

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

It seems as though we should have to revise our estimate of Herod. What is our estimate?

The Herod of our infantile imagination is a composition. It is a creature that is scarcely human, compiled from the criminal record of the whole family. It is a sort of ogre who massacres the babes of Bethlehem, to whose table the head of John the Baptist is brought in a charger, who stretches forth his hands to vex certain of the Church, who kills James the brother of John with the sword, who, 'because he saw it pleased the Jews,' proceeds further to take Peter also, and whose proper and exquisitely hideous end is to be eaten of worms and give up the ghost. We must revise that.

And more than that. We must revise our estimate of one of the Herods who go to make up that picture. Dr. A. W. Verrall says that we must revise our estimate of Herod Antipas. Dr. Verrall has sent an article to the *Journal of Theological Studies* on 'Christ before Herod.' He has made an independent study of what we call the trial of Christ by Herod, and of all that is said about the relation of Herod to Christ elsewhere in the Gospels. And he comes to the conclusion that Herod was never anything but friendly towards Christ, friendly and even deferential, and, in particular, that there never was such a thing as a trial before Herod.

Dr. Verrall says that there never was a trial before Herod, and never could have been. For Herod had no jurisdiction in Jerusalem. He had jurisdiction in Galilee, it is said, though even that is a mistranslation in our Authorized Version. What St. Luke (23⁷) says is that Jesus was from the *dominion* of Herod. He does not say that He belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, which might mean that Herod could carry that jurisdiction with him wherever he went, even into Jerusalem. He could not carry it into Jerusalem. For Pilate was ruler in Jerusalem, and it was not in his power, even if he had been willing, to allow any man to occupy the position of judge in Jerusalem, or shift to any other man's shoulders his own responsibility for a judgment.

This simple but irremovable circumstance is enough of itself to end the idea of a trial before Herod: Pilate did not send Jesus to Herod for judgment; he sent Him simply for examination. He wanted to get at the facts of the case. He learned that Jesus was of Galilee, part of the dominion of Herod. It was probable, then, that Herod knew something about Him, or at least that he would be able to elicit such information regarding Him as would make it easier for Pilate to pass judgment. He therefore sent Him to Herod. And he sent some of His accusers with Him.

Dr. Verrall says that the historical representations of Jesus before Herod are altogether wrong. In Jerusalem Herod was a private person. He was perhaps lodged in the very building in which Pilate held his court. When Jesus came to him it was still early morning. In whatever condition it was customary for him to spend a private morning in his lodging, in that condition Jesus and His accusers found him.

But if the visit was not an official one, it was a visit of much interest to Herod. For a long time he had desired to see Jesus, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. It was not vulgar curiosity. It was not mere savage delight in the marvellous. Herod was a religious man. There was a time when he had heard John gladly, and he had done many things which John bade him do, going out of his way to do them. Now when at last he came face to face with Jesus he was deeply disappointed in Him. For not only did Jesus refuse to work a miracle before him, He even refused to reply to one of the many questions which he put to Him. He was deeply disappointed, but Dr. Verrall does not believe for a moment that he expressed his disappointment in contemptuous abuse of Jesus.

Certainly it is said that Herod with his men of war set Him at nought and mocked Him and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe. But Dr. Verrall does not believe that that statement represents the facts. For, in the first place, Herod could not have had men of war with him. He could scarcely have had any very imposing bodyguard in Jerusalem, far less troops or 'armies,' as the Greek word literally signifies. He could scarcely have had more than one or two soldiers in waiting. Dr. Verrall thinks it possible that St. Luke's word means no more than that. And if so, we must see that we do not put more into it.

But it is said that Herod set Him at nought. This Dr. Verrall calls a 'dexterous modification' of the meaning on the part of the Authorized

translators to suit the prevalent idea. He believes that what Luke actually says is that Herod 'thought nothing of Him'—that is to say, as a political prisoner. But again, it is added that he mocked Him. And again Dr. Verrall says that it is a mistranslation. What St. Luke says is that Herod jested—not at Him, but at *it*; that is to say, at the whole absurdity of making this man out to be a dangerous enemy of the Empire.

But once more, it is said that he arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe. Was not that in mockery? For was it not a royal robe? And was it not put on in derision of His claim to be King of the Jews? It was not, says Dr. Verrall, exactly a royal robe, but it was a robe worthy of a king. And it was put on Him in all seriousness, that Herod might testify to his own reverence for Jesus, and at the same time enable Pilate to understand more unmistakably than any message that might be carried to him the estimate which he had formed of His character and His claims.

Dr. Verrall's translation of the whole passage is, 'But Herod "with his forces" thought him not important, and jested thereupon, and, having clothed him with fine apparel, sent him back to Pilatè.'

