

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE are not many things more puzzling in the New Testament than the holy kiss. It is a feature of the early Christian gatherings. It belongs especially to the gatherings for the celebration of the Eucharist. But what was the origin of it? And what did it mean?

There is no parallel in the Old Testament. There is no parallel in Gentile custom or literature. In the narrative of the woman who was a sinner, Jesus said to the Pharisee who invited Him to dinner, 'Thou gavest me no kiss.' That also is puzzling. It gives no assistance in explaining the kiss of love. It needs explanation itself. For there is no record anywhere that it was a custom for the Jewish host courteously to kiss his guests as they came.

The Jews said there were three kinds of kiss. To account for Jacob's kissing Rachel they added a fourth, the kiss of relationship. But they had no custom which could have suggested to the early Christians the 'kiss of love,' as St. Peter calls it, or the 'holy kiss,' as it is called by St. Paul, when they met together for worship.

Dr. Edwin A. ABBOTT looks into the matter. Dr. ABBOTT has issued another great volume on the interpretation of the Gospels. It is called

The Fourfold Gospel. Section IV.: The Law of the New Kingdom (Cambridge: At the University Press; 12s. 6d. net). Not less than any of the numerous great volumes which have preceded it, this volume is a marvel of minute learning, all brought together to make the Gospels more intelligible. In the course of studying the Miracles of Feeding, Dr. ABBOTT is drawn to the occasion upon which Jesus Himself served at tables, the occasion upon which, during the Last Supper, He girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet. It was an act of love. It was an act, Dr. ABBOTT thinks, of passionate love. And it leads him to consider whether there are other traces in the New Testament of passionate feeling, expressed in passionate words or acts. He is led at once to the holy kiss.

He does not find it in the Gospels. And he does not hint that Jesus Himself either practised or recommended it. He finds it in the Pauline and Petrine epistles. But only in the earliest epistles. For there were risks attaching to it. These risks were recognized by early writers. 'The shameless use of the kiss,' says Clement of Alexandria, 'which ought to be, mystic, occasions foul suspicions and evil reports.' And it may be that St. Paul thought it better to give no further encouragement to the practice when he wrote his later epistles.

But what did it signify, and why did it originate? Dr. ABBOTT has two explanations to give. Both are good, and both may be true.

It was a kiss of relationship, like the kiss which Jacob gave to Rachel. For were they not brethren now, these followers of Jesus? He called them so. 'Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on them which sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' And they certainly recognized their new relationship. When He told them to love *one another*, they accepted the commandment as new and found a word to express the new relationship. This love of brethren—the love of John to Peter, of Simon Zelotes to Judas not Iscariot—*philadelphia* they called it, brotherly-love. And when the writer of 2 Peter threw out his chain of virtues he used this word to form its last two links, saying, 'and to brotherly-love add love.' They knew that where brotherly-love was there might the kiss of love be. And they saluted one another with a holy kiss.

But the other explanation is better. Dr. Edwin ABBOTT has been a painstaking and most erudite student of the Gospels. But he would never have called himself their passionate admirer. He is arrested by this kiss of love. Is it possible, he asks himself, that there is something in the Gospels which I have missed? Is there a power in Christ? Is there an influence which I have not reckoned with or recognized? 'Many believe easily enough in Christ's material miracles who do not realize His spiritual, social, and (so to speak) revolutionary miracles wrought on human nature.' He finds in the holy kiss the high-water mark of a passion of devotion to the person of Christ and then to those that are His, a high-water mark 'reached at one rush by the religion of Christ during the period that followed His death.' Why did they begin to kiss one another? Their answer was, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'

They lost that first love. Grievous wolves entered in, not sparing the flock. Men and women kissed one another not out of spiritual love but out of carnal affection. The custom became a scandal, and had to be discontinued. But it will come again. Dr. ABBOTT believes that it will come again, though in a different way. 'Then it was reached by a visible Presence and an audible Voice. Hereafter the Presence may be not visible, and the Voice not audible, to the bodily sense. But in either case the Spirit will be the same, human yet divine, cosmopolitan yet homely, the Spirit of the Family of God breathed into God's children by God's Son.'

