THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

In our February issue we took notice of the appearance in English dress of the first volume of the second part of Professor Nygren of Lund's historical study of the Christian idea of love, entitled *Agape and Eros*. The first part dealt with the Christian idea as it appears in the New Testament and in contrast to the Hellenistic idea. The first volume of the second part told the story of how the synthesis of the two ideas was prepared, up to the Cappadocian Fathers in the fourth century. And now we have the second volume of the second part before us (S.P.C.K.; 7s. 6d. net). It takes the reader to the point where the problem of 'Eros and Agape' finds its natural solution in the Reformation.

Already in the first part the author had sketched the plan of the whole work. Here is the outline of it, in terms of a picturesque analogy: 'Two rivers have their sources in regions far distant from one another, the one in primitive Christianity, the other in Hellenism. The rivers converge, and at an early date in Church history efforts are made to turn the waters of the one into the other. At first these efforts fail; but as time goes on the distance between the river-beds diminishes. They meet, and for the whole period of the Middle Ages they flow together in one broad current, till at last they are separated again at the Renaissance and the Reformation.'

It is in Augustine, with whom this volume begins, that a genuine union of Eros and Agape is first reached; the result is the emergence of a new conception of love, summed up in the word 'caritas.' But between two things so different as Agape (God's own love freely bestowed on the sinner) and Eros (man's desire for heavenly things) no real synthesis was possible, but only a relative synthesis; and such is caritas. On this synthesis, however, the Middle Ages lived.

How did Augustine settle the issue between Agape and Eros? He never sees that Christian Agape is the direct opposite of Neoplatonic Eros. But he seeks a compromise between the two motifs which will do justice to both. He looks upon Agape merely as a necessary corrective, without which Eros cannot reach its goal. It is a corrective of that feeling of self-sufficiency and pride, that 'superbia,' that is always bound up with Eros. The only real cure for it is God's Agape, God's 'humilitas,' His love in sending His Son, who humbled Himself even to the death of the Cross.

Augustine's own words are memorable, in which he rebukes the philosophers who saw from afar but would not hold the humilitas of Christ and despised His Cross: 'O, proud wisdom! thou laughest at the crucified Christ; it is He whom thou sawest from afar: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." But why was He crucified? Because the Wood of His humiliation was necessary for thee. For thou wast puffed up with pride, and hadst been cast out far from that

fatherland ; and by the waves of this world the way has been cut off, and there is no means of crossing to the fatherland, unless thou be carried by the Wood.'

The reason why the synthesis of Eros and Agape could not be completely effected by Augustine is that it involves an inner contradiction. Ultimately, therefore, a break was bound to come. The two streams which had flowed together for a thousand years must again separate. It was a mutual separation. Almost at the same moment as a new revival of the Eros-conception appeared in the Renaissance, the idea of Agape breaks out again in Luther, with a force comparable to that of its first appearance in the Apostolic Age. The Eros-conception of the Middle Ages was broken up, and the Agape-doctrine restored.

The most clear and interesting example of the concern of the Renaissance for Eros is provided by Marsilio Ficino, an ardent follower of Plato's philosophy, who, however, looks at Plato with Neoplatonic eyes. The Plotinian mysticism fills a large place in Ficino's thought. Through contemplation and ecstasy we have to break the fetters that bind us to the sensible world and realise the union of the soul with God. And he goes further than the Neoplatonists and actually proclaims man to be God in mortal dress. This faith of man in his own divinity and man's consequent worship of himself forms for Ficino the essential content of Christianity.

What a contrast to Luther's position ! Everything of our own is to be broken down and destroyed, he said ; and he sees this, ' everything of our own,' concentrated in the doctrine of caritas, according to which man's love is the way to God. And everything outside us and in Christ is to be built up and planted ; and he sees this, ' everything outside us,' concentrated in the love which comes to us in Christ and tries to find a way through us to our neighbour—that is, in Agape-love.

He also says, in words that bring out the full Agape-quality of his doctrine of love, ' If any one would paint and aptly portray God, then he must draw a picture of pure love, as if the Divine nature were nothing but a furnace and a fire of such love, which fills heaven and earth. And again, if it were possible to paint and picture love, we should have to make such a picture as would be not of works nor human, yet not of angels nor heavenly, but God Himself.'

The first sentence of the motto from Luther, from the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, which Professor NYGREN has chosen for his attractive and scholarly work, gives an apt description of the nature of Eros and Agape respectively : ' Divine love does not find but creates the lovable object, but human love is created by the lovable object ' (*Amor Dei non invenit sed creat suum diligibile, Amor hominis fit a suo diligibili*).

The distinctive witness of Congregationalism has been for the liberty of the Christian man, and the special contribution it has made in history has been its ardent defence of that principle in Church and State.

