THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

LORD BALDWIN in a recent speech put the momentous question, 'How shall we overcome these Totalitarian systems, which enslave the mind, without being ourselves enslaved?' and he answered his own question by saying 'only if our spiritual effort exceeds and controls the material.' He recognized that the root of the present conflict is spiritual, and the victory must be spiritual too.

These words recurred to mind in reading one of the essays of Mr. Graham WALLAS which have been published under the title of *Men and Ideas* (Allen & Unwin; 8s. 6d. net). Of Graham WALLAS, Professor Gilbert Murray in a Preface to the book says beautifully, 'He remains to me a type of that *Humanitas* towards man and beast, which was once generally accepted without question as an ideal, then undermined by those four years during which the civilized peoples concentrated on doing the maximum of evil towards one another, and never fully restored during the following twenty years of reconstruction, hindered by irresolution and suspicion and stained with unparalleled cruelties.'

Once more it is war, and we may well put the anxious and dubious question whether when the war is over that noble quality of *Humanitas* shall be found in the earth. In an essay on 'Mental Training and the World Crisis' Graham WALLAS has some suggestive things to say from the educational and Christian point of view.

His mind turns back to the crisis of fifteen hundred years ago when ancient civilization was visibly falling in ruins. 'All the structure of government on which the ancient world, as organized by Rome, had depended, had come to an end. Roman law was no longer valid; all the habits, all the loyalties, all the ideals, all the philosophies, all the religions of the ancient world were passing away, and men may have asked themselves at that time: "Is the mind of man sufficiently strong and wise to keep the reconstruction of the world under the control of rational purpose, or must we let disasters come, and their results slowly work out by a succession of accidents?"'

There was, indeed, intense and constructive thought going on in that critical age, for it was then that Augustine wrote his 'City of God,' but it was directed less to the reformation of this present evil world than to finding a way of escape from it. And so the world was left to welter through the dark ages with disastrous results for all time.

The problem before us to-day is of greater magnitude, and the danger we have to face is more intense than the danger at the fall of the ancient civilization. For one thing our social system is infinitely more complex. 'Where there were a few cultivators in the clearings of the woods, or a few wandering shepherds out in the plains, now there are millions and millions of industrialized and concentrated factory workers. The very existence

of the present population of the Eurasian continent depends upon organization, and to substitute accident and drift and confusion for organization means to reduce our population to something like what it was at the fall of the ancient world.' For another thing the situation is made more complex and difficult to handle because of the piling up year by year of immense masses of new knowledge about man and the conditions of man's life which we are finding it 'almost impossible, without the severest efforts, to bring into any co-ordinated system.' The situation, in short, threatens to get completely out of control and the problem to baffle human solution.

The supreme need of our time, therefore, is for new and creative thought, such thought as will give to man a new mastery over himself and his passions and all that mass of new knowledge which is now placed at his disposal but which he is so apt to turn to his own destruction. But the difficulty is that, while man can in general exercise control over his actions and feelings and thoughts, what we call new and creative thought is beyond his control and cannot be produced at will. As Shelley says in 'A Defence of Poetry': 'A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it, for the mind in creation is as a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness.' Neither the poet nor the prophet, neither the inspired statesman nor the discerner of the signs of the times can be made to order.

Must things, then, be left to chance? Must the blind forces at work in the world be suffered to take their way uncontrolled in the hope that through a chapter of happy accidents they will work out all right in the end? No, we are not forced to this conclusion. There are at least two things that can be done. While it is true that we cannot by direct effort produce new and creative thoughts any more than we can write new poetry, there are certain indirect efforts by means of which it can be made more likely that new and creative thoughts will come into the world for its guidance and help.