In preparing that great edition of the New Testament in Greek which we know by the name of Westcott and Hort, the editors placed the utmost reliance upon the two manuscripts \aleph and B. When these two manuscripts agreed, their text was adopted. Once only did they agree and yet were set aside. It was in their spelling of the last word of James 1¹⁷. As Hort expressed it, that was their 'solitary blunder.' It has just been shown, on excellent authority, that it is no blunder, but the correct text.

According to the Authorized Version this is the verse: 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' How does the ordinary reader understand that? He is a little puzzled with the repetition of the word 'gift.' He does not see clearly why the gift should be called first 'good' and then 'perfect.' 'The Father of lights' is an expression with which he is not familiar, and he is not quite sure that he understands it. And the meaning of 'shadow of turning' at the end of the verse he takes to be 'the least trace of changing,' or else it is altogether hidden from him. Still he thinks he understands what St. James in his own way wishes to say. God, who is the giver of all the blessings of life, may be trusted to give them

throughout life, because it is not in His nature to change.

Then comes the little knowledge which is a distressing thing. Turning to the Revised Version the reader finds that there are two kinds of gift, for now he reads, 'Every good gift and every perfect boon.' He finds that 'variableness,' though it seems a better word for the character of God, is not so correct a translation as 'variation.' And he finds that he was all wrong in taking 'shadow of turning' to mean the least trace of changing. For the Revised Version has 'shadow that is cast by turning.'

The ordinary English reader is not alone in thinking that 'shadow of turning' means small amount of turning. That is how the Old Latin understood it (*modicum obumbrationis*); and not only the Old Latin versions, but also several of the early Greek commentators, and even a few modern translators, including the Authorized translators themselves. But it will not do. The Greek word never occurs in that sense.

The meaning of the whole verse is given by Alford (as he understands it) with his usual clearness: 'Every good gift (properly, *act of giving*) and every perfect gift (properly, *thing given*; but we cannot express the two by two words in English) descendeth from above, from the Father of the lights (it seems now generally agreed that by the lights here is meant the *heavenly bodies*, and by Father the creator, originator, as in Job xxxviii. 28, "*Who is the father of the rain?*" Being this, being the Father of those glorious fountains of light, and thus purer and clearer than they all, it cannot be that He should tempt to evil. Our very life, as renewed in Christ, is of His begetting, and we are a firstfruit of His new world), with ("*chez,*" in the presence of) whom there is no change (none of that uncertainty of degree of light which we see in the material heavenly bodies, but which is not in God their Creator) or shadow (*a shadow*, the dark mark of shadow, the result of being over-

shadowed, and cast from any object) of turning (arising from turning—from that *revolution* in which the heavens are ever found: by means of which the moon turns her dark side to us, in a constant state of *change, and shadow of turning*: by means of which the moon is eclipsed by the shadow of the earth, and the sun by the body of the moon, or, if you will, though this is hardly so likely to have been in view, is hidden from us during the night. From all these God, the Father of lights, is free; as 1 John i. 5, "*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*").'

Alford says that we have not English words with which to distinguish the act of giving from the thing given. And immediately after he had said it, the Revisers declared that we have, and offered 'gift' and 'boon.' But Alford was right. A gift is a boon and a boon is a gift; and these two words do not carry us the very least way towards the true distinction. Listen to Plumptre: 'The two nouns are different in the Greek, the first expressing the abstract act of giving, the second the gift as actually bestowed. The perfection of the one flows from the goodness of the other. The "perfect gift" carries our thoughts beyond all temporal blessings which, though good, have yet an element of incompleteness, to the greater gifts of righteousness and peace and joy; the gift, *i.e.* of the Holy Spirit, which is the crowning gift of all.'