It has been said that the price of liberty is sleepless vigilance, and never was such vigilance more urgently needed than it is to-day, when liberty, political and religious, is in danger throughout the whole world. We regard, therefore, as a very timely contribution to the subject the lectures delivered to the General Council of Congregational Churches of the U.S.A. by the Rev. Albert PEEL, M.A., Litt.D., and now published under the title of *Christian Freedom* (Independent Press ; 3s. 6d. net). The thesis upheld in these lectures is that ' in a world where freedom is at a discount there is special need of the Congregational insistence on freedom—the freedom wherewith Christ made men free. At a time when many voices in Church and State cry aloud for authority, dogma, uniformity, it is particularly *our* duty to stress the need for liberty.'

It used to be taken for granted that a decisive and permanent victory had been won for freedom in

Church and State, but now the tide has completely turned and is running strongly in the direction of Totalitarianism. The rights of free speech, free worship, and free missionary enterprise have disappeared. Persecution has again lifted its ugly head ; in some lands the Church has again become the Church of the Catacombs. The religious toleration which we thought had been established as a recognized mark of the civilized State has been contemptuously cast aside. The State is being deified and the people regimented. All of which things imply that Christ's estimate of the infinite value of the individual goes by the board.

It is the work of the Church, indeed it is vital to her very life, to maintain the value of the individual and defend his rights. 'The recent history of Russia, Italy, and Germany shows that any effective resistance to the Totalitarian claims of the State will come only from the Church of Christ. Other institutions—political, economic, cultural—give way and bow before the storm, but the Church under the compulsion of a higher authority finds no way of escape but is constrained to say, 'We must obey God rather than man.' So she becomes the sheet anchor of the political liberties of the nations. In this connection, therefore, and in the situation which confronts us to-day, it becomes necessary for the Church to re-examine the whole question of the powers of the State, to ask whether there is such a thing as a Christian State, and what are its rights, and the rights of citizens and Christians within it. When the civil powers begin to lay burdens on the Christian conscience the Church must be prepared to give guidance and leadership.

But in asserting the rights of the Christian man against the claims of the Totalitarian State we must beware of bringing him into bondage to a Totalitarian Church. Many to-day hanker after this very thing. 'They are tired and weary, bewildered and confused, by the bustle of the world and the argument "about it and about," they shirk responsibility and the severe discipline of testing and deciding things for themselves. With relief they enter the comfortable armchairs of a Church which will do their thinking for them, and tell them what to believe and what ceremonies to perform.' Short of this absolute surrender of individual rights and liberties there is a strong tide running in all the churches in the direction of an imposing uniformity in doctrine and worship. Certain ancient creeds are declared to be binding upon the Church for all time, certain forms of worship and of church government are regarded as essential to the very being of the Church. These and such-like ordinances would be laid as a fetter upon the believer and upon the Christian community, and would restrain the working of the Holy Spirit in their midst.

Even the written Word itself must not be allowed to usurp the place belonging only to the living Word. The written Word may become a fetish and a fetter. It is easy to say with Chillingworth that the Bible is the religion of Protestants, but 'what is the ultimate authority for the Christian and for the Church? The written Word of Scripture? If so, interpreted by whom? The Pope, speaking *ex cathedra*? The faculties of divinity schools? . . . But you will say, Why have any interpretation? Cannot the Bible speak for itself? Here again is the assumption that the Bible is a unity, an assumption we cannot accept to-day without clearly defining what we mean by unity.' The Reformers were at one in declaring that the Bible is certified as the Word of God by the witness of the living Spirit in the believing heart. The ultimate authority is the Living Word not the written Word. This means no disparagement of the Scriptures. 'The Bible is disparaged by making it a volume of proof-texts, or placing it on a Procrustean bed of mechanical unity, rather than by regarding it as a collection of books which tells of the preparation for and the coming of the Living Word, Christ Jesus.'

Dr. PEEL goes on to argue for a similar freedom in regard to the Sacraments. Can we say that the use of the outward rite is of perpetual obligation and must be made a condition of Church membership and of union? Some churches hold by seven Sacraments, others by two, while some, like the Quakers, dispense with the symbols altogether. No Christians take literally our Lord's injunction about foot-washing, which might equally be made a

