

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR KIRSOPP LAKE of Leiden has written a book on *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (Rivingtons; 16s. net). It is a book of unusual beauty as well as strength. It reminds us of the work of his great predecessor, KUENEN. As characteristic of the book, and as representative of the freest modern criticism, let us look at the section in which Professor LAKE discusses the authenticity of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Ever since the modern criticism of the Pauline Epistles began, the authorship of Second Thessalonians has been in doubt. The tide of opinion has ebbed and flowed. There has never been a unanimous opinion against the Pauline authorship; nor has there been a unanimous opinion in favour of it, as in the case of the First Epistle. Professor LAKE reduces the real arguments against the Pauline authorship to two. One is the argument that the Apocalyptic passage in the second chapter refers to events which occurred later than the life of St. Paul, or that it is at any rate inconsistent with the eschatological teaching of the First Epistle. The other is that the style of the Second Epistle is different from that of the First, and especially that it seems to be addressed to a different community.

logy of the Second Epistle different from that of the First? The objection is that in the First Epistle St. Paul describes the Parousia as imminent; in the Second he protests against the belief that 'the day of the Lord is at hand' (*ἐνέσθηκε*). In this part of the argument, says Professor LAKE, there is nothing. The Apostle does not deny that the Parousia is 'at hand'; what he denies is that it 'has come'—for that is the meaning of the word (*ἐνέσθηκε*) which he uses.

The other part of this argument is more substantial. It is maintained that the second chapter of the Second Epistle contains the so-called Nero Saga, and the Nero Saga is of later date than the Apostle Paul. What is the Nero Saga?

When Nero died in 68 A.D., the first feeling on the part of the people was joy over their deliverance; the next was fear that the news was too good to be true. Pretenders took advantage of that fear. Within a year of his death one man appeared claiming that he was Nero. Eleven years later another came, and was acknowledged by Artabanus, the king of the Parthians. And yet another impostor in 88 almost succeeded in raising a revolt against Domitian. After 88 the death of Nero was accepted. But now the idea was conceived that he would rise again from the dead, and would lead the armies of the East against Rome.

Each argument is in two parts. Is the eschato-

Last of all, Nero lost his personality, became identified in the minds of the Christians with Antichrist, and so passed into the region of supernaturalism, this Neronic Antichrist being half-human and half-diabolic.

Now it has been contended, and for a time it was believed, that the Nero Saga, or legend, was the source of the whole Antichrist idea. And as the Antichrist idea is evident in Second Thessalonians, the conclusion was inevitable that Second Thessalonians was later than St. Paul. 'This argument,' says Professor LAKE, 'or something like it, certainly played a great part in the commentaries on Second Thessalonians in the nineteenth century. But it is unnecessary to discuss it in detail, because W. BOUSSET to his many services to the study of the New Testament has added this, that he has shown the true history of the Antichrist legend to be independent of the Nero Saga, and far older than the time of St. Paul.'

But the second argument against the authenticity of the Epistle remains. For a time, after the issue of BOUSSET'S *The Antichrist Legend*, opinion ran strongly in favour of the Pauline authorship. In 1903, however, this opinion was checked and reversed by the late Professor WREDE. For in that year WREDE published an extremely able monograph on Second Thessalonians (*Die Echtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefs*), in which he admitted that the Apocalyptic argument had been done to death, but contended that a comparison of the literary style of the two Epistles made common authorship impossible.

It is not that the mere language is so different. The language is not different; it is strikingly alike in both. It is that there is a vast gulf between the tone of the one Epistle and that of the other. WREDE laid most stress upon these two points: (1) First Thessalonians is full of the deepest and most heartfelt sympathy and friendship; Second Thessalonians is much cooler, and, as it were, more official in tone. (2) First Thessalonians seems to

imply a purely Gentile community, while Second Thessalonians shows no trace of Gentile thought, and contains no reference to anything implying Gentile origin, but, on the contrary, has a strongly Jewish colouring, with perhaps a more clearly marked resemblance to the thought and language of the Old Testament than any book in the New Testament, except the Apocalypse.

