

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

NOTHING that we have ever published has been so favourably received and so often reprinted in other journals as the two articles by the Rev. Thomas Adamson, B.D., on 'The Spirit of Power.' Now we are glad to say, in answer to many correspondents, that Mr. Adamson has revised these articles and sent them to press for separate publication. By the time this issue is in our readers' hands, the little book should be ready.

Those who have read the articles know that they touch the central doctrine of living Christianity at its very source. Wild theories of the Spirit's presence and power are generally due to wild exegesis of the opening chapters of the Acts. Mr. Adamson has examined these chapters. His examination seems to us to be thorough and reliable. From the positions he establishes it is possible to go forward, framing a full doctrine of the Spirit, living a far fuller life in the Spirit. Messrs. T. & T. Clark have undertaken to publish the little book in a form and a price which will make it suitable for a New Year present. We have no higher wish for our friends than that they should begin the new year in the possession of the Spirit of Power.

In his new Commentary on St. Luke, Dr. Plummer has made a discovery. We are suspicious of
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new discoveries in the Gospels. But this is a genuine discovery, a discovery of great importance, a discovery that will stand. Dr. Plummer has discovered that a most valuable assistance to the interpretation of the Gospels has been lying to everyone's hand, and no one has dreamt of using it.

The best discoveries of modern days are rediscoveries of things that were known long ago. Long ago—well, as long ago as 1847—a quarto volume was published by subscription in Dundee. It was described on its title-page in black and red letters, 'A Collation of the Sacred Scriptures.' The author was Charles Roger. In that quarto volume Mr. Roger, who introduced himself to his readers as the 'Author of the Genealogical and Historical Trees of the Kings of Scotland,' stated that in the year 1812 he had accidentally fallen in with the translation of the Bible printed in 1549, and 'was struck forcibly with the variation from the present Authorized Version.' Thereupon 'I soon procured more of the translations, and generally found, where a passage in the one was dark, some of the other versions served to explain it; and, upon reflexion, it occurred to me that collating the different translations was better than trusting to one individual, however well he might understand the Hebrew tongue, as it is generally admitted

that the Hebrew idiom admits of being translated into English by a number of words very different in their signification.'

Mr. Roger seems to speak as if the Authorized Version had been made by 'one individual,' and as if the whole Bible had been written in Hebrew. But what he did is better than what he says. For he gathered the difficult verses throughout the Bible, and across his broad page he printed a variety of translations of each.

This is the discovery which Dr. Plummer has rediscovered. And he has greatly improved upon it. For he has a greater variety of versions at his call, and a different scholarship at his command. So when Dr. Plummer reaches the difficult passages in the Gospel according to St. Luke, he is not content to give the Latin renderings of the difficult words he finds there, but adds the far more interesting and far more important renderings of the different English versions.

At the office of the *Christian Commonwealth*, Dr. Maclaren, of Manchester, has published a new volume of sermons under the title of *Triumphant Certainties*. The title of the volume is the title of the first three sermons that are found in it. And the texts of these three sermons, it is scarcely necessary to say, are taken from the First Epistle of St. John. 'John closes his letter with a series of triumphant certainties, which he considers as certified to every Christian by his own experience, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not"; "We know that we are of God"; and "We know that the Son of God is come."' These three certainties are found in the fifth chapter of the Epistle, the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth verses.

Of the three triumphant certainties with which John closes his Epistle, the third is a mere commonplace amongst us now, 'We know that the Son of God is come.' The second, 'We know

that we are of God,' is openly unchallenged if we avow it, though it may be secretly disallowed. The first, that 'Whosoever is born of God sinneth not,' is unhesitatingly and well-nigh universally denied—or, at the least, and in Dr. Maclaren's gentle language, it is 'laid up upon the shelf where the unintelligible things are getting covered over with dust.'

But Dr. Maclaren thinks that this first certainty may be made intelligible, and then triumphantly ours. So he gives the first sermon of his new volume to explain it, asking and answering three plain questions as he goes. First of all he asks the question, Of whom is the apostle speaking here? And after pointing out that the Revised Version reads more accurately, 'whosoever is *begotten* of God,' he answers the question by recalling the conversation which Jesus held with Nicodemus, and which John has himself recorded. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' There is the root of all that this epistle is full of. It is the conception of a regeneration, a being born again. To the man who was groping in the midst of mere legal conceptions of righteousness, the work of his own hands, Jesus laid down this principle—there must be the entrance into every human nature of a new life before there is any vision, any possession of, any entrance into that region in which the will of God is King. It is of him who has received this new life in him that John says, 'he sinneth not.' Thus far Dr. Maclaren very plainly, and we surely all agree with him.