sacramental rite. Is it not difficult, on the assumption that God, through the Holy Spirit, has set down in Holy Writ the rules for the life of the Church, to explain why His ordinances and instructions are so obscure that, with the utmost goodwill, His followers cannot agree about them? It is manifest that Christians have lived and are living in great faithfulness and devotion without the use of the two Sacraments, and it surely cannot be in accordance with the mind of Christ to exclude such people from His Church on the ground that they do not accept the perpetual obligation of Sacraments and make no use of them. Must we not recognize that temperaments vary, and that devout Christians may here have different views? 'Those who do not feel the symbols a help may be denounced as arrogant in that they reject means which devout Christians have employed for many centuries, or they may be pitied as blind men, not able to see the *verbum visible*. On the other hand, those who use symbols may be criticised as superstitious and believers in magic. These charges should not be preferred, but the sincerity of the opposite points of view should be admitted. A man may in all humility believe that the Sacraments have been established by God "taking account of our coarseness and weakness" (Dutch Reformed Church) and that one may grow out of them as one reaches the stature of a perfect man. A man may in like humility receive the symbols though he find they do not aid his communion. In Christian charity we must recognise the possibility of varying views being sincerely and conscientiously held.'

The spiritual freedom claimed in respect of the Written Word and the Sacraments must be asserted in regard to Church government and organization. Dr. PEEL takes for granted that to suppose that episcopacy or any other form of Church government is of divine institution and is an indispensable mark of the true Church is altogether foreign to the spirituality of the Christian faith. But, over and above that, the Church may be fettered by attaching its services to so-called sacred buildings and practically limiting its ministry to a special class of paid officials. Not that consecrated buildings and a whole time ministry are in themselves objectionable, on the contrary they may be of the greatest use. But if the Church puts her faith in these she has fallen from the Christian ideal, and is in danger of losing her liberty of action and simply digging herself in. 'In many churches and chapels the situation has reached this point, that a small body of faithful people are struggling heroically to keep their church alive, which, as I have said, has come to mean the raising of sufficient money to keep the fabric in good repair and to maintain a minister. In hundreds of such churches there is no energy left for those specific tasks for which a church should exist, primarily the spread of the Christian message among the surrounding people.' To fulfil this high end the Church needs the active ministry of all her members, serving not in consecrated buildings but in all the walks of life. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said, 'There ought certainly to be in every parish groups who can be living witnesses to the reality of Christ, to all that He gives in Himself, and in the privileges and gifts of His Body.'

None knows better than Dr. PEEL that many of the views he puts forward are highly controversial, but it is well that these views should be put forward, and that those who are intent upon uniformity and the conditions on which Church union may be attained should clearly understand that such views on Christian liberty are maintained with conviction and will be adhered to with tenacity. And after all Christian freedom is a very precious thing.

It is, of course, impossible for the Christian minister to keep abreast of the science of to-day, even if it were his business to do so. At the same time, he would be well advised to give the subject such attention as he can afford, if for no other reason than to deliver him from the absurdity of giving his people some second-hand and perhaps already antiquated theory with the reverential announcement that 'men of science tell us.' St. Augustine in his day spoke of preachers who made themselves ridiculous by their ignorance of science, and the race is not yet extinct. It is a wholesome reflection that the science of St. Augustine's day, which the preacher had to reckon with, is long since antiquated and dead, and the time

will certainly come when many of the scientific theories of our time will likewise pass away. Meantime, however, there they are, proudly holding the field and often making extravagant claims. And there can be no doubt that any preacher must have deep misgivings who has the impression that the best thought of his day is in conflict with his faith.

In this connexion a book of manageable size has recently been published which should be helpful. The title is *The Riddle of Life*, by Mr. William McDougall, M.B., F.R.S. (Methuen; 7s. 6d. net). It is described in the sub-title as 'A Survey of Theories,' and it justifies this description. Beginning with physics it passes on to treat of the mechanical biology of to-day, showing the difficulties which attend all materialistic theories. Next, it treats of such topics as emergent evolution, holism, and other similar theories which attempt to explain in an organistic way the riddle of existence. No safer guide through these intricate paths could be found than Dr. McDougall, by reason of his extensive knowledge, his scientific bent of mind, his logical acumen and his breadth of view. He does not press any single theory as the solution of the problem, but he renders a service of high value by showing how manifold and varied the theories are and what difficulties attend them all. It entitles us to hesitate before we commit ourselves to any of them. And, in particular, it requires us to think long before we permit them to dictate to us within the realm of our Christian faith and life.

Dr. McDougall very emphatically supports a spiritual view of life. In the realm of physics he needs no argument to make plain the collapse of the mechanical theory which seemed to the nineteenth century so finally triumphant and impregnable. By the practically unanimous testimony of the physicists themselves, when the atom exploded it blew that theory sky-high. 'What is the use of talking about materialism,' says one authority, 'when we don't know what matter is?'