It is easily seen that the force of this argument lies in its second part. Warmer or colder is a matter of the reader's as well as of the author's mind; and there might be good reasons for the change of temperature of which we have no account. But it is not possible that between the writing of the First and the Second Epistles the community could have changed from Gentile to Jew. WREDE accordingly suggested that 'we ought to regard the Second Epistle as the work of some unknown writer, who found that the Thessalonians were too much imbued with an immediate expectation of the Parousia, and therefore wrote a warning that the Parousia could not come before the Antichrist, of whom, it is implied, no sign had yet been seen, while in order to secure attention for his warning he surrounded it in a mosaic of Pauline phraseology from First Thessalonians, and issued it as an Epistle of St. Paul.'

But now comes Professor HARNACK. Recently to the Berlin Academy Professor HARNACK read a paper on the authenticity of Second Thessalonians. He held it proved by WREDE that the two Epistles could not have been written at the same time by the same man to the same community. But he examined the circumstances of the Church at Thessalonica more carefully than even WREDE had done; and he came to the conclusion that there were two communities in it. There was a Gentile community, to whom the First Epistle was addressed, and there was a Jewish community, to whom the Second was directed.

The evidence is not very evident, but Professor HARNACK is at his best in finding and using it.

In the first place, he notices that St. Paul adjures the recipients of the First Epistle to see that it is read by all the Christians. In the immediately preceding verse there seems to be a similar emphasis on the idea of *all* the brethren. It appears, therefore, to Professor HARNACK that St. Paul was aware of a division at Thessalonica which justified the fear that his letter would not be read to all the community unless he insisted on it. Now the First Epistle was addressed to Gentile Christians; who could the minority be whom he wished to reach if not Jewish Christians? But the Jewish Christians would not be satisfied with the first epistle, in which there was nothing that could be particularly agreeable to them. Therefore, immediately after the first, the Apostle dispatched a second epistle for the special benefit of the Jewish Christians.

There is another small item of evidence. In 2 Thess. 2¹³ St. Paul says: 'We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning unto salvation.' But that is only one rendering of a doubtful word. The textual evidence is about equally balanced between 'from the beginning' (*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*), and 'as a first-fruit' (*ἀπαρχήν*).

But how could the Thessalonians be regarded as a first-fruit? The expression does not seem true to history in any sense, for neither were they St. Paul's earliest converts nor even were they the first in Macedonia. Interpreters have accordingly preferred to see a reference to predestination in the passage. But if Professor HARNACK's suggestion is followed, the matter appears in a new light. For the Jewish Christians in Thessalonica were, according to the Acts, the first-fruits of St. Paul's preaching in that city, though they were soon surpassed in numbers by the Gentile converts.

Professor HARNACK's theory is open to some objections. He himself admits it. Nevertheless to Professor LAKE it seems to be far more accept-

able than any other which has yet been put forward. And 'whereas before its publication the balance of argument seemed to be in favour of some such hypothesis as that of WREDE, and against the authenticity of Second Thessalonians, the situation is now reversed, and there is sufficient justification for accepting the Epistle as a genuine document belonging, together with First Thessalonians, even if not so certainly, to the earliest period of Christian life in Thessalonica.'

We have said that the discussion of the authenticity of Second Thessalonians is characteristic of Professor Kirsopp LAKE's book on *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*. But that discussion is chiefly literary. Now there is another element in the book, which to the author himself is more than all the literary discussions in it. And it is, in any case, so important and so significant of the change that has passed over the study of the New Testament, that we may say something about it.

In the Preface to his book Professor LAKE tells us that two main types of problems have been attacked in it. In the first place, an effort has been made to deal with those literary and critical questions which concern the integrity, destination, and history of the Epistles. It is of that we have seen an example. But in the second place, attention has been given to the world of religious thought to which the earliest Gentile Christians belonged—the world of the Hellenistic Mystery Religions.