No doubt that runs in the direction of homiletics. But the distinction is there. Hort also insists upon it; and in the adjectives he finds that while 'good' expresses 'the character of the gifts, derived from the Giver, "perfect" expresses the completeness of their operation when they are not misused.' Huther warns us against understanding by the one the gifts of nature or the present life and by the other the gifts of grace or the future life.

It is now generally agreed, says Alford, that 'the lights' (observe the *the*) are the heavenly bodies.

That is so. Yet Plumptre thinks otherwise. 'The plural' ('lights'), he says, 'is used to express the thought that light in all its forms, natural (as in the "great lights" of Ps. cxxxvi. 7), intellectual, spiritual, is an efflux from Him "who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all."' And Hort agrees to this extent that while he believes St. James calls God the Father (that is, the Creator) of the luminaries of the sky, he used such a word as would include all lights, and that invisible as well as visible. Then Knowling believes that 'St. James would not only remind his readers that if the lights of heaven, sun, moon, and stars brought such blessing to men, how much more He who made them; but he would again enforce the truth that if God was the source of all light, then we cannot refer sin to Him, the darkness which blinds the eyes of the soul and of the understanding.'

But all this is introductory. The difficulty of the verse is in the end of it: 'with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning,' as the Revised Version has it.

What is the 'shadow that is cast by turning'? What is it that turns? 'In considering the phrase,' says Bennett, 'we must, of course, dismiss from our minds our modern knowledge of astronomy, e.g. of the revolution of the earth on its axis, and its motion through an orbit round the sun. "Shadow cast by turning" could only mean to the readers the darkness in which the earth is plunged by the diurnal revolution or "turning" of the sun and moon round the earth—a special instance of "variation."'

Beyond that none of the commentators have been able to go. The older men took it more astronomically than the modern see their way to. Bishop JEBB's translation is 'with whom there is no parallax or tropical shadow.' And this is Doddridge's paraphrase: 'The sun itself is but a feeble image of His glory, *with whom there is no variableness, nor so much as any shadow of turning*; whereas the sun is continually varying,

and has no sooner arrived to its meridian, but it begins to descend to the west; or to its summer height, but it verges towards the winter again; causing the direction of the shadows it occasions proportionably to vary.'

This again is a trifle homiletical. Worse than that, it gives a precise sense to a word which was used quite generally. Mayor's paraphrase is very different. The meaning of the passage he takes to be: 'God is alike incapable of change in His own nature and incapable of being changed by the action of others.' And now we come to the discovery.

We have already seen that when Hort wrote his great Introduction in defence of his two choice manuscripts, he found that in one place only did they agree to go wrong, and that place is our verse. How did they go wrong? They gave the last word in the genitive (*ἀποσκίασματος*) instead of the nominative (*ἀποσκίασμα*). Hort had various ingenious conjectures to account for the blunder, which do not concern us now. For it is no blunder.

A new volume has just appeared of the 'International Critical Commentary.' It is the volume on *The Epistle of St. James* (T. & T. Clark; 9s. net). The editor is Dr. James Hardy Ropes, Hollis Professor of Divinity in Harvard University. In issuing his commentary Professor Hardy Ropes acknowledges that 'it draws frankly from its predecessors, just as these in their turn used materials quarried by earlier scholars, whom they do not name on each occasion. The right to do this is won by conscientious effort in sifting previous collections and reproducing only what is trustworthy, apt, and instructive for the understanding of the text. If new illustrations or evidence can be added, that is so much to the good.' But he immediately adds: 'So far as I am aware, the solution I have given of the textual problem of 1¹⁷, the "shadow of turning," is strictly new.'

In what respect is it new? It is new in this that it takes the alternative conjunction (η) as the definite article (η), and keeps the last word in the genitive. This does not give a different sense. Of that there was no need. The translation is: 'with whom is none of the variation that belongs to (consists in, is observed in) the turning of the shadow.' But it vindicates the judgment of Westcott and Hort in their reliance upon \aleph and B, and that in the most agreeable and conclusive manner.