There must, of course, be energetic thought and planning. There must be a gathering together of the materials required for a solution of the problem, and conscious effort, concentrated and long sustained, to co-ordinate that material and search through it for the solution of the problem. But of more importance still, following upon that period of severe conscientious preparation, there must be a period of rest in which the subconscious mind, guided by its emotions, may produce new thoughts. 'Shelley, by allowing himself to brood with the full force of his poetic imagination, by toiling and striving to know and then waiting humbly till the conviction came upon him, saw more of the significance of what was happening in the world than nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of those who had taken a more direct part in events.' That is what he meant when he said, 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.' The distinguished French mathematician, Henri Poincaré, tells how he worked hard at a mathematical problem to the utmost limit of logic without reaching a solution, but being called away to military service in a period of mental quiescence the solution came to him in a flash. 'This connexion between the preliminary period of hard thought and the suddenness of the discovery of inspiration has been noticed again and again by all sorts of writers.' Cases also might be quoted, like that of Darwin, where great thinkers have found a period of rest, perhaps through illness, more fruitful in creative thought than years of hard work. The importance, therefore, of such periods of quiet, humble, and receptive waiting cannot be exaggerated.

Now this fruitful quiescence which is so essential for the discovery of truth is what in the language of religion we call 'waiting upon God.' It does not exclude human thought and human energy but crowns them. Man may build his altar and lay the wood upon it, but he must wait for the fire from heaven. He cannot force a solution of his problem, at least not the right solution; he cannot drive through to a successful issue by sheer strength. There is an element in the situation which is beyond his control, which must be received as a gift from above through the secret inspiration of the Divine

Spirit. Is not this what the Psalmist means when he says, 'Vain is it to rise early for your work, and keep at work so late. . . . God's gifts come to His loved ones as they sleep?'

Is this understood? Is the value, yea the sheer necessity, of waiting upon God for guidance in the present crisis realized with any clearness and conviction? One fears that in many quarters it is not, but that the whole confidence of many is still placed in human strength and skill and armaments. A suggestion was recently made in the House of Commons that a day of national prayer should be appointed. In regard to this a member of the House asked cynically whether the Government would consult the leaders of the Army and Navy as to the strategic value of such a day. This sally was received with laughter, thoughtless laughter doubtless, but laughter which must have grated harshly on every Christian ear.

The overwhelming answer to such profane laughter would have been to say that the men in the last war, both in Navy and Army, who came through with most distinction and who brought the nation through, were men of prayer. Did not Admiral Beattie write home from the Grand Fleet that we should never win the victory we needed and hoped for till the people gave themselves more earnestly to prayer? Earl Haig never missed the hour of worship in the little Presbyterian chapel, and in the dark week of March, 1918, when in his famous dispatch he declared 'our backs are at the wall' he at the same time acknowledged that he sustained his heart by the last Sunday's text, 'The battle is not yours but God's.' It is emphasized in his biography that he had a profound belief in prayer, and to the end he cherished a fond vision that some day the nations might forgather on the blood-stained fields of Flanders in a great congress of intercession for the peace and welfare of the world. Foche also, the supreme commander, was of like mind. It is told of him that passing a wayside shrine he asked his staff to give him an hour of quiet. They thought he had gone in to sleep, but on the arrival of an urgent telegram they broke in upon him and found him before the altar on his knees in prayer.

A wealth of testimony to the same effect might be brought from the greatest workers and helpers of mankind, that in such hours of quiet waiting light and guidance came to them. And still men ask what is the use? Do we not here touch the very root of our problem? Is it not for lack of this spirit of humble waiting upon God that our world in its mad haste and violence has gone so far astray? When will men learn that 'except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'? When will the harassed leaders and busy workers of our people be wise enough and humble enough to pause for a moment in their frantic activities and say with David, 'Wait on the Lord, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord?'

A book on preaching that is at once learned, entertaining, and instructive is a rare gift. Such a book is *The Art of Preaching: A Practical Survey of Preaching in the Church of England, 747–1939*, by the Rev. Charles Smyth, Fellow and Dean of Chapel, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (S.P.C.K.; 8s. 6d. net). It does not contain 'lectures on preaching,' like those of the Yale, Warrack, or any other foundation. Canon Smyth does not look hopefully on any of these lectureships as a source of instruction. He thinks you can only teach men to preach *indirectly* by 'tutorials and supervisions,' or by such a work as Professor Dodd's 'The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments.'

But he has a high sense of the value of preaching and the necessity of learning how to do it. On the very forefront of his book he places a remarkable utterance of Bishop Hensley Henson: 'Of all the actions of the Christian ministry preaching is the highest, and the test of our reverence for our profession is our performance of the preacher's duty.' That is a remarkable statement, coming from a minister of a church which is generally regarded as standing for the supreme value of worship and the secondary importance of the

sermon. But Canon SMYTH agrees with Bishop Henson, and emphatically asserts that the art has to be learned, quoting from Canon Twells: 'Beyond all question, the vast majority have to learn this thing. It is one of the dangers of the Church of England that so many don't learn it.'

