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Ever yours sincerely  
John M. Clark

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

It is unhappily true, as Dr. Frank BALLARD maintains in his recently published *Reality in Bible Reading* (T. & T. Clark ; 6s.), that the only knowledge of the Bible now possessed by a large proportion of the population is confined to the portions which they hear read in church. Among those who are outside the churches there is practically no reading of the Bible at all ; and even of the members and adherents of churches it may be truly said that very little reading of the Bible is done at home.

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It becomes therefore all the more imperative not only that the portions that are publicly read should adequately represent the sense of the original, but that they should be presented in the familiar and intelligible language of to-day ; otherwise the one chance of lodging the Bible in the minds of many worshippers is all but irretrievably lost. And Dr. BALLARD has written his book to secure, so far as one man can, this very desirable end.

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But it may be asked, Have we not the Revised Version ? and for the New Testament have we not in addition the thoroughly scholarly, yet thoroughly popular and modern versions of Dr. Weymouth, Dr. Moffatt, and 'The Twentieth Century New Testament' ? Undoubtedly we have ; but Dr. BALLARD's case is that, at certain points, even these excellent versions leave some-

thing to be desired. It takes a brave man to enter the lists against antagonists like these ; but Dr. BALLARD has courage as well as knowledge, and he is not afraid to take Dr. Moffatt to task for his rendering of 1 Ti 6<sup>10</sup> by 'love of money is the root of all mischief,' which, he argues, is simply not true ; or to tackle the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal* for his use of 1 Co 15<sup>19</sup>—'another instance of the strange perversity with which good men cling to old errors.'

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The Revised Version, no less than the Authorized, is severely handled for its maladroit and even misleading use of *shall* for *will*. Scotsmen apparently have not a monopoly of the confusion occasioned by these troublesome words. The translators of A.V. and R.V. cannot, of course, be accused of Scotticisms, yet by their misuse of *shall* they frequently import the idea of threat into a statement which may merely be an assertion of the order of Nature, or even of simple futurity, or at most of gentle warning. *E.g.*, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that *shall* he also reap,' for which Dr. BALLARD substitutes, 'Whatever a man sows, that is just what he will reap.'

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The sequel to this verse, as it appears in A.V. and R.V., illustrates another defect which calls for remedy. 'Sowing to *the flesh*' and 'sowing to *the spirit*' are hopelessly unmodern phrases, which

do not carry their meaning directly and inevitably into the average mind. For 'flesh' and 'spirit' Dr. BALLARD proposes to substitute 'his lower nature' and 'his spiritual nature.' There is a whole group of words which need similar drastic treatment; e.g. temptation, conversation, and especially physiological words like *reins* and *bowels*. In one of the most impressive passages of Jeremiah (4<sup>19</sup>) even the R.V. is content with the intolerable 'My bowels, my bowels.'

To this category belongs the word *blood*, which is a peculiarly intractable word to deal with, as the ancient associations of this word are quite different from our own. Less and less, Dr. BALLARD maintains, do congregations welcome such hymns as 'There is a fountain filled with blood,' and he offers the attractive suggestion that the New Testament blood might often be effectively rendered by *self-sacrificing love*. E.g. Eph 1<sup>7</sup>, 'in whom we have redemption through his *self-sacrificing love*'; or again, 'the church of God which he purchased with his own *blood*' (Ac 20<sup>28</sup>) becomes 'the church of the Lord Jesus which he bought at the price of his *dying love*.'

The danger of Dr. BALLARD'S method—inseparable perhaps from all attempts to modernize an ancient book—is that what professes to be translation readily lapses into paraphrase. This is conspicuously so in such a passage as Rev 7<sup>14</sup>, 'they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,' which Dr. BALLARD transforms into 'they have purified their souls through their trust in the self-sacrificing love of Jesus.' This is frankly paraphrase, not translation; and most of the difficulties experienced by translators, ancient or modern, centre in the feeling that they have a certain obligation to be as faithful as is linguistically possible to the words, as well as to the ideas, of the original.

And there are cases where Dr. BALLARD'S ambition to secure a thoroughly modern and intelligible interpretation leads him to do less than justice

to the vigour of the original. Take, e.g., Mt 5<sup>29</sup>, 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.' R.V. improves on the *offend*, but introduces a needless grammatical archaism with its *causeth thee to stumble*. But surely Dr. BALLARD does not adequately bring out the tremendous nature of the demand of Jesus by the rather tame, 'If the possession of good sight lays you open to evil thoughts, *close your eyes firmly and turn away*.'