The Gospels are biographies of the Christ. Do they include any autobiography? The Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, believes that they do. Dr. MURRAY has published a volume of *Studies in the Temptation of the Son of God* (Longmans; 2s. net). He believes that the narratives of the Temptation in the Wilderness are genuine bits of autobiography.

Dr. MURRAY does not look upon the temptations as outwardly historical events. The scenes depicted are scenes in a spiritual experience. No doubt, he says, the Lord was for a time actually in the wilderness. 'But there is no need to assume that Satan appeared to Him in a visible form; or that He was miraculously transported to stand in the flesh on the pinnacle of the Temple; or that there is any mountain on the surface of the globe from which it would be possible for human eyes to gaze on all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.'

Even if the temptations had occurred outwardly as they are recorded, the account of them must have come from Christ Himself. There was no other there to witness them. Dr. MURRAY sees 'no reason to suppose that the early Christian Church possessed sufficient imaginative power to create such a story for itself, or would have chosen such a theme for its exercise had it possessed the power.'

But it is particularly agreeable to the synoptic

portrait to believe that He Himself threw His spiritual experiences into this outward shape. It is but a vivid example of the parabolic form of teaching. And Dr. MURRAY has no hesitation in understanding that the narratives of the Temptation contained in the First and Third Gospels both rest ultimately on accurate recollections of teaching actually given by our Lord Himself to His disciples.

They both rest on His own teaching. And yet they differ. They differ not a little in their language. And they differ in the order of the temptations, a difference that is extremely puzzling.

Dr. MURRAY follows St. Matthew's order. So do most expositors and preachers. But he is strongly drawn to the order of St. Luke. With Westcott he regards the Temptations in St. Luke's arrangement as 'exhibiting the stages of growing intensity in the trial, piercing deeper and deeper into the hidden world of personality within. The first assault came through the channel of the physical need of the body; the second was an appeal to human ambition through the imagination and feeling; the third was a temptation to spiritual presumption. They affect in turn our relation to ourselves, to the world, and to God.'

He might have added, had he observed it, that in appealing first to the appetites of the body, next to the desires of the imagination and emotions, and finally to the call of spiritual presumption, St. Luke's order of the temptations has a striking resemblance to the temptations of Eve. Eve saw that the tree was good for food; she saw that it was pleasant to the eyes; and she saw that it was a tree to be desired to make one wise. No doubt this agreement might be represented as intentional. St. Luke or the oral tradition he incorporated may have deliberately brought the temptations of the Son of Man into line with the temptations of the mother of us all. But the argument is just as strong the other way. It is

just as easy to say that the temptations did occur in St. Luke's order, or that they were related by our Lord in that order, so that no temptation to which the human race is liable might be omitted from the experience of Him who came to redeem it.

Even without observing the coincidence with Eve's temptations, Dr. MURRAY is so impressed with the suggestiveness of St. Luke's order that he believes our Lord told the story of the Temptation more than once, and that at one time He gave the order as we have it in St. Matthew's Gospel, at another as we find it in St. Luke's. For he cannot accept 'accidents' in the composition of the Gospels. 'They have meant so much for the life of the Church in the past, and must mean so much for the Church in every age, that what we are inclined to call "accidents" in their composition must still have been subject to a Divine overruling.' And he finds 'nothing improbable in the supposition that the Lord Himself must again and again have repeated the lesson to His disciples, varying the form in accordance with the special aspect of the experience which He wished to illustrate. If so, there is nothing extravagant in the suggestion that two of these forms have been preserved for our learning, to enable us to realize the many-sidedness, and the essentially spiritual character of the incident described.'

Can we do anything to prepare for the work that lies before us when the war is over? Can we do anything to prepare our people? Can we do anything to prepare ourselves?

A writer in the *Church Times* for 17th and 24th March thinks we can. He does not give his name. But he has spent many months, he says, with men of both the Old Army and the New, all of whom have been at the Front. 'The men belong to almost every rank of society and every regiment in the British Army; they include the

old Regular, the Territorial, and the men from Kitchener's Armies. They are of every age, from the recruit who, in his zeal to serve King and Country, has added a year or two to those he can legitimately claim, to the veteran who, for similar reasons, has doctored his tale of years of perhaps some four or five.' And he has come to some conclusions about them.

