

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THEMIS is the title of a new book which has been written by Jane Ellen HARRISON, Hon. LL.D. (Aberdeen), Hon. D.Litt. (Durham). It is published in Cambridge at the University Press (15s. net). 'Themis' is the subject of the last chapter of the book. And inasmuch as that chapter is the summary, as well as the summit, of the book's whole argument, there is some appropriateness in the choice of 'Themis' for the title.

But who or what is Themis? Whether 'who' is correct, or 'what,' depends on the stage in the evolution of the religion of Greece upon which you enter. If you take Greek religion at the Homeric stage, the form of the question would be 'Who is Themis?' 'What is Themis?' would be the correct form if you enter it near the beginning of that previous and long-lasting period which Miss HARRISON investigates in her new book.

In Homer Themis is a goddess, and dwells in Olympus. She has two functions. She convenes and dissolves the assembly of the gods, and she presides over the feast. Zeus bade Themis 'call the gods to council from many-folded Olympus' brow.' Whereupon she 'ranged all about and bade them to the house of Zeus.' Why did Zeus, the supreme god, not summon the assembly himself? Because he was not supreme. Themis

was before Zeus in being, and before him in honour. Even Homer cannot hide the fact. And so, when the assembly is gathered together, Themis takes the chair. She presides over the banquet, and dismisses the gods when the banquet is over.

For Themis is Doom. The words are etymologically one. We were taught at school to translate the word Themis by 'Right.' And the translation was not altogether out of it. But 'Doom' is better. For Doom is the thing that is fixed or settled. It begins with opinion. There is your opinion and there is mine. When many opinions agree the matter is settled. It has become Doom. Laid out in language, you may call it Law. But it does not need to be laid out as Law. As binding, as awful as any Law is that collective opinion called most inadequately Custom. It is Doom. The day it dawns upon us as an inescapable force is our Doomsday. And when we project it into the future, conceiving of it as awaiting us in that dim and dreaded after-life, we call it the Crack of Doom, the Last Judgment.

Now this is not the way in which *we* came to the conception of the Last Judgment. For us it was not custom or convention projected into the future. First we came to the knowledge of God, and the Last Judgment was to us 'the Day of the Lord.' For from the beginning we have had in

our hands a Bible, and that Bible has given us God. But the Greeks, having no Bible, had no God given to them. They came to the conception of a God at last. And this was the very way they came to it. One man's opinion agreeing with another man's, there gradually arose a sense of some things settled. That sense became Custom. In process of time Custom became venerable, awful; its origin was lost in the past, its grasp was laid on the future. It became the highest and most adorable. It was called God. And even after there were Gods many in the land of Greece, Custom—Right, Doom, Themis—still held the highest place, called the gods together, presided over them, and dismissed their assembly.

Was this the religion of the Greeks, then? Yes; this was their religion, and that was the way they attained to it. It was not the only way in which men attained to religion. There were others who had no Themis, no sense of the majesty of Doom, who were nevertheless religious.

There were the Cyclopes, for example. The Cyclopes were religious, undoubtedly. They were conspicuous by their piety. For they trusted wholly in God for food and raiment and did not till the ground.

A people proud to whom no law is known,
And, trusting to the deathless Gods alone,
They plant not and they plough not, but the
earth

Bears all they need, unfurrowed and unsown:
Barley and wheat, and vines whose mighty
juice

Swells the rich clusters when the rain of Zeus
Gives increase; and among that race are kept
No common councils, nor are laws in use.

The Greeks could not deny the religion of the Cyclopes. They could not ignore it. They were greatly distressed when they considered it. For the Cyclopes had no Themis. And this was the more incomprehensible and distressing to the

Greeks when they remembered that the Cyclopes were by no means individualists. They had a family life and even excelled in it. But they went no further. They had no public life. They did not meet in assemblies. They had no market-place. That to the Greek was the last desolation. We hear the chorus in remote barbarian Tauri cry:

O for a kind Greek market-place again!

The Cyclopes had their family life. But in each family the father was supreme and the father's word was law.

For on the high peaks and the hillsides bare
In hollow caves they live, and each one there
To his own wife and children deals the law,
Neither has one of other any care.