We agree with him also when he adds that this new life 'is mediated and received by us through our faith.' Remember the prologue of the Gospel, he says, where, as a great musician will hint all his subsequent themes in his overture, John gathers up in one all the main threads and points of his teaching. There he says, 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' Long years afterwards (the note of time is Dr. Maclaren's own), when an old man

in Ephesus, he writes down in this last chapter of his First Epistle the same truth which he there set blazing in the forefront of his Gospel, when he says, in the very first verse of the chapter, 'Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.' On condition, then, of a man's faith in Jesus Christ, there is communicated to him a new life direct from God, kindred with the Divine; and this new life dwells in him and works in him precisely in the measure of his personal faith. That is Dr. Maclaren's position, and with that we all agree.

Then Dr. Maclaren proceeds to his third point. He says that the new divine life which is the result of this new birth exists along with the old nature, which it has to coerce and subdue, sometimes to crucify, and always to govern. For the divine life, like the physical life, has to pass through stages. It has its infancy, youth, and manhood. It has to grow, fighting its way as it grows, till the old nature in which it is planted is purged and hallowed. And this growth demands effort, strenuous and continuous diligence, that the new life may itself grow stronger, its antagonist weaker. Whereupon "there may be indefinite approximation to the entire suppression or sanctification of the old man; and whatsoever is born of God manifests its divine kindred in this, that sooner or later it overcomes the world."

But Dr. Maclaren sees very well that 'sooner or later' will not do. 'Whosoever *is begotten of God* sinneth not,'—it is not 'whosoever has been begotten of God these many years.' 'Whosoever is begotten of God *sinneth* not,'—it is not, whosoever is begotten of God will not sin in the long indefinite future. Therefore Dr. Maclaren repeats his question, 'Of whom is the apostle speaking here?' and, being ready for it now, gives a short and unmistakable answer. It is not the whole man who is begotten of God that sinneth not. It is the man in so far as he is so begotten; in so far, that is to say, as the divine life has its abode within him and asserts itself in his life. It is the divine life itself indeed, of which he is the recipient,

for in another part of this same chapter the apostle substitutes '*whatsoever*' for '*whosoever*,' as if he would have us mark that the thing which he declares to be victorious and sinless is not so much the person as the power that is lodged in the person. That is Dr. Maclaren's answer to his first question.

And if that answer will stand, the other two questions are easily asked and answered. The one is, 'What is asserted about this divine life?' And its answer is, that it sins not. Whereupon it is seen that sin is sin, and needs no exegesis of the apologetic sort to make it acceptable. When it is said that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, it is precisely the same kind of sin that is meant as when it is said in the verse that almost immediately precedes this, 'If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death.' That question is easily asked and answered. And the other just as easily, What is the ground of John's assertion about him that is born of God? Our Authorized Version answers, Because 'he that is begotten of God keepeth himself.' But the Revised Version gives a very different and the only possible answer: because 'He that is begotten of God keepeth him.' Observe the capital letter. In the first clause, 'he that is begotten of God' is the Christian man; but in the second clause, 'He that is begotten of God' is Christ the Saviour. So it is not the believer that keeps himself—it is the only-begotten Son of the Father that keeps him. And if 'whosoever is born of God sinneth not,' it is because round his weakness is cast the strong defence of the Elder Brother's hand.

In Bishop Dahle's *Life after Death*, of which a translation has just been published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, there is a very fair and very *English* discussion of the subject of Prayer for the Dead. The whole work is characterised by fairness and by fitness for English readers. And, if we may judge by this volume, the scholars of Norway have all the instincts of the best scholarship, and are thoroughly acquainted with English theology.

Prayer for the dead, says Bishop Dahle, is very natural. It is very natural that we should wish to commend our dear ones to the loving kindness of God even after they are gone. We have been so accustomed to pray for them whilst they lived, that it is not easy to stop the habit the moment that they die. It is not strange, therefore, that we should find the early Church offering prayer for the dead, that we should be able to trace the custom back even to the second century.

