. Unhappily he is also right when he says that the preacher may safely presume that the people know little about the subject. The Bible has never been so profoundly studied by so many scholars, nor so completely neglected by so many people, as to-day. But imaginative and conscientious expository preaching would in time remedy this defect, and help to reinstate the Bible in the intelligent affections of the people; and with several of the Biblical books, *e.g.*, Amos, Proverbs, James, Acts, Dr. BLACK shows how this may be helpfully done.

There is also a wise discussion on the relative merits of liturgical and free prayer. He speaks the thoughts of many ministerial hearts when he says: 'On the whole, I believe that a liturgy is more welcomed by the speaker than by the people.' Some one has said, 'If all men prayed always as some men pray sometimes, there would be no need for a liturgy.' But, as far as public worship is concerned, the real contrast is for the most part not between a genuinely free and a liturgical prayer, but, as Professor Kilpatrick once put it, 'between the noble liturgy of the Church and the degraded liturgy of the individual.' Dr. BLACK has done well to make it clear that our freedom is 'not only a freedom from forms, but a freedom, if we care, to use forms.'

Of the four possible types of sermon—read, memorized, delivered from notes, delivered without notes—Dr. BLACK prefers most of all the last, though he has a very good word to say for the third; but to him, as to all sensible men, the second method is anathema. Principal Denney once said that the preacher should learn both how to read well and how to speak extempore well; for there are sure to be occasions in his ministry when he will have to express himself with great precision, and others when he has no option but to be spontaneous.

The vital subjects dealt with in this racy and able volume are handled with much freshness and occasionally lit up by a striking story. The book, while guiding the novice, will also search the heart of the experienced preacher: it will throw him back upon ultimate problems—the theory of worship, and the ordering of his own devotional life. But after all, there is about all great preaching something elusive and indefinable, associated, in the last analysis, with personality. It remains, as Dr. BLACK has called it, a mystery.