The Cyclopes had no Themis. They had reached their Gods in another way from the Greeks. They had not carried custom through the family, the tribe, and the nation up to God. They had found their God in the kindly earth, in the sun and rain and fruitful seasons, and had been content. And undoubtedly it was a lower religion than the religion of the Greeks. The Greek religion was indistinguishable from morality perhaps; but it was at least the morality of a nation; the individual gave himself willingly for the nation's good. The religion of the Cyclopes was scarcely even morality. They did not care whether there was righteousness in the earth or not if there was plenty of barley and if rich clusters hung upon their vines. Their religion consisted in letting God find them barley and wheat and wine, and thanking him when He did. There is nothing lower than that to which the name of religion can be given.

The religion of the Greeks, we say, was higher. And yet it was properly not religion but morality. It is true there were Gods in it. And there was Doom, higher than the highest God, herself a God requiring worship. But Gods do not make religion. And the placing of Themis high among

the Gods only shows the more manifestly that along that road by which the Greeks went to find religion and God, neither God nor religion is to be found.

'And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parables. And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them' (Mk 4¹⁰⁻¹²).

Did Jesus really say this? Professor George JACKSON cannot believe it. Now Professor JACKSON is a Wesleyan. He has just been elected to the position of Resident Tutor at Didsbury College, Manchester. He was previously chosen to deliver the forty-second Fernley Lecture. And it is in that Lecture that he says he cannot believe that Jesus ever uttered this hard saying about the parables.

Why can he not believe it? The text is unassailable. The meaning is unmistakable. He cannot believe it simply because of the hardness of the saying itself. 'The words create a difficulty concerning the purpose of the parables which but for them would not have existed; for they seem to say that Christ adopted the parabolic method in order to hide the truths of the Kingdom from unspiritual minds; and such a purpose would be entirely at variance with the whole spirit of His ministry.'

Is Professor JACKSON entitled to reject a passage of the Gospels simply because he thinks that it is not after the mind of Christ? He believes that that is within his right. Nor do his fellow-believers dispute his right. And that being so, it is evident that no change has taken place within the last generation that can for a moment be compared in far-reaching issue with the change

in the attitude of the Christian Church to the Bible.

It is in keeping with that change that Professor JACKSON, discussing in a single paragraph the authority of the Bible, declares with the same plainness of speech that in the old sense, the sense which we still attach to the word authority, the Bible has now no authority whatever. 'We no longer believe that a biblical statement is necessarily true simply because it is a biblical statement.' He refers to the historical and scientific facts which enter into the Bible narrative. Over these, he says, there is no room for authority; 'the only authority is the authority of the facts themselves.' But the situation is precisely the same in the realm of the moral and spiritual. Here also, he says, the authority is not of the Bible. The only authority that can be recognized by us is the authority of the truth which the Bible brings to us.

Mr. T. R. GLOVER, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and University Lecturer in Ancient History, has delivered a Lecture—the Swarthmore Lecture it is called—on *The Nature and Purpose of a Christian Society* (Headley Brothers; 1s. net). The tone of the lecture, perhaps the very title of it, suggests the thought that possibly Mr. GLOVER delivered it to an audience that was more interested in the individual than in society. And if we read the preface last, as we are always expected to do, we shall find that our surmise is right. The Swarthmore Lecture is a Quaker foundation. Mr. GLOVER's audience therefore consisted mainly of those to whom the great fact of life is the Inner Light, the revelation of God directly and immediately to their own individual souls.

Why did Mr. GLOVER lecture to Quakers on a Christian Society? For two reasons. First, because he believes that those who make much of the Inner Light have always to be warned against the abuse of that enjoyment. He quotes St.

John of the Cross. 'I am terrified,' says that Spanish mystic of the Counter Reformation, 'I am terrified by what passes among us in these days. Anyone who has barely begun to meditate, if he becomes conscious of these words during his self-recollection, pronounces them forthwith to be the work of God, and, considering them to be so, says, "God has spoken to me," or, "I have had an answer from God." But it is not true; such an one has only been speaking to himself. Besides, the affection and desire for these words which men encourage, cause them to reply to themselves, and then to imagine that God has spoken.'

The other reason is, that however sure of the Inner Light a man may be, and however accurately he may interpret it, he will be the better to hear what other men's experience has been. 'I believe,' says Mr. GLOVER, 'that any real light that comes to a man from God, directly or indirectly, will be confirmed by the light that comes to others from Him.' More than that, he believes that the experience of any individual is true only if it corresponds with the experience of the historic Church. 'I believe in George Fox as a religious teacher and not in Joseph Smith, Jun., because I am convinced that history is rational and relevant to ourselves. In every sphere of life progress has been made by use of past experience—in ship-building from the