Much of this highly interesting book is taken up with discussion of texts whose real meaning or full bearing is not commonly understood; and many surprises are dropped by the way. We are reminded, e.g., in connexion with Mt 26<sup>24</sup>, 'good were it for that man if he had not been born,' that a more obvious and thoroughly defensible translation of the Greek would be, 'good were it for him (*i.e.* the Son of man) if that man (Judas) had not been born.' This translation opens up a very unconventional vista of Jesus' view of His own career. There are many things in the book nearly as striking and interesting as this.

It is a poor and unworthy business to belittle the Revised Version. It has unquestionably rendered valuable service to the cause of sound interpretation, as, for example, when it transforms A.V.'s 'let them go down quick into hell' (Ps 55<sup>15</sup>) into 'let them go down alive into the pit.' But Dr. BALLARD is quite right in maintaining that neither R.V. nor even any subsequent version furnishes the modern man at every point with everything that he may fairly demand; and many of Dr. BALLARD'S own contributions to the better understanding of inadequately translated or imperfectly understood verses are always interesting and worthy of serious consideration. He has given us a thought-provoking and highly stimulating book, from which even those who have been reading the Bible all their days will have much to learn; while those who seldom or never read it at all would be lost in wonder, love, and praise, if through such a book as this they could be brought

under the power of it and learn for themselves that it is as modern as it is ancient.

One of the most notable features of recent theological literature is the revival of the theory of Conditional Immortality, or, as one writer prefers to call it, 'Potential Immortality.' This theory, associated with the name of Edward White, was supposed to have been discredited. It was discredited chiefly by New Testament exegesis. A close and accurate study of the language of the New Testament, it was asserted, leaves no foothold for the theory in Scripture.

But a marked change has taken place in Christian thought upon the subject. Professor Pringle PARRISON'S Gifford Lectures on Immortality afford one instance of this. This distinguished philosopher does not believe that there is an inherent immortality of the soul of man. The soul or self or personality is not something given and complete at first. It is an achievement. Man builds up a soul by his acts and thoughts in a life with God. And it is this achieved self that lasts on because it has in it something of God.

Two books that have been published only the other day come to the same conclusion from a different standpoint. One is a purely Scriptural study: *Life and Immortality*, by the Rev. Eric LEWIS, B.A. (Stock; 6s. net). For the most part Mr. LEWIS avoids all *a priori* speculation either of a metaphysical or of an ethical nature. He does point out that the 'terrors of hell' have ceased to alarm anybody. People do not believe in them. The Christian conception of God has made belief in a hell of endless torment impossible. He has a good deal to say also about supposed evil results that will flow from the abandonment of a belief in eternal punishment.

But his conclusion is one he has derived from a patient and exhaustive study of the New Testament. No more careful or exhaustive account of

the relevant passages has been given probably by any previous writer. And his conclusion is that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul has crept into the Christian faith on insufficient grounds. It is not the teaching of Scripture but a guess of pagan philosophy. Immortality and eternal life are two entirely different things. Eternal life is a present possession of the believer. It is life with Christ in God. And because it is the gift of grace it links the believer with the life that is in Christ and that will be immortal in the future.

Those for whom the language of Scripture is final on this subject will have to reckon with this able and sincere study, which goes over the whole ground with meticulous care. Probably some readers will feel that the argument is too meticulous and that a broader treatment would be more convincing. This is precisely what is furnished in the second volume to which we referred: *Immortality*, a work of many hands, edited by Sir James Marchant, and published by Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons (7s. 6d. net).

The writers are Sir W. M. Flinders PETRIE, Professor WELCH, Professor R. G. MACINTYRE, Principal GALLOWAY of St. Andrews, Professor Rudolf EUCKEN, Canon BARNES, Mr. Maurice HEWLETT, Professor MACDONELL and Mr. F. M. CORNFORD. The whole subject is treated from the historical, the Biblical, the philosophical, the scientific, the ethical, and even the literary points of view. Here again the theory of 'Potential Immortality' receives strong reinforcement, sometimes deliberately, sometimes obliquely.