But if the dear ones dead could be prayed for, they must be surely in some distress. So prayer for the dead helped forward the doctrine of purgatory. And purgatory once received, prayer for the dead became a great necessity. They hold together, these two, and can never be long kept separate.

Nevertheless, the reformers rejected the doctrine of purgatory, but did not wholly forbid intercession for the dead. For they knew the practice was older, and it seemed so much more harmless. Said Luther in his great *Confession*, 'Since Scripture does not say anything about prayer for the dead, I do not consider it a sin if a man in his private devotions prays in terms like these: Dear Lord, if it is the case that this soul can be helped, then do Thou graciously, etc., and when this has been done once or twice, let that suffice.' Later reformers more definitely disapproved of the custom, especially in the Lutheran Church. But the Anglican Church still retained the practice, and even the encouragement. For the Anglican Service-Book of 1549 contains both a general prayer for those who had died in faith, and a special prayer for each individual at his burial, 'Grant unto this Thy servant that the sins which he committed in this world be not imputed to him.' In the present Anglican Service-Book, which dates from 1662, that petition is not found, but the practice has lingered on. Thorndike, Barrow, and Ussher have expressed their approval of prayer for the dead. And the great Dr. Johnson used to pray

for his deceased friends thus, 'O Lord, if I may do so, I commend to Thy paternal love my father and my brother.'

So the practice of praying for the dead is very old and very natural. Nevertheless, Bishop Dahle finds no Scripture authority for it, and finds it highly dangerous. The only possible prayer for the dead is prayer for their spiritual development (*N.B.*, adds Bishop Dahle in a parenthesis, 'not for their *purification*'). And even such a prayer had better be avoided, for 'our knowledge regarding this development is so meagre that we cannot easily pray for it with that confidence and assurance of being heard which a true prayer demands.' A general commendation of the dead to God's mercy—yes, that is possible; but not even for such a commendation is it possible to find a rational ground or a valid Scripture argument.

If our Lord had not Himself declared that there was one subject of which He was ignorant, few of us would have found it difficult to ascribe to Him omniscience. That declaration being there, one subject being unmistakably beyond His ken, other items may be found to go along with it. But these would not have been made so much of, and would not have carried any serious or persistent value, if that declaration had not been there. 'Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son.' If Jesus had not said that, we could easily have called Him omniscient.

But the author of the latest work on the Person of Christ calls Him omniscient still. *The Principle of the Incarnation* is a substantial volume, just published by Messrs Longmans. The author is the Rev. H. C. Powell, M.A., of Oriel Collège, Oxford, Rector of Wylde, and formerly Provost of Inverness Cathedral. The book was written at the suggestion of the Bishop of Salisbury. It has received the encouragement, and in some degree

the revision, not of Dr. Wordsworth only, but also of Dr. Ellicott, Dr. Mayor, and Dr. Bright. It carries therefore a kind of *nihil obstat* on its title page. And it calls our Lord omniscient still.

Now any man can get rid of an inconvenient text, as any person can quote one for his purpose. But it is not likely that Mr. Powell would adopt the ancient method of perverting the sense, or the modern method of denying the authenticity. It is not likely that these scholars would have 'encouraged' him if he did. He finds the text in question in two of the Gospels, and he quotes it accurately from both. In Matt. xxiv. 36, the Revised Version gives it, 'But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.' And in Mark xiii. 32, 'But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.' And although Mr. Powell believes that the words 'neither the Son' are insufficiently attested in St. Matthew,—insufficiently to found any argument upon them,—there is no question that they are universally found in St. Mark, so he makes no capital out of that. But he takes this title 'the Son' apart, and he earnestly asks what it means.

Now this title 'the Son' is not the same as the simple pronoun 'I.' There is no instance in which we can change 'the Son' into 'I' without a change in the meaning. And in this very place, as the saying is recorded by St. Mark, our Lord passes from the first person, in which he has just been speaking, and, with a manifest intention, adopts the third. So Mr. Powell claims, and he seems to claim it fairly, that when our Lord says He knows not that day nor hour, He does not say so simply in respect of His personality, but in respect of some position in which He stands, some office He has come to fill.

