

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

IF readers of the DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE should discover any errors in it, they will confer a favour by sending a note of them to the Editor.

The chief duty of our age, said Archdeacon Watkins, in his Bampton Lecture, is translation. The Company of Old Testament Revisers had recently concluded their sittings in Westminster, but Dr. Watkins did not refer to their work. The Revisers of both Old Testament and New had set themselves a hard task, and they were severely handled for what they made of it. But they who undertake the translation of which Archdeacon Watkins spoke, have a harder task before them, and the expectation of a more sweeping condemnation. And yet, if Professor Sabatier of Paris is right, it is a task that has to be undertaken by every person who is an heir to the Protestant reformation of religion.

What Archdeacon Watkins meant by translation has recently been explained by Professor Sabatier to the students of his Dogmatic Theology class in Paris. It is the clearest explanation we have seen. Perhaps Professor Sabatier explains Archdeacon Watkins, and a little more. Perhaps Archdeacon Watkins would be the first to repudiate some of Professor Sabatier's explanations. Still, Professor Sabatier has delivered an intro-

ductory lecture to his students, it has been translated into English by Mrs. Emmanuel Christen, and published by Messrs. A. & C. Black, and that lecture is intended to explain what Archdeacon Watkins meant by translation—that and nothing more.

The title of the lecture in English is *The Vitality of Christian Dogmas*. It is a hopeful title. For we have been told that dogma is dead, and deservedly. And since what is true of a dog is equally true of a dogma, that a bad name is next to hanging, we have almost come to believe it. Professor Sabatier calls this one of our prejudices about dogmas. He does not believe they ever die. And history seems to be with him. For if before 1830 Jouffroy wrote his celebrated essay to show *How Dogmas End*, sixty years thereafter another philosopher of the same school, M. Caro, has written an essay to show *How Dogmas Revive*. 'In truth,' says Professor Sabatier, 'dogmas do not die, they become transformed.'

There are three ways in which dogmas become transformed. We shall come to that in a moment. But first of all, What does Professor Sabatier mean by a dogma? We are wont to distinguish a dogma from a doctrine. We say that a doctrine is a truth expressed in the Bible, a dogma its

more precise and rigid expression in a Creed. Professor Sabatier makes no such distinction. To him a dogma is a doctrine, and a doctrine is a dogma. When, therefore, he says that dogmas are in continual process of transformation, he does not refer to the wording of the Thirty-nine Articles, he refers quite as emphatically to the doctrine of Creation, of the Fall, of the Devil, and other doctrines of the Bible.

If we would understand what Professor Sabatier means by a dogma, we had better take his own illustration. A dogma is to religious experience what language is to thought. There is a hero in fiction who has made himself immortal and ridiculous by saying that he could think only when he spoke. That hero is everybody. Thought is unthinkable except in language. Yet thought and language are quite distinct. So is it with religious experience and dogma. When God comes into contact with the soul of a man, whether in the Bible or out of it, that man has obtained a certain religious experience. The expression of that experience is dogma. And although the man cannot conceive it even in his own mind without the expression of it in word or worship, yet the experience which is religion, and the expression of it which is dogma, are for ever quite distinct. Religious experience, or the revelation of God to the soul, is itself and abides for ever; the expression of it, which is a dogma, is subject to continual transformation.

For clearness' sake let us take an example here. Let it be an unmistakable and striking example of what Professor Sabatier means. There is a religious thought which St. Paul has experienced and desires to express. That thought is that 'the value of the Person of Christ in relation to the whole universe is infinite.' How does St. Paul express it? It comes to him as he writes his Epistle to the Philippians, and his expression of it (Phil 2¹⁰) is that the *ἐπουρανίοι* or inhabitants of the superior spheres, the *ἐπιγείοι* or inhabitants of the earth, and the *καταχθονίοι* or beings of the

lower regions, must bow the knee in the name of Jesus. The thought is as true for our conscience as for the conscience of St. Paul, but the expression of it belongs to a cosmography or conception of the world that has long since passed away.

Well, there are three ways in which a dogma becomes transformed. For a dogma is a living thing like a language. And just as a language grows with its years, suffering change by dropping some words, by modifying the meaning of others, and again by reviving old or coining new, so is it with dogmas.