The puzzling thing, as Dr. McDougall points out, is that, while the physicists had given up the vain attempt to explain the constitution of the atom in terms of mechanism, the biologists on the contrary continued to build their science on mechanistic lines. He accounts for this by the rise of the recent science of genetics which gave a new lease of life to mechanical biology. 'These studies led to the particulate theory of heredity, according to which the nucleus of the egg-cell contains a multitude of material particles (the genes), and each gene is "the cause" of some one unit quality of the organism which develops from the egg.' Having gained a new insight into the mechanical processes which go on within the germ cell, and having by experiments in breeding confirmed the accuracy of these observations, the biologist has been tempted to imagine that he has at last unveiled the secret of growth and development. 'The genes do it,' is his explanation, or, if some external stimulus is introduced it is spoken of as 'the organizer,' and is credited with being the *vera causa*.

This, as Dr. McDougall has little difficulty in showing, amounts to a begging of the question. Professor E. B. Wilson, whose work on 'The Cell' is of the highest authority, says: 'The egg offers an impressive spectacle when busily engaged at its work of blocking out the embryo, without visible tools or model, but with an uncanny air of deliberation, purpose, and mastery of technique that any human artist might envy. Beyond a doubt the movements and regrouping of materials which give rise to the visible pattern are expressions of an underlying more fundamental organization that escapes the eye; *but it is precisely this organization of which we are ignorant.*' The visible components follow an order, but they do not create it. What constitutes or controls this fundamental organization of the egg? That is a problem which 'no one is yet able to answer. The embryologist, the cytologist, the physiologist, and the bio-chemist—all alike have thus far only skirted the outermost rim of the problem.'

Why does the biologist so persistently follow his search for a mechanistic explanation of life? Probably the main reason is that he believes that 'only the spatially extended features of the world can be dealt with scientifically and only in terms of

mechanistic causation.' This, however, is simply a prejudice. As Jung says, 'It is an almost ridiculous prejudice to assume that existence can only be physical.'

Having dismissed the common prejudices, traditional in modern science, in exclusive favour of matter, of spatial relations, and of mechanical causation, Dr. McDOUGALL goes on to review certain speculative suggestions which propose to solve or at least to illumine the riddle of life, 'by assuming that living beings owe their distinctive properties either to the operation within them of some physical energy of a quite peculiar kind, a kind unknown in the inorganic world; or to some quasi-matter, to the inclusion in their composition of substance allied to matter but different from it in essential respects, perhaps in respect of sub-atomic structure.' He then passes on to discuss theories of the kind associated with the names of Smuts and Whitehead, theories which imply some sort of non-material power of organization immanent in living things, and perhaps also in the inorganic world.

It is impossible to give here, even in outline, the searching examination to which these theories are subjected. He supports the Lamarckian theory of the transmission of acquired qualities and functions, regarding it as of crucial importance. (In this connexion he mentions that his famous experiment on racial memory in rats has at the time of writing reached its forty-ninth generation, and has now doubtless celebrated its jubilee.) 'The evidence supporting Lamarckian transmission supports also the non-material basis both for individual and racial memory; and instead of following the neo-Lamarckians who try to conceive a material basis for both individual and racial memory, it is open to us to take the opposite line and, while identifying racial with individual memory, to regard both as founded in immaterial or psychical structure.'

The immaterial basis of memory and the reality and efficacy of the teleological activities of organisms are the two main supports of any thoroughgoing non-mechanical biology. Personally, Dr. McDOUGALL inclines to some form of psycho-physical dualism, in spite of its being regarded with horror in some philosophic quarters as a sheer monstrosity, 'for, in my opinion, formed after a life time of struggling with this and allied problems, it consists with a larger proportion of empirical evidence than does any other formulation of the psycho-physical relation.'

After a survey of the whole field there would appear to be a convergence of many lines of thought on the reality and activity of some organismic structure of things, with perhaps a hierarchical organization of monads, interacting and subtly combining together to form ever higher and more complex wholes. 'It is an advantage of the dualistic theory, especially when combined with monadism, that it makes intelligible the existence of individuals or persons higher than and more comprehensive than ourselves, the wholes of which we are subordinate members, and in the lives of which we may play some part without being aware of the fact. This, I say, is advantageous, and for two reasons. First, ethically and religiously, because it gives us a glimpse of an intelligible possibility of the continuance of the activity of each one of us beyond death of the body, and hence of the continuing influence of whatever of positive value in our personalities may have accrued from our individual efforts. Secondly, scientifically advantageous, because there are a number of empirical indications of the reality of such individuals, indications that our individual personalities do in some measure express the influence of higher personalities in whose life or lives they participate. I point here to moral, æsthetic, and religious experiences, too vague and uncertain of interpretation to be arrayed as evidence of appreciable weight; but also to equally vague indications of a purely biological kind, which I am disposed to think may, when they are seen to be worthy of fuller investigation, prove to be far richer and more significant than at present appears.'