Is that office, then, the same as elsewhere He expresses by the title 'Son of God'? Or is it the office of the 'Son of Man'? Says Mr. Powell, it

is quite distinct from both. In the title 'Son of God,' the emphasis is laid on the Godhead; in the title 'Son of Man,' it is equally laid on the Manhood. But in the simple title 'the Son,' our Lord takes a place between these two; He speaks in His character as the *one Mediator between God and men*.

So then, this much a careful examination of the title seems to give us. When Jesus declared that 'of that day and that hour knoweth no one, neither the Son,' He did not express unqualified personal ignorance as the personal pronoun would have conveyed. He affirmed this ignorance of the *Mediator* between God and men. He asserted it of Himself in some function of His mediatorial office, whether as Revealer, Reconciler, or Great High Priest, or King.

But where is the gain from it all? By the last word of this saying the Son is sharply distinguished from the Father. 'Neither the Son, but the Father,' these are the words of St. Mark. And St. Matthew is yet more emphatic, 'Neither the Son, but the Father only.' Is not the Son, who is thus distinguished from the Father, God manifest in the flesh? Is it not solely and wholly just our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

It depends, says Mr. Powell, on what 'the Father' means. And he seems to have no difficulty in proving that 'the Father' here does not mean the Father as distinguished from the Son, but that it means the whole Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Distinct from 'My Father,' 'the Father' is used elsewhere as plainly expressive of the Trinity. 'The time cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' Can the meaning be that henceforth worship will be confined to the First Person in the Trinity? Is the meaning not rather this, that true spiritual worship shall henceforth be offered to God, now revealed as Triune,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—and as standing towards men in all the blessed relation of Father-

hood? Again, when Jesus says that no one knoweth the Son but the Father, does He deliberately exclude the Holy Ghost? Or finally, when St. Paul says (1 Cor. viii. 6), that 'to us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ,' does he not first of all under the name 'Father' include Jesus Christ as God, and then, as a second object of thought, mention Him as Incarnate and in a special sense our Lord?

If these things are so, Mr. Powell claims the liberty to take the expression 'the Father' here as denoting the Triune God, and we do not seem able to refuse it. So, then, our Lord is distinguishing Himself as Incarnate Son, as Man, from the Triune God, with whom as God He is one.

And the addition of the word 'only' in St. Matthew seems to emphasise the contrast. Therefore it was not as God, but as Man, that He was ignorant of the day and the hour. And, as we have seen already, it was as Man in respect of that great function of His Manhood, His mediatorial office. In short, the knowledge of the actual day and hour of the Final Judgment was not part of the *revelation* which, as the Son, He was commissioned to make; therefore the knowledge of this particular had not been communicated to His human mind. Humanly, He did not know it, though as one with the Father He knew it divinely and eternally, after that manner of knowing from which human knowing stands quite apart, the knowing which belongs to none but God.

The Basis of Morals.

A COLLEGE ADDRESS.

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To search through all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law.

'THERE are two things,' says Immanuel Kant, 'that fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe the oftener and the more steadily they are contemplated—the *starry heavens above* and the *moral law within*. The former reflexion begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connexion therein to a boundless extent with worlds upon worlds and systems upon systems, and carries me into the limitless times of their periodic motion. The second consideration has its starting-point in my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world of thought which is truly infinite, and with which I find myself to be in a universal and necessary connexion, no less than with those other visible worlds of space. The former view, of a countless multitude of worlds, annihilates my importance as an animal creature, which, after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again

give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits—that planet a mere speck in the universe. The second view, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence, since the moral law reveals in my personality a life transcending my animal nature and even the whole sensible world. For this inward law assigns to my existence a destination that is not restricted to the conditions and limits of the present life, but that reaches into the infinite.'

These lofty words of Kant indicate the greatness of the subject before us, and the point of view from which we approach it. It is a subject of vital and urgent interest. Never since the days of Socrates has ethical controversy been so radical; never have the assumptions upon which everyday morals rest been so daringly challenged as they are by our contemporaries. This restless and widespread criticism is due to the concurrent action of several causes. In part it is the effect of the vast progress of natural science in recent times—a progress too rapid for the general development of the human mind. We have not had time as yet to digest our splendid discoveries in the realm of