This, says Professor LAKE, is a much more difficult inquiry than the other, but it is also much more important. He charges students of the New Testament with having been somewhat slow to grasp its importance, or to make use of the rich material which has been provided by classical and archæological scholars, such as CUMONT and REITZENSTEIN. 'Nevertheless I have no fear but that the immediate future will make good the remissness of the past. The study of the religious

life of the Græco-Roman world as a whole is now fully recognised to be absolutely necessary if we do not wish our notions about early Christianity to be a mere caricature of the truth.'

These words are very weighty. And to the present writer they are very grateful. For it is some years since he saw the necessity of full and sympathetic study of the religions of the world (not of Greece and Rome only, but also of the East, and even of the most primitive tribes), if the study of the New Testament was to retain its freshness and go forward. It was on that account that he projected THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS, of which the fourth volume is about to be issued.

And it is not only the study of Religion that is necessary. The study of Psychology and of Ethics is scarcely less necessary. On this also Professor LAKE has a word to say. 'There is one subsidiary point to which I have drawn attention in more than one chapter, and desire to emphasize once more,—the psychological aspect of religion. To understand the history of religions, we must understand the psychology of religious men. I have endeavoured in the following pages to use what knowledge of psychology I possess, but I am confident that this method ought to be extended far more widely. The difficulty is due to our ignorance of co-ordinated facts, and this again is partly caused by the unnatural limitation of the modern study of theology.'

'We desire'—let the last words of this memorable Preface be quoted also—'We desire,' says Professor LAKE, 'to arrive at an intelligent understanding of religion; we grow old and weary in the study of texts and inscriptions, and we do well, for they have much to teach us; but we forget that religion is to be found in men, not in manuscripts, and we need to take a lesson from our brothers the doctors. They are the students of the body, as we are of the soul; they make the centre of their work the study of the body as it is

found here and now, and their use of the books of past generations is always subsidiary to that study. It is the fatal mistake of the theologian to think that he can do otherwise, and understand the soul from the study of ancient books. Our great need at present is the study of the living soul, and I venture to say this, because it is, among other more important things, very necessary for the study of those Epistles on which I am writing.'

It has happened to few men to be both so over-rated and so underrated as Dr. William Porcher DuBOSE has been. The reason is not far to seek. His style of writing is very difficult. He has written many books. Those who have read them are glad to hope that they have not spent their labour in vain. Those who have not taken the trouble to read them are easily persuaded that it is not worth the trouble.

His latest book is *The Reason of Life* (Longmans; 5s. net). It is not an attractive title. And it is not an attractive book. For the greater part it moves along the verses of the first chapter of the Fourth Gospel. But it moves at will, and its movements are often unexpected. No doubt it would be difficult for any man to give us a philosophy of life, after the straitest sect of the modernists, and yet cleave close to the prologue of St. John's Gospel. But few men could make it so difficult as does Dr. DuBOSE.

In the end of the book he has left St. John's Gospel, and become easier to follow. The last chapter has the very familiar title of 'Theology and Ethics.' It discusses a phrase which is also very familiar now, the cry 'Back to Christ.' And the discussion of that phrase brings out a serious mistake which popular theology has fallen into, and at the same time shows Dr. DuBOSE in his most acceptable manner.

Dr. DuBOSE does not claim that he has made a discovery. A discovery has been made, but it

belongs to another. Quite frankly he says that his final chapter 'is based upon a recent work, *The Ethics of St. Paul*, by Archibald B. D. ALEXANDER M.A. (Glasgow).' 'With that work as a whole,' he adds, 'as the best and completest exposition I know of the ethical teaching and system of St. Paul, I am in entire accord. Now, however, I desire to lay even additional emphasis upon a particular point, which the author himself makes much of.'

This is the point. In his Preface Mr. ALEXANDER quotes the saying from somebody, that 'for many thinkers St. Paul is as obsolete as Tertullian or Calvin.' Dr. DUBOSE quotes it after him, and does not deny it. The reason of it, he says, is that the theology which these 'many thinkers' attribute to St. Paul is not St. Paul's. In what respect is it not St. Paul's? It is unethical and even immoral. St. Paul's theology is an insistent demand for personal righteousness at every step.