Professor Paul Haupt of Baltimore is a great Orientalist. He astonished the Congress of Orientalists held at Copenhagen in 1908, by arguing that Jesus was not a Jew. He repeated his argument at Oxford in the end of the year, in a paper which he read at the Congress of Religions. And now, after full reflexion, and after having the benefit of the frank criticism of both these learned Congresses, he publishes an article in the *Open Court* for April 1909 on 'The Aryan Ancestry of Jesus,' in which he repeats his argument and endeavours to strengthen it by many forbidding footnotes. He declares that Jesus was not a Jew but a Persian, not a Semite at all but an Indo-European like ourselves. What are the proofs he produces?

In the first place, he is quite sure that Jesus was born at Nazareth, and not at Bethlehem. The 'tradition' that Jesus was a descendant of David and born at Bethlehem he dismisses easily as 'not original,' and finds the evidence in Jn 7⁴¹. He says that the Census referred to in the Third Gospel took place in 7 A.D., 'that is, at least eleven years after the Nativity.' And he approves of Wellhausen, who begins his translation of the First Gospel with the third chapter. The first two chapters, he says, with the Davidic genealogy of Joseph, the Virgin Birth, the star of Bethlehem, the wise men from the East, the flight into Egypt, and the slaughter of the innocents, are simply not worth considering.

Now, if Jesus was born at Nazareth, Dr. Haupt's argument is that He was not a Jew, because the inhabitants of Galilee were not Jews at the time He was born there. Once there had been Jews in Galilee. But in the year 164 B.C., Simon Maccabæus had transferred them all to Jerusalem. It is true that in the year 103 B.C., Simon's grandson Aristobulus had gone to Galilee, and had forced the inhabitants to adopt circumcision and the Mosaic Law. And from that time forth the Galileans were Jews by religion. But to be Jews by religion is not to be Jews by race. A negro who joins the Church of England, says Dr. Haupt, does not become an Anglo-Saxon. The Galileans became Jews by religious profession, but the very speech of a man like Simon Peter 'betrayed' his non-Jewish extraction.

Where, then, did the Galileans come from, and who were the ancestors of Jesus? They came from Assyria, says Professor Haupt. They were descendants of those colonists whom Tiglath-Pileser IV. and Sargon II. had sent to Galilee after the inhabitants had been deported to Assyria in 738 B.C. They were accordingly called *Itureans*, which is simply a corruption of *Assyrians*.

But if they were Assyrians, were they not Semites? No, Dr. Haupt does not think they

were Semites. At least they were not all Semites. For Sargon II. relates that he deported the Median chief Deioces, 'with his kinsmen,' to Hamath. Now Hamath was the capital of Galilee. This is a discovery that Professor Haupt has made. And we may just as well express our belief that this discovery is the origin of the whole argument about the ancestry of Jesus.

Hitherto it has been the universal opinion that Hamath was the royal city of the Hittites, and that it was situated on the Orontes in Northern Syria. But the boundary of Israel never reached so far north as the Orontes, and the names of the kings of Hamath mentioned in the Cuneiform Texts are not Hittite but Hebrew. Hamath was the ancient capital of Galilee, and was to be found at the famous hot springs half an hour to the south of Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Professor Haupt's conclusion is that the inhabitants of Galilee, or at least some portion of them, were descendants of Deioces and his kinsmen. 'It is extremely improbable,' he says, 'that Jesus was a son of David; it is at least as probable that He was a scion of Deioces or even a descendant of Spitam, the ancestor of Zoroaster.'

One of the first rules which the study of History has taught us is that there ought to be no surprises there. An event happens, like the crossing of the Channel by an aeroplane, which takes the world by surprise. But the world ought not to have been taken by surprise. That event was one of a long chain of events. It came to pass, not because some one suddenly said, Go to, let us fly across the English Channel, but because many experimental failures had preceded this first experimental success. A book has at last been written which explains our Lord's resurrection from the dead by means of Psychology. If it is successful it is a greater event than the crossing of the Channel by an aeroplane. But we need not be surprised at it. There has been plenty of preparation. Some man was bound to come who would at last run the risk

of a deliberate attempt to explain the resurrection of Christ from the dead by telepathy.

Origen led the way. 'I am of opinion now,' said Origen, 'that the statements in this passage (1 Cor. 15^{5f.}) contain some great and wonderful mysteries, which are beyond the grasp, not merely of the great multitude of ordinary believers, but even of those who are far advanced, and that in them the reason would be explained why our Lord did not show Himself, after His resurrection from the dead, in the same manner as before that event.'

But the first open encouragement seems to have been given by the present Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury. In the volume known by the title of *Cambridge Theological Essays* there is an essay by Dr. J. O. F. Murray, formerly Fellow and Dean of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and now, as we have said, Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, in which the difficulties of belief in the resurrection are not belittled though the fact is affirmed; and in that essay there occur these significant words: 'The physical laws in obedience to which, the particular force by the operation of which, this result was attained, are at present unknown to us, and it is possible that they may remain unknown. No one can wish anything but God-speed to those who press onward in the hope that a fuller knowledge of the constitution of matter and a closer study of psychic phenomena may enable them in the end to lift the veil.' This essay was published in 1905. Then in 1907, Professor Kirsopp Lake of Leyden, laying down his pen at the end of an effort to estimate the historical value of the evidence for the resurrection, gave it as his opinion that the next stage of resurrection criticism would be the study of the narrative in the light of psychical research.