In the essay on 'Hebrew and Apocalyptic Conceptions,' by Professor WELCH, it is made clear that 'there is no hint in Old Testament teaching of the soul as a divine spark, prisoned for a time in a house of clay and set free from the taint of matter by the liberating hand of death.' What the Jew thought of was the relation of the faithful dead to Yahweh. God could not leave them to Sheol, because He was faithful. The Jew

came to his faith in immortality from his recognition of what is involved in the life of the soul with God. The relation had become so deep and intimate as to set it above the accidents of time.

So that, broadly speaking, the Old Testament conception of life, as life in God which lasts on beyond death because it is in God, is a support to the idea of an immortality that is not essential but conditional. Professor R. G. MACINTYRE, in his essay on 'The Christian Idea of Immortality,' argues that it is the same in the New Testament. Immortality in the New Testament is directly connected with redemption. 'The filial relation of God is everything in Christianity. . . . To have this fellowship restored is immortality . . . this requires the imparting of a new principle of action.' A life redeemed has in itself the assurance of immortality. It is the faith of the Psalmist enriched and assured.

'Later Christian thought and authoritative credal statements have so far departed from the New Testament idea as to make the soul inherently immortal.' This is a view, according to these writers, destitute of any foundation in the Bible, and derived from Greek philosophy. Traditional theology has imposed it on the Bible and 'inflicted it' upon the Church. But if this be true, then the 'grim doctrine of an eternal hell' must be eliminated also. It is not in the New Testament, and is not consonant with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

It is a striking fact that from so many quarters at the same time, from science, from philosophy, and from Biblical study, come these testimonies to a revived belief in a future life, not as the lot of all, but as the moral and spiritual achievement of some, of those who, being born again, have already begun even here to live their life in God.

Dr. A. C. MCGIFFERT, well known by his *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, gave four

lectures to the Divinity School of Yale University in October 1922. They are now published under the title *The God of the Early Christians* (T. & T. Clark; 6s. net). It is not a big volume; but we say deliberately it is one of the most important that has appeared for some time. No one who proposes to treat of the teaching of Jesus, or of the development of early Christian theology, can afford to be without it.

There are four chapters dealing respectively with 'The God of Jesus and of Paul,' 'The God of the Primitive Gentile Christians,' 'The God of the Theologians,' and lastly 'Creation, Providence, and Judgment.' Each is very full and suggestive, and provocative of thought. Space forbids us to attempt to do justice to them. To give our readers a taste of the book, hoping thereby to encourage them to study it for themselves, we select three points.

First, as to the teaching of Jesus about God. It has become a tradition, as the author acknowledges, that Jesus was original at least in the emphasis with which He taught the love and the Fatherhood of God. If few are now so ignorant of contemporary Jewish doctrine in the time of Christ as to say that Jesus was the first to proclaim the Divine Fatherhood, there are few even among scholars who will not be somewhat surprised at the completeness with which Dr. MCGIFFERT shows that the whole idea is a profound misapprehension. So far as the Synoptic Gospels are concerned, Jesus, he shows, has really very little to say about either God's love or His Fatherhood. Much more does He emphasize the austerity of God. 'When He spoke of divine forgiveness He seems as a rule to have been interested not so much to assure His followers that God forgives sins, as to warn them against presuming upon His forgiveness.' It was common Jewish thought that forgiveness and repentance go together. Jesus may have accepted this, as the story of the Prodigal suggests. But what He emphasizes is that Divine forgiveness is conditional upon our manifesting a forgiving spirit

ourselves. As to the common opinion that Jesus went beyond His contemporaries in emphasizing the Fatherhood of God, 'nothing,' says our author, 'could well be more erroneous.' 'At no point, so far as we can judge from the Synoptic Gospels, did He go beyond His people's thought about God. His uniqueness, so far as His teaching goes, lay not in the novelty of it, but in the insight and unerring instinct with which He made His own the best in the thought of His countrymen. So far as the God of the Christians is different from the God of the Jews, it is due not to Jesus' teaching about God, but to the teaching of Paul and those that came after, or still more to the personality of Jesus and the interpretation His followers put upon it.'