You will find, says Dr. DUBOSE, a statement of the true ethical Paulinism in Mr. ALEXANDER'S *Ethics of St. Paul*. You will find a statement of the popular doctrinal—unethical and therefore un-Pauline—Paulinism in the late Professor WREDE'S *Paulus*. Dr. DUBOSE has read the *Paulus*. What he has to say about it is based on a knowledge of the whole of it. And what he has to say is this. WREDE finds St. Paul in complete contradiction to Jesus. 'The preaching of Jesus is direct and imperative: man is to submit his soul to God's will without reserve: the condition of his salvation is obedience: it is simply a matter of personal (human) decision.' But 'the central point with Paul is a divine action (or complex of actions, the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of a divine being), which opens to mankind a salvation prepared for man: he who believes these divine acts can obtain salvation.'

So WREDE. Dr. DUBOSE says that WREDE has made two mistakes. First, he has taken the work of the Pauline Christ as the work of an entirely and

exclusively celestial, superhuman, or divine person. And, next, he has assumed that the acts of Christ are represented by St. Paul as in no proper sense our own acts, but acts that are done for us by one who remains external to us.

Now Dr. DUBOSE is prepared to assert that even the Incarnation is never represented as exclusively a divine act. 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' That is true. It is also true that the flesh accepted the Word. If humanity had not willed that the Word should become flesh, if man had not in the exercise of the freedom of his will, opened his humanity to the indwelling of God, then Dr. DUBOSE is prepared to say that God would not and could not have become man. He is prepared to say that that is the theology of St. Paul.

The Rev. J. G. SIMPSON, D.D., Canon and Precentor of St. Paul's, has published a volume of sermons to which he has given the title of *The Spirit and the Bride* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s.). It is the third volume of sermons which Canon SIMPSON has published. And in the Introduction to this volume he draws our attention to the fact that the three volumes are related to one another.

For in the apprehension of Jesus as Lord, there are, he says, three stages. These stages correspond roughly to the knowledge of Christ gained by the Apostles during His earthly ministry, to their realization of the significance of the Passion, and to their experience of the Pentecostal life. The three volumes accordingly follow the order of these three stages. The first volume deals chiefly with our Lord's character and teaching. The sermons in the second volume are almost entirely occupied with His redemptive work, consummated on the Cross. The volume just published begins with Christ's exaltation, touches the coming of the Spirit, glances at the Church and the Sacraments, and then is mainly given up to an account of the Christian life and the Christian witness.

This manner of preaching is not new. But it seems as if for some time it had been forgotten. It is only within the last year or two that one has observed a tendency to return to it. The most unmistakable example of it, and it is a striking one, is Dr. MACGREGOR'S first volume in the 'Scholar as Preacher' series, *Jesus the Son of God*. In that volume every sermon can be read by itself with no uncomfortable feeling that it is not complete. But it is only when the whole volume is read that the full value of each separate sermon is obtained. So also with Dr. SIMPSON'S volumes, though perhaps not quite so impressively. Here also we realize the advantage which the regular hearer has over the occasional, and how easy it is to receive from the pulpit systematic instruction in doctrine and life without the sacrifice of expectation or the interest which attaches to the unknown.

Canon SIMPSON follows the three stages of approach to God. Every man who calls Jesus Lord has come to Him at one or other of those three stages in His ministry. He has been attracted by the beauty of Christ's character. Or he has been arrested by the conviction of sin and found peace, like Bunyan's Christian, at the foot of the Cross. Or he has recognized the presence of the Spirit, and the power the Spirit gives for righteousness, whether in his own life or in the life of the Christian community around him.