First, a dogma changes by dissuetude. When an idea drops out of a nation's current thought, the word that expressed it drops out with it. In like manner, there are ideas, says Professor Sabatier, that have dropped out of the religious consciousness of the Christian nations, and the dogmas which clothed them have fallen away with them. You know, he says, what a vast place was occupied in the mind of the early Church by demons, and the idea of demoniacal possession. Men's minds were haunted by it. There was even a class of priests whose business it was to drive the demons out, and the formulas they used may be read in the writings of Tertullian. All that, says Professor Sabatier, has disappeared. To the consciousness of the Protestant, at least, it has disappeared. And not only has the belief in demoniacal possession passed away, carrying with it all its dogmatic formulas; but, he adds, the belief in the Devil, the belief in a personal historical Devil, acting supernaturally in our life, is at least dying if not dead. Nay, he continues, the Devil himself is dying. Luther, when he threw his inkstand at his head inflicted on him his mortal wound. The ink had more effect to exorcise the Devil for ever than all the holy water that the Church had used.

The second way in which dogmas are transformed is by *Intus-susceptio*, which the translator renders 'inward reception.' Our old dogmas

remain, but they assume new meanings. It is the theologian that does this. Speaking as a theologian, Professor Sabatier says, 'We spend our lives, consciously or unconsciously, in putting new wine into old bottles.' And then he makes the sweeping statement that there is not a single dogma, dating from two or three centuries back, which is repeated with the same meaning as in its origination. Our fathers spoke of the inspiration of the prophets and the apostles, of the atonement, of the Trinity, of the divinity of Christ, of miracles; we speak of them still, but we do not mean what our fathers meant.

And the time comes with some of our fathers' dogmas when we cannot speak of them at all. The new wine bursts the old bottles. Then we must make new vessels to receive it. New words are coined to express the new ideas; new dogmas are shaped to carry the new experience. Thus arose in the sixteenth century the dogmas of justification by faith, and the universal priesthood of believers. And when he has called them new, Professor Sabatier sharply turns upon himself and denies that they are new. They are old dogmas rising into new energy.

Ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos,
Multa renascentur quae jam cecidere, cadentque
Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula.

As leaves in woods are changed with changing years,
So words that once have fallen may live again;
While many now in honoured use may fall.

And so of dogmas there is a falling and a rising again. It is the third and last of the ways in which they suffer transformation.

Thus Professor Sabatier shows how dogmas change, and brings to an end the first part of his lecture. In the second part he shows how they *must* change. First the manner, now the necessity. For the word of God through prophet or apostle, or even the Master Himself, is like a grain of wheat. There is a germ which is mysterious as life and as divine, and there is the visible *fecula* or covering of the germ by which it manifests itself and pro-

duces its effects. The external covering is comprehensible; it can be analyzed. In the grain of wheat it consists of nitrogen, glucose, albumen, and the rest. In the word of Jesus Christ it consists of a Hebrew environment, a Semitic dialect, a Jewish mode of thought. This outward covering can be dissected without touching the germ beneath. It can be transformed—must be transformed, indeed, to our Western and modern consciousness, before we can profit by the germ of religious truth it covers, just as the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die before it can bring forth fruit.

It is true that in Jesus Christ the '*fecula* of Hebraism,' to use Professor Sabatier's phrase, is reduced to the least possible compass. The creative and revealing principle in the authentic discourses of Jesus touches the most elementary and therefore the least transformable ideas. It is otherwise with the seed which was scattered by the liberal hand of St. Paul. Now the covering is Hebrew pharisaism blended with and modified by Hellenic civilization. And when at last the seed of the Kingdom passes out of the reach of the apostolic hand, the envelope which manifests it becomes more and more complex, imposing, and transitory. What a distance there is, says Sabatier, between the dogmatic Christianity of the fourth and fifth centuries and the Messianic gospel preached by the Master on the shores of the Sea of Galilee! Here the rare and pure moral ideas of Hebraism; there all the fundamental notions of Greek logic and metaphysics.