The chief conclusion is that their religious education has been neglected. The secular education of some of them has also been neglected. He has come across men who find it difficult to write. Others have been well educated secularly, for they are of all ranks and professions. But the religious education of nearly all of them is an amazingly poor thing.

It is so poor that he has had to be careful with his questions. For example, it is very unwise, he says, to ask a man whether he is a communicant, as you may receive the startling reply, 'No, sir! Church of England.' Nor is it always safe to inquire as to whether they are confirmed, as, after some hesitation, you get some such answer as this: 'Well, sir, only two or three times!'

Their ignorance of Christian doctrine is as amazing as their ignorance of Church order. 'Again and again men will tell you what admirable lives they have led, especially if they can proudly claim the virtue of teetotalism; and if to this be added the heroic virtue of non-smoking, it is sometimes not very easy to find any point of approach; very commonly they summarize the whole situation by saying: "Well, sir, I never done anybody any 'arm in my life," and, hard as it is to believe, they are probably more or less sincere in this conviction.'

It may well be asked, says this anonymous and indignant writer, What sort of religion will these men demand when they return from the war? His answer is that 'in most cases they will demand something very different from that to

which they have been accustomed. They are frequently tired of the type of sermon which they have heard again and again and are perfectly willing to criticize. As one man said to me, "We do not want to be told to be good, what we do want is to be told how to be good." The sermon which takes the form of a second-rate literary essay with strong ethical tendencies is as useless as it is boring to men of this kind; what they crave for is systematic instruction, and it is this which the clergy either cannot or will not give them.'

He therefore proposes that, first of all, we should endeavour to teach them to pray. The Morning and Evening Prayer will not satisfy them. He is quite sure of that. Morning and Evening Prayer may be admirable exercises for those who know how to pray, but they do not know. 'A man said to me not long ago, "When I go to church on Sunday evening, I notice that the people kneel down before the service: I suppose they are saying their prayers. I should like to do the same, but I do not know what to say."'

In the second place he suggests that in our preaching and in the lessons that we read we should make a clear distinction between the Old

Testament and the New. Hitherto he thinks we have made so little distinction that the men themselves make none. 'They believe that a literal acceptance of the Old Testament is an integral part of Christianity, and many of them are seriously affected by such grave problems as the difficulty of Cain's wife and cognate questions.'

He believes and he hopes that when the war is over and the men return they will demand a change, and with no uncertain voice. They will demand that 'the Old Testament should be put in its proper place, that the truths of redemption and the scheme of salvation as it is to be found in the Catholic Church should be substituted for outlines of Jewish history and tables of Israelitish kings, that their children from their earliest youth should be brought into touch with the supernatural by being present, week by week, at the Holy Eucharist, that they should be definitely and thoroughly instructed in the sacramental system as a whole, that they should be transported into that broader world which Christ opened up to all believers and in which the holy dead find place and the blessed saints are not forgotten. Perhaps they will ask for these things, perhaps they will not, but of one thing I have little doubt: that if they be offered them, they will not refuse them.'

The Mysticism of Greece.

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I.

THE mysticism of Greece may be studied broadly under two different aspects. On the one hand, we may investigate archæologically various kinds of mystic worship, notably the rites established at Eleusis in Attica, the cult of Dionysus, the beliefs and ritual of the communities called Orphic and Pythagorean, and several forms of ecstatic religion prevailing in the later Græco-Roman world, and associated with the names of more Oriental deities

known as the Great Mother, Isis, Mithra, and others. Or, again, we may trace in great authors and thinkers the effect of the doctrines promulgated in mystic societies. The highest importance is to be assigned to this part of the subject. We cannot tell to what extent Plato, Pindar, Euripides, and Plotinus may have taken part in ceremonies requiring initiation; such scraps of evidence as we have (*e.g.*, Porphyrius, *Vit. Plot.* 10) indicate that they