At the present time Canon SIMPSON thinks that men are most attracted by the character and words of the human Jesus. It is characteristic of the present age, he says, with its remarkable appreciation of social problems and its yearnings for an ethical ideal and an inspiration of human brotherhood, to 'come and see' in the spirit of the enthusiastic Peter, or the guileless Nathanael, whether this be indeed the Messiah. Fresh from the annual gathering at Swanwick, organized by the Student Christian Movement, he sees clearly enough that it is on this side that the most eager approach is made to Christ by young men in our

day. But these annual gatherings have impressed him with another thing.

The men who are drawn to Christ in this way are never quite content. They rarely fail to see that in the Gospels, as well as in the Epistles, the chief emphasis is laid not upon Christ's character but upon His work, not upon what He was but upon what He did. And they often realize, with something like consternation, that it is the work Christ came to do, and did, that has given Him His unique place in the world, His unique power over the heart and conscience. To put this in the language of modern theological inquiry, they are seeking for the true connecting link between the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience.

Canon SIMPSON is entirely in sympathy with this uneasiness. He recognizes the power of that discipleship to which Jesus is presented as a heroic, prophetic, and withal intensely human personality. But at the same time he recognizes its inadequacy to effect that incorporation into the very spirit and life of Christ which is the characteristic experience of the Christian. For it is not enough that Christ should be an illustration in history, He must be a Divine presence in whom we live and move and have our being. Where is the link to be found that will unite the human Jesus with the Divine Christ? 'We claim,' says Canon SIMPSON, 'that the true and only link is provided for us in the interpretation which the New Testament sets upon the Passion.'

For it is not enough that Christ should simply show forth the beauty of His own character. That would be no explanation of His life. It would be no explanation of the life of any one. Men do not act in order to reveal themselves. They do not act in their social relations merely or even primarily to manifest their love. This they inevitably do, their actions being simply accepted as pledges of what they themselves are. They act for the purpose of accomplishing something. They act with some end in view. One man is a teacher,

another writes books on science, or history, or philosophy, a third is a social reformer. Each man has come to do something. What he does no doubt reveals his character, but what we ask about him is, What did he come to do, and what has he done?

That is what we ask about Christ. He Himself encouraged us. His final answer to every question about Himself was this, that 'the Son of man came to give his life a ransom.' Canon SIMPSON is right when he says: 'It is entirely false to the proportions alike of the Synoptic Gospels and of St. John to regard the Crucifixion as other than the climax of the whole story, the goal of all the efforts of the Son of Man.'

Of St. John, says Canon SIMPSON, as well as of the Synoptics. And, as if in answer to an objection, he selects the Fourth Gospel for the purpose of proving the centrality of the Cross as the triumphant achievement of the life of Christ, although he says it might be freely illustrated from every book of the New Testament. He selects the Fourth Gospel because there seems to be a tendency to miss the real scope and purpose of that great writing. People talk as though the object of this 'story of a disciple's faith' were merely to select such episodes in the evangelical story as in his judgment made it unmistakably clear that Jesus was the only begotten God, and that in consequence a series of seven works of power were chosen as illustrations of this one theme. It is even argued that a gospel the very purpose of which was to emphasize, in opposition to gnostic heresy, the reality of the Incarnation, and in which the thirst, the tears, the affections, the wistfulness, the mortality of Jesus, are all conspicuous, allows the humanity almost to disappear in contemplation of the Godhead. 'So far is this from being the case that, as at least it seems to me, there is no ground for supposing that the Fourth Gospel ever separates the idea of the manifestation of God in Christ from the redeeming work of the Son of man. This becomes still more

evident when the gospel is read in the light of the First Epistle.'

But there are two things quite easily apprehended and sufficient of themselves to keep us right regarding the scope of the Fourth Gospel. The first thing is its Prologue.