Canon SMYTH holds that a great deal can be learned of the art by reading the history of preaching, and he has certainly made good his contention in the survey he has presented of preaching from the mediæval period, through Tillotson, to the nineteenth century and after. It has been a task of stupendous labour, of many years, of reading so wide and deep that many a man would have sunk in the sea out of our sight and left above the surface only flotsam and jetsam. But in this book we are accompanied by a human being, with a sense of humour, interested in life and people, and ready at all suitable places to turn aside and point the moral and adorn the tale.

What then are we to learn about preaching from this fascinating survey? First of all, and emphatically, that preaching is a *pastoral* function. You cannot preach the Word of God with power if you are isolated from the rough and tumble of a pastoral ministry. For it is precisely in the whole business of rubbing up against human opinions, human feelings, human anxieties and human needs that you encounter at every turn the real meaning and significance of your faith in God. 'Indeed, I know of no better stimulus for a preaching ministry than the decorous abandon of a Parish Social and the blessed drudgery of visiting old women with bad legs.'

Over and over again this is asserted and illustrated in these pages. And if Canon SMYTH had done nothing more than make this clear and convincing in his survey, he would have done a good deed. For it is one of the ominous facts of church life at present that clergy of all denominations appear to undervalue the necessity of pastoral visitation; indeed, in many cases, not to value it at all. This applies particularly to the younger members of the profession, who, too often, imagine that if you have a 'message' everything else is subsidiary.

The point Canon SMYTH insists on is that you will not have a message that can get over to the people unless you know them. 'No man can preach effectively who does not read his Bible and say his prayers and love his people.' But if he loves his people he will be much among them, learn all about their 'bad legs,' and about their children and their business and their difficulties. There may be exceptional men who are great preachers and yet live remote from ordinary life. But is not this 'great' preaching really a great *performance* which hearers enjoy as such?

The second lesson on preaching that emerges frequently in this review is that the *subject* of preaching is God's Word. The idea that the pulpit must be up-to-date has led preachers to discourse on topics that are supposed to be in their hearers' minds. It has 'stampeded the Anglican clergy' (the author writes in a delightful sentence) 'into preaching about Eddington and Jeans: the sort of thing that is now done only by the simpler type of Bishop when trying to impress an academic audience.' Or it may be the international situation that inspires the sermon, or 'the benevolent commonplaces of Ella Wheeler Wilcox expressed even more prosaically than in her poetry.'

The ministry of preaching is not only pastoral. It is prophetic. The real business of the preacher is to declare and minister the Word of God. Canon SMYTH objects to the statement of the late 'Dick' Sheppard: 'Science is not the primary interest of my life. My main interest is the Christian religion, by which I mean Jesus Christ, His views about God, and His Sermon on the Mount.' The idea of our Lord having 'views about God' is, says the writer, completely foreign to the language and to the theology of the New Testament.

You see, it is not the business of the Christian religion, neither is it the business of the Christian

preacher, to interest the public in 'views about God.' We are the stewards of Divine Revelation, the ministers of the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ. We were ordained to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord, to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children that are in the midst of this naughty world, that they might be saved through Christ for ever. We were not ordained to have views about God, or to wallow in the slough of a subjective pietism. That is the fundamental issue.

This same note of the prophetic function of preaching excludes the type that used to be known as 'moderate,' the preaching of morality. From this, which was so prevalent in the eighteenth-century pulpit, we were delivered by the evangelical revival, supplemented by the Oxford Movement. But 'moderatism' did not die without a struggle. 'Were you to inculcate the morality of Socrates,' said a famous Archbishop of York, 'you would do more good than canting about the New Birth.' The result was that, as Sydney Smith himself said, the sermons of that time were characterized by a 'decent debility.'