The book which opens that stage in the study of the resurrection is anonymous, and we know not who the author may be. He seems to be a clergyman of the Church of England. He is manifestly a student, both of Psychology and of

the Gospels. He is well acquainted with the work of the Abbé Loisy, and recognizes at least its suggestiveness. His book, of which the title is simply *Resurrectio Christi* (Kegan Paul; 3s. 6d. net), is sure to take the theologian by surprise. For the theologian is more familiar with the progress of aeronautics than with the progress of the science of Psychology.

But if it is a surprise it need not be a disagreeable one. It is extremely probable that a great revolution is about to take place in our theological thinking. But the revolution is coming without the agony of previous revolutions. For the study of Psychology has been made popular not by men who welcome it as a new weapon in the warfare of Science and Religion, but by men, like Professor William James and Professor Albert Coe, who are not ashamed of their own personal faith in Christ and their conviction of the supernatural. The anonymous author of this book is a Christian. If he endeavours to explain the resurrection by the use of telepathy, he does so in order to get rid of its difficulties and establish its fact.

Now, one of the most serious difficulties belonging to the narratives of the resurrection is the apparent discrepancy regarding the place or places in which our Lord appeared to His disciples. Did the appearances take place in Jerusalem or in Galilee? St. Luke says Jerusalem, and he seems to exclude the possibility of Galilee. St. Matthew says Galilee, and rejects the appearance to apostles at Jerusalem. The author of this book holds that the contradiction is absolute. He holds that every attempt at reconciliation persuades its own ingenious author and no one else. But he claims that the contradiction is one of the strongest supports of his own psychological explanation.

For in actual fact, he says, the appearances all took place in Jerusalem. And yet those who say that they took place, or that some of them took place, in Galilee are not false witnesses. They or their informants actually saw them there. They

saw them there in vision. Not, however, in a subjective vision. Not in such a vision as could be called a mere hallucination. Let us admit that there were disciples in Galilee who believed that they saw Christ making Himself known to the Twelve assembled with them in Galilee, at the very time when the Twelve were actually in Jerusalem and were seeing Him there. Their belief was not a hallucination; it was an actual experience. It was due to the telepathic power possessed and exercised by Christ.

But we must go back a little. When the resurrection took place, where were the disciples? It is probable, says our author, that they were in Galilee. They had gone back to their homes. They may not all have gone to their homes, but at least the majority had done so. It may be that the Twelve and some others were only on their way to Galilee, or were even in hiding quite close to Jerusalem. But, wherever they were when the resurrection took place, they had a vision. Or, to speak more psychologically, there was made upon them a subconscious impression. The effect of this subconscious impression upon some of them, upon those who were still within easy reach of Jerusalem, was to induce them to repair thither. For it was the purpose of Christ to 'concentrate at Jerusalem the floating material which went to form His Church.'

When they repaired to Jerusalem, in obedience to this subconscious impression, the disciples had their visions of the risen Christ. Again, these visions were not mere dreams or begotten of an ardent desire to believe that their Master had risen from the dead. They were actual appearances to them of an actually risen Master. But they were made, not to their ordinary consciousness, but to their subliminal self. They were made to that subconsciousness which is as real and as reliable as consciousness, although it may not be so directly at command.

At this time the rest of the disciples were in

Galilee. They too had had their subconscious impression. But in their case the telepathic impulse had directed them to a mountain in Galilee. There they also were enabled to see the Lord. And not only the Lord Himself, but, as St. Matthew has it, the Lord surrounded with the Twelve, although the Twelve were at that very time in Jerusalem. For if the personality is strong enough, there is no limit to the impression which a telepathic force can make. In course of time these disciples also found their way back to Jerusalem. And when the Day of Pentecost arrived they were all with one accord in one place. For the purpose of these communications of the risen Lord was to recover them from their disappointment and prepare them for the gift of the Holy Ghost, on the reception of which they would be ready to go forth and make disciples of all the nations.

But if the appearances of Christ to the disciples were subconscious, how were they able to recollect them when they returned to consciousness? That they did recollect them, we know. We know how necessary it was that they should recollect them. For they were to become witnesses of the resurrection and of the power of it. The difficulty, says our author, simply points us to Pentecost.

The main feature of Pentecost on the human side was just this, that the subconsciousness of the believers came to the surface. 'All that we know of Pentecost and its subsequent repetition in the exercise of spiritual gifts shows that Pentecost was simply the exhibition of subliminal activity by persons in a state of trance.' Pentecost and its subsequent phenomena have certainly, as the author says, presented some difficulty to us. The meaning of Pentecost and all that followed it is simply that the hidden memories of the disciples were then, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, brought to the surface. They realized what they had seen and their hands had handled. And they were sent forth to the ends of the earth as witnesses of Christ and the resurrection from the dead.