Second, as to the God of the primitive Gentile Christians. If he be a genius who first unfolds what most men will find to be convincing and wonder only why nobody said it before, then Dr. MCGIFFERT is a genius. For he is the first to point out, what is plain to all as soon as it is set forth, that there was a strongly marked difference in what the Deity of Christ meant to Jewish and to Gentile converts respectively. For the Jew was a monotheist, the Gentile was not. To the Jew the Saviour God must be the supreme and only God, who had made all things and governed them. For the Gentile, especially if he had acquaintance with the mystery religions, nothing like this followed at all. The Saviour-Lord was a god, but by no means necessarily or even probably the Creator-God, in whom the Gentile took little interest. The tendency of the Gentile converts was probably to take Jesus the Saviour as all the God they cared about. Thus, while with Jewish converts the problem was to get them to make a place for Christ alongside God, with the Gentiles the problem was the reverse—to get them to see even the necessity of finding a place for God in any sort of relationship to Jesus. For this view of the situation Dr. MCGIFFERT carefully marshals evidence. Some of it is weak in itself, but the total effect of it all, combined with the reasonableness of such a view *a priori*, is convincing to our mind. For the importance

of it we must ask our readers to turn to the book itself.

Third, as to the development of the doctrine of the relationship between God and Christ. 'It was not enough to stop with Jesus, a personal Saviour. If the new religion was to be given world-wide significance, it must be brought into a larger setting. The doctrine of salvation must be made part of a system embracing the universe as a whole, and the Saviour Christ must be related in some way to the Divine forces which lie back of the world or find expression in it. Otherwise Christianity would be inferior to Judaism . . . indeed—it would be inferior even to some of the mystery cults.' Of this problem three solutions were attempted in early times. There was the view of Paul who connects Christianity with Jewish monotheism and sets forth Jesus as the Son of God. There was Gnosticism which set Christianity within its dualism. There was Modalism which saw in Christ neither the Son of God nor one of the æons of the Gnostic system, but simply the Father Himself, the creator and ruler of the world. Gnosticism and Modalism both had to yield. But difficulties were left and new ones raised, and the consequent confusion survives to our own day.

In *The Greatest Service in the World*, by the Right Rev. G. H. S. WALPOLE, D.D., Bishop of Edinburgh (Wells Gardner; 3s. 6d. net), some striking things are said on the need for urgency in the preaching of the gospel. 'If,' said the chairman of a religious conference in San Francisco, 'you can do anything for us in America, by sending us some one who will teach us how to preach, we shall be greatly indebted, for we cannot do it. We have lost the power of it.' Discussing this statement a company of Anglicans and Scottish Presbyterians agreed that it was the note of urgency that was lacking in the preaching of to-day. 'The modern preacher has no great anxiety about his people. His message is generally quiet and intelligent, full of ethical interest, but not urgent. It does not



appear to matter very much whether what is being pressed is obeyed at once or not. There will, of course, be loss if men do not believe; it may be serious, but not the kind of loss pictured in the New Testament. The present moment is not critical.

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Various reasons may be suggested for this attitude. The study of other religions has led to a wide-spread belief that while Christianity is certainly the best, yet it is only one among others, and that we must not be too exacting in pressing its claims as exclusive. The preaching of the Fatherhood of God has produced a general feeling that He is not only very kind, but also very indulgent to men's sins. The natural reaction from a teaching about hell, which was degrading in its thoughts of God and Christ, has led to what is felt to be a wise ignoring of the whole subject.

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Yet there can be no question that if preaching is to be modelled on the New Testament it must have the note of urgency. At the very outset we are face to face with it in the preaching of the Baptist. 'And so far from qualifying what His herald had said, Christ asserted it again and again with increased emphasis, using many striking pictures to drive it home. The house crushing in upon its occupants, the horrible refuse pit burning with unquenchable fire, the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the dark prison, are all images of future judgment. . . . Men must repent at once and quickly. No time was to be lost. . . . And they must not shrink from any measures, however desperate they might seem, if only they could avoid the ultimate ruin to which unbelief led.' All this was in Paul's view when he said, 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.'

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The note of urgency is so often struck, both in the Old and in the New Testament, that it is difficult to avoid feeling that it is a necessary element in the gospel message, and that we may be missing just that factor which gives a reasonable ground for such amazing acts as the Incarnation, Atonement,

and the Resurrection, as well as that spiritual power which makes for conversion. 'If men were really perishing, if the outlook of humanity were really so serious and grave as the Bible represents, then we can understand perfect Love undertaking anything and everything to save mankind. But if the race was slowly but surely evolving into perfect fulness of life by its own inherent power, then it is difficult to see why the Eternal should become man and die upon the Cross.'