It was the Evangelicals who restored to us the preaching of the Cross. And it was they, at their best, who illustrated what may be called *direct* preaching. Canon SMYTH admits that generally in preaching the speaker should say 'we,' not 'you.' But there are times when, he says, it is necessary to break into the second person plural, and even into the second person singular. The great Evangelicals did it: 'My message is to *thee*, sinner! *Thou* who dost now appear in the presence of thy God—loathsome in thy sins—I challenge and command thee to bow thy stubborn neck, and to bend thy knee.' That is speech only possible for men who know they have the authority of the Word of God and that they are commissioned to declare it.

These are the two impressions left on our minds by this interesting volume. Preaching, to be effective, must be pastoral and it must be prophetic. If it were both, what a power it might be! Naturally, in such a survey as he has given us, Canon SMYTH records his judgment of many well-known practitioners of the 'art of preaching.' And it may be interesting to set down his opinion of two in particular. He has an intense admiration for Robertson of Brighton. And he has no admiration at all for Cardinal Newman. 'For the ecclesiastical historian,' he says, 'it is extraordinarily difficult to regard Newman in any other light than as an evangelical gone to the bad.' And: 'Judging from the volumes of his printed sermons, it is difficult, at least for one of my generation, to see why they should have been so extravagantly praised.' This may well be the final verdict on Newman as a preacher.

Professor Robert CORKEY holds the Chair of Christian Ethics in the Presbyterian College, Belfast. He is also a representative of Queen's University, Belfast, in the Parliament of Northern Ireland. Accordingly, we turn to his recent study in ultimate war aims, *War, Pacifism, and Peace* (S.P.C.K.; 4s. net), in the hope of finding in it a treatment of this topic at once scholarly and practical. Nor are we disappointed.

Let us begin by quoting from Viscount Cecil's Foreword: 'There is one proposition upon which all peace-lovers may agree, whether or not they accept the views of those called "pacifists." We all desire the abolition of war, and we all believe that international peace cannot be safely or satisfactorily maintained except upon a moral basis. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all who are concerned with the future of international relations—and who is not?—should examine closely the question of how far war is consistent with international morality. Hence this book, so temperately and convincingly written, should be very useful in enabling unprejudiced persons to reach a conclusion on a point on which the whole future of civilization may depend.'

The heart of the book is its discussion of the problem of war from the standpoint of the fundamental Christian moral principle of neighbourly or brotherly love. Dr. CORKEY is far from satisfied with the arguments of out-and-out pacifists, regarding them as often inconsistent with this fundamental principle. Without taking sides in the issue we shall state certain of those arguments and show the way in which it is here sought to meet them.

The pacifist (that is, the extreme or out-and-out pacifist) sometimes urges that war is inconsistent with the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.' But Dr. CORKEY holds that it is a defective theory of the good which regards it as a quality in good acts regardless of results or consequences; in other words, which looks upon certain types of acts as in themselves always right irrespective of what the results or consequences may be. It is possible to imagine situations in which to take life would be, most emphatically, to do the right thing. It must not be allowed that the Sixth Commandment prohibits all war.

Again, the pacifist sometimes urges that it is never right to do evil that good may come. There is an element of truth in this opinion, Dr. CORKEY allows, but that element of truth must be clearly understood before we can safely apply the principle to a problem such as that of war. It becomes a misleading principle if it is taken to mean that, since war in itself is an evil, it can never be used in pursuit of an end that is good. In our efforts for peace we may not always be able to avoid war.

Yet again, the pacifist sometimes urges that a sincere Christian is never obliged to choose the lesser of two evils; there is always a way out by the way of the Cross or its equivalent. But Dr. CORKEY holds that this comfortable notion of an ideal third way is contrary to everyday experience. In a truly tragic dilemma the obligation to make a choice is indeed a cross, but the mere refusal to choose is not really the acceptance of a cross in the Christian sense but a dereliction of duty.

Finally, the pacifist sometimes urges that we must consider the example of sacrifice set before the world in the Cross of Christ; will not the way to the world's peace be found in the voluntary sacrifice of some martyr nation? Says Dr. CORKEY, there is a sense in which nations must sacrifice themselves if peace is to come to the world, but it is a gratuitous hypothesis that the times of war would be at an end if a nation could be found sufficiently devoted to the ideals of peace to discard all its armaments, accept indignity and impoverishment in quietness, and allow the aggressor to dictate its policy and determine its destiny. Mankind will not believe that in all disputes which may lead to war justice ought to be allowed to go by default; still less that abiding peace can be established in that way.