How much does the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel cover? It covers, says Dr. SIMPSON, not less than the first eighteen verses. It will not do, therefore, to say that the thesis of the Gospel is the statement that the Word became flesh and we beheld His glory, and thereupon conclude that the writer intended simply to reveal the Divine character of Christ. For observe that the glory is the glory of grace and truth. It is the glory of grace as well as the glory of truth. Now in the Fourth Gospel, as in St. Paul, grace is related to the redeeming work. 'He came unto his own home, and his own people received him not.' Here is His rejection; here is His cross. It is all included in the Incarnation. The writer now turns and looks at the same series of events as a Divine activity, wrought out on behalf of believers. As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God. Here is the recovered status of 'them that believe on his name.' It is exactly what St. Paul means by 'the grace wherein we stand through faith in Jesus.' Then this recovered Sonship is seen to involve a new birth. It is 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,' a condition which is intimately related in the First Epistle to the propitiation for sins. It is only when all this has been said that we reach the declaration 'the Word became flesh.'

The other thing is the writer's own experience. There is a thread of personal experience, says Canon SIMPSON, which is not always noticed, but which nevertheless binds together and gives unity to the successive episodes which the writer chooses in order to illustrate his theme. The words of the Baptist, uttered in the hearing of 'two of his

disciples,' may be regarded as the text of the gospel: 'Behold the Lamb of God.' The note of this utterance is struck again and again throughout the book. If it is not present in the story of the marriage at Cana, it is prominent in that of the cleansing of the Temple. It meets us in the conversation with Nicodemus, when we read of the Brazen Serpent, with its commentary, 'God so loved the world.' The thought is present in Christ's hard saying about His flesh and blood, and in the similitude of the corn of wheat. Caiaphas is described as having 'prophesied that Jesus should die.' It may be assumed that the idea of sacrificial consecration breathes through the narrative of the Upper Room and the Last Discourses. And the two most striking features in this Evangelist's account of the death of Jesus are the emphasis with which he records his conviction of its reality and the unexpected analogy which he draws between the unbroken legs of the dead Christ and the wholeness of the paschal lamb. We seem to hear an echo of the

Baptist's announcement, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!'

And thus Canon SIMPSON concludes that of St. John's Gospel, as indeed of the whole of the New Testament, the main interest is the Cross. And what is the Cross? Is it a redeeming God accomplishing the redemption of men by laying His stripes upon a human victim? No, it is a redeeming God, Himself sacramentally present and accepting every stripe, and in the acceptance of it accomplishing the redemption. Jesus bears His cross, is stretched upon it, receives the vinegar, yields up His spirit. The soldier pierces His side. The body is laid in the tomb. But beneath the outward submission there is a conflict, as final as it is fierce: 'Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.' The Evangelist recalls the familiar passage of Isaiah. He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, but at the same moment He bears the iniquities of His people.

The Sealed Book of the Apocalypse.

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THE great Christian Apocalypse is admittedly one of the most difficult books to interpret; and yet it seems at times as though commentators went out of their way to make it less easy to be understood. The vision which is described in chaps. 4-8¹, gives us the opening act in the drama proper, all that has gone before is of the nature of a prologue. The present general mode of treatment breaks up this vision into a series of disjointed scenes, which do not seem to have any particular connexion with each other, unless we exercise considerable subtlety. Such treatment, of course, favours the current partition theories. With these we have not now to deal, but it seems probable that, even if we accept such theories, the final editor must have had some definite plan in his head, and the interpretation of the whole must depend very considerably upon the meaning that we attach to this first act.

Let us take first, quite briefly, the interpretations which are offered with regard to this vision.

In dealing with the sealed book (*βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν, κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγίδων ἑπτὰ*), it is of no great moment whether it took the form of a codex (as Spitta supposes) or of a papyrus roll. Nor need we go to the Roman legal requirements with regard to the sevenfold sealing of a will (as do Zahn, J. Weiss, Hicks, and others) in order to explain the symbolism. The chief point is that the seals could only be opened by the Lamb.

We are told that the book is 'the book of doom' (Moffatt); that it is a book having for its contents the judgements of God, 'the things which are to be hereafter,' which are successively displayed through the successive opening of the seals (Anderson Scott); that 'it is the book of Destiny' (Swete); and so forth. There is a similar unanimity