So when the great intellectual revolutions swept over Europe these dogmas fled before their face. The old bottles would not hold the new wine. First came the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, which we call the Reformation. The note of the Reformation was its appeal to the Word of God: and that single essential note searched the array of dogmatic formulas which the great Councils had built up and swept a large part of it away. And when to this appeal to the

Word of God as sole interpreter of dogma was added the discovery that man's salvation was upon faith alone, it was at once perceived that dogmatic formulas of every kind exist for the inner principle of Christian experience they enshrine. If they convey no inner principle, they have to pass away at once. If they convey it faultily, they must be transformed in order to convey it as perfectly as can be. For it is justification by faith that has taught us, and we have almost learned the lesson now, that Christianity is a moral life and not a system of metaphysics.

But almost simultaneously with the Reformation or revolution in religion began the great revolution in science. It was the creation of a new world. Before that time the earth, itself the centre of the cosmic system, was flat and round, and belted by the river Ocean. Above, the sky was a crystal vault revolving with the stars. Beyond that were other skies and spheres to the number of seven. At the top sat the Supreme God, resting from His work of creation, and superintending His little world below. Under the earth were other stages, the infernal regions, down to the haunts of the devil and his angels. That cosmography is no longer ours. And as the cosmography is transformed, the dogmas which rested upon it must be transformed also. Professor Sabatier gives some examples. One has already been mentioned—that passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, in which things in the heavens and things in the earth and things under the earth are prophesied as bowing the knee before Jesus. Another is the reference in 2 Cor. 12² to the third heaven to which the 'man in Christ' was caught up. Where, asks Professor Sabatier, are we to look for this third heaven to-day?

Finally, there is the great intellectual revolution which is due to the modern historical method—on which he scarcely enters. But he gives us easily to see that in his judgment it is most sweeping, most radical of all. For it overturns

our notions of the antiquity of man. It introduces the ideas of heredity and evolution, and transforms our formulas about responsibility. It grasps our dogmas of the canon and of inspiration. It makes the last remnant of our untouched dogmatism to pass through a searching fire. And this is what is meant by 'translation.' It is not the work of a selected Company of Revisers. It is the duty of every Christian believer. 'We may lack faith and courage to undertake it, but,' in the words of Professor Sabatier, 'if we fail, God will raise up other workers. Christianity cannot perish: it has never failed to adapt itself to the state of mind and thought of past centuries; and it will find and create the dogmatic form which will suit future times.'

The *Church Times* for 18th March contains a criticism—masterful and merciless—of the famous Assyrian tablet in which Professor Sayce discovered the names of Chedorlaomer, Arioch, and Tidal. According to the *Church Times*, Professor Sayce never did discover these names, never saw the tablet till after he had announced the discovery, but guessed his discovery from the report of another, and now that which was announced to the world as a marvellous confirmation of the historical accuracy of Gn 14, is 'of as much historical value as the snippets with which the evening newspapers fill up their columns when news runs short.'

The *Church Times* is angry, not because it ever believed in the Khudur-mabul, Eriakhu, and Tudkhul of these 'much-vaunted tablets,' but because it is of Professor Sayce's way of thinking as regards the Higher Criticism, and 'such uncritical statements make it more difficult for those who, like us, are upholders of the traditional belief to know on what materials they may safely rest.'

The *Church Times* never believed in the tablets. On 29th November 1895, just after the

announcement of the discovery, it drew attention to the following points:—(1) The reading *ERI... A-KU* could not represent the Bible Arioch, if for no other reason than because of the hiatus in the middle of the tablet word. This was over and above the difficulty that in any case it would not be Arioch but the son of Arioch that was referred to. (2) It was a pure piece of conjecture to suppose that *Kudur-Ku-Mal* of the tablet was Chedorlaomer of Gn 14. (3) Similarly, *Tu-Ud-Khula* was not, and could not be, resolved into Tidal. And (4) a tablet of about 300 B.C. was worthless as evidence of what was supposed to have taken place and been recorded about 1800 B.C.

So the *Church Times* uttered its warning. Its warning was repeated by the *Athenæum* of 24th April 1897. But it was useless. Professor Sayce put his conjecture into his articles and his books, it was accepted by the public, and even incorporated as a note into Maspero's *Struggle of the Nations*. Meantime, Mr. Pinches, the discoverer of the tablet (not of the identification), was preparing a full translation and defence. The defence was read before the Victoria Institute in January 1896. But it has just seen the light of publication—'such is the leisurely way in which science pursues her course.' Mr. Pinches 'practically surrenders the whole case.'