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The preacher, if he is to be true to his vocation, must keep in touch with changes in thought, and specially he must be in touch with fresh discoveries whether in science or philosophy. The newest development of modern thought is in the field of psychology, and for several reasons it is imperative that the preacher should know what is being done and said in this field. Doubtless many people are 'sick of the very name' of the New Psychology. We cannot get away from it. It almost seems as though half the books that are being published were on some aspect or other of the new science.

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The preacher cannot ignore it, however. He cannot ignore its contributions to our knowledge of human nature. Still less can he ignore its challenge to the very foundations of his faith. The New Psychology, at least as it is presented by some of its most prominent exponents like Freud, Tansley, and Jones, is to-day *the* Enemy. In the days of Huxley and Tyndall, science was the enemy. Later it was criticism. To-day it is what may be called the Freudian psychology.

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The preacher will therefore turn with keen expectation to Dr. H. Crichton MILLER's latest book, *The New Psychology and the Preacher* (Jarrolds; 6s. net). Already Dr. MILLER has dealt in successive volumes with the relation of this science to the parent and the teacher. In the present volume he essays a much harder task, its relation to religion. It must be admitted that he achieves only a moderate success. The preacher



will learn a good deal about the New Psychology itself, though in a somewhat scrappy fashion. But the discussion of the problems it raises in the religious sphere is not thorough at any point, and is specially disappointing at one point, the challenge of the New Psychology to religious experience.

The reason why we call the New Psychology *the* Enemy is that it assails religious faith with a subtle and plausible argument that is likely to make a great impression on many people. Tansley, for example, attributes religious faith to a delusion of the mind itself. We wish a sense of security, we wish to be rid of a sense of inferiority, we wish the conflict in the soul resolved, we wish to rest on an absolute authority; and therefore we create the God who will give us these things. Our faith is due to the process of 'rationalization.' Its source is our unconscious desires.

This is the modern issue in religion that is to take the place of evolution and critical results. Here is a problem on which the preacher eagerly opens Dr. MILLER'S book to get some help. But he does not get much. The author's answer to the sceptical psychologist is that the verification of religious experience is its power to produce results. Does it create heroism? Does it lead to a calvary? Does it make for both personal harmony and social worth? Then it is valid.

Is this satisfactory? Doubtless the ethical results of a belief have a place in its vindication. But one is inclined to ask two questions. First, Is it unknown that an erroneous belief can produce fine ethical fruit? If it can and does, then Dr. MILLER'S criterion fails. And further, May a belief not be true and held honestly with very imperfect and inadequate ethical consequences?

The real reply to the suggestion that religious faith is a purely subjective 'phantasy' must surely be on broader lines and on more than one line. We may hold, for example, that the very same

argument which would make spiritual experience an illusion will make our physical experience an illusion. There is no more ground for asserting the validity of our belief in any external object than there is for asserting the validity of our belief in God. The argument which seems to destroy religious faith destroys the reality of *all* that is outside our mind.

Then again, Dr. MILLER seems to think little of the argument from *semper et ab omnibus*. But surely he is in error here. If an experience has been repeated age after age in the case of uncounted millions of people, and always, in its essence, and amid many varieties of colour, the same, this would seem to make strongly for the validity of that experience. This fact has to be used with caution, but so has every fact.

There are other considerations. But we turn finally to a point on which Dr. MILLER has much that is wise to say. In what respects has the New Psychology brought a contribution to religion and to the preacher of religion? We can do little but indicate some points. Its contribution need not be exaggerated. Often the 'discoveries' of the New Psychology are only new names for old facts. The 'introvert' and the 'extravert,' for example, are only our old friends the 'inner' and the 'outer' man.

But there are real accessions which have come to us from the new science. It has shown us the immense influence of the herd in religion. It has enabled us to see that sins are often really forms of disease—mental or nervous disease. It has brought to all intelligent and wise preachers a new power in dealing with the sinner himself. Its discovery of the subconscious is destined to have a far-reaching influence in religious education. And, perhaps best of all, it has brought into the religious sphere a breadth of outlook, a sanity and charity which will help to create a new religious apologetic.