For he says, 'I now come to what many will probably regard as the most interesting part of my lecture, namely, the tablets which seem to refer to Arioch, Tidal, and Chedorlaomer.' At the word 'seem' you find a reference to a note at the foot of the page. The note is this, 'At this stage I purposely say, "seem to refer," and I wish it to be noted that I have never spoken of these names without a note of interrogation, though this was probably an excess of caution.' But he continues the lecture, and he says, 'With such imperfect texts as these, dogmatizing is impossible, and the author disclaims any such intention. It is quite indifferent to him whether

KU-KU-KU-KU-MAL, *ERI-E-A-KU*, and *TU-UD-KHULA* be Chedorlaomer, Arioch, and Tidal respectively—they may be entirely different personages, but if they are not what they seem to be, it is a remarkable historical coincidence, and deserves recognition as such.' That, says the *Church Times*, is not the way men talk when they have made an 'important discovery.' And it adds, 'After this its advocates can do no less than give their dead tablet a decent and honourable burial.'

'Not even Dr. Hort's reputation for soundness of judgment could stand against many posthumous publications such as *The Christian Ecclesia*.' That sentence may be read at the end of one of the 'Notes' in Canon Gore's recently published *Epistle to the Ephesians*. Professor Armitage Robinson read it there. And in the next week's *Guardian*—the *Guardian* of 9th March—he wrote about it.

Professor Armitage Robinson wrote as a pupil of Dr. Hort. He had had no responsibility for the publication of *The Christian Ecclesia*, or any other posthumous work of Dr. Hort's. He wrote as a pupil, and all that he felt he had to do with the word 'posthumous' was to consider whether injustice was done to Dr. Hort's reputation by the issue of a book which he might not have issued had he been alive. Now, on that point, Professor Armitage Robinson is emphatic. He was present at the delivery of many of the lectures contained in *The Christian Ecclesia*. He knows that the book is 'an exact transcript of what Dr. Hort then read to us.' Moreover, Dr. Hort's painful regard for finish in all the work he did is known to everybody. These lectures were in so finished a state that they were perfect copy for the press. And in actual fact, with the exception of a few changes introduced from the recapitulation of a previous course, the lectures were given to the printers in Dr. Hort's own handwriting. But, says Professor Armitage Robinson, even if the author had himself published the book in his lifetime, and

even if he had made his own modifications upon it before he did so, 'I cannot believe that his "reputation for soundness of judgment" would have been challenged the less by his critics.'

For it is evident that it is not the *posthumous* publication of this book, but the publication of the views it expresses, that Canon Gore regrets. These views were notoriously the views of Dr. Hort, and it is not with Dr. Hort's executors that Canon Gore has really to do, but with Dr. Hort himself. Before we pass to that, however, we may notice that in the same issue of the *Guardian* Professor Sanday has a letter in which, regarding 'the posthumous publications of so many of Dr. Hort's writings, and in particular of *The Christian Ecclesia*,' he says, 'I entertain the deepest feeling of gratitude both to Dr. Hort's family for permitting the publication, and to the friends who have spent so much time and care in seeing the books through the press.'

Now there are several grounds upon which Canon Gore objects to Dr. Hort's *Christian Ecclesia*, and Professor Armitage Robinson meets them one by one. The first is this—we give it in full, following Professor Armitage Robinson's example, for as he says very truly, 'the danger of giving isolated quotations from any writer is very great'—'Dr. Hort's work on *The Christian Ecclesia*, in many respects, as would be expected, most admirable, seems to me to minimize quite extraordinarily the apostolic authority. The apostles, he says, were only witnesses of Christ. "There is no trace in Scripture of a formal commission of authority for government from Christ Himself." This surprising conclusion is reached by omitting many considerations.'

'This,' says Professor Armitage Robinson, 'is a serious charge, especially when directed against a writer who did not bear a character for "omitting many considerations" which were even distantly connected with the topics he handled.' Whereupon he shows that Canon Gore has quoted one sen-

tence out of a larger paragraph, and omitting one warning word in it, has changed its colour entirely. It will be worth while to follow Professor Armitage Robinson again, and give the early part of the paragraph completely: 'The authority of the apostles was of a different kind. There is indeed, as we have seen, no trace in Scripture of a formal commission of authority for government from Christ Himself. Their commission was to be witnesses of Himself, and to bear that witness by preaching and by healing. But it is inconceivable that the moral authority with which they were thus clothed, and the uniqueness of their position and personal qualifications, should not in all these years have been accumulating upon them by the spontaneous homage of the Christians of Judæa an ill-defined but lofty authority in matters of government and administration; of which indeed we have already had an instance in the laying of the price of the sold properties at their feet.'

But Canon Gore knows perfectly what he is about; and Professor Armitage Robinson knows as clearly. It is not for minimizing the apostles' actual authority that Dr. Hort comes under condemnation. It is for shifting its basis. The question is, Whether was the authority which the apostles undoubtedly possessed the outcome of their general commission to preach and to heal, or the result of a special and definite commission from Christ to govern? Dr. Hort believes that the governing was the natural outcome of their position and powers as apostles. To put it in Professor Armitage Robinson's well-chosen words, 'Dr. Hort believes that authority for determining the methods of its government and administration is lodged by Christ in the Church as a whole; that it was the will of Christ that these methods of government and administration should be developed under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in response to the growing needs of the Body. He believes, accordingly, that the commission given by Christ to bind and loose, and to forgive and retain sins, was given to the whole Church, even if on the occasion of its deliverance

none but apostles, the representatives of the whole, were addressed.' Canon Gore believes that the commission to govern was given directly to the apostles by Christ, and given to the apostles alone. The difference and the grievance lie there.

So when in the next sentence Canon Gore argues that 'in St. Matthew xvi. 19 a definite grant of official authority—as appears in the passage (Is. xxii. 22) on which it is based—is promised to St. Peter, and he is on this occasion, as Dr. Hort himself maintains, the representative of the apostles generally,' Professor Armitage Robinson has no difficulty in showing that the criticism stops short of the mark. Dr. Hort would admit the definite grant of official authority. He would admit that St. Peter was on this occasion the representative of the apostles generally. But he would go further, and add that the apostles generally were representatives of the whole Church. 'In virtue of this personal faith vivifying their discipleship,' he says (*Christian Ecclesia*, p. 17), 'the apostles became themselves the first little Ecclesia, constituting a living rock upon which a far larger and ever enlarging Ecclesia should very shortly be built slowly up, living stone by living stone, as each new faithful convert was added to the society.'

Professor Armitage Robinson closes his answer to Canon Gore in these words: 'What Dr. Hort appears to me to have specially taught us, or, in so far as it was not new, to have specially emphasized for us, is that Church order is from the beginning a sacred growth, directed by the constant presence within of the Holy Spirit, so as to meet the needs of a living and multiplying society; that it is not a scheme delivered by the

Lord to the apostles, and by the apostles to the Church; that the Body of the Christ is an organism rather than an organization; that here, as elsewhere, life has its inherent law of orderly evolution; and that the most fruitful lesson of modern biblical criticism is this—that, in the consideration of all these topics, we connect more closely than ever before our belief in the Holy Ghost and our belief in the Holy Catholic Church.'

Canon Gore replies in the *Guardian* for the following week—16th March. He explains that he did not mean to say that Dr. Hort's *Christian Ecclesia* had better not have been published. He only meant that it risked his reputation as a man of sound judgment. And then he enters on the question at issue.

That the apostles received a commission to govern direct from Christ Himself, Canon Gore finds sufficient proof of in the New Testament writings. St. Peter says of Judas that he had received (plainly from Christ) not only a ministry, but also an 'office of supervision' (*ἐπισκοπή*). The last word occurs only in the quotation from the Psalm which St. Peter introduces, but Canon Gore thinks that St. Peter would not have quoted the Psalm containing that expression unless he had instinctively felt it to be applicable to Judas' position. He will not argue, however, from a mere word. It seems to him that St. Paul had too positive a conception of his own authority not to have received it directly in virtue of his apostleship; and that throws back light on the gospels, so that in the grant of the 'keys' to St. Peter, with the 'stewardship' and the 'pastorate' elsewhere alluded to, he sees nothing less than the institution by Christ of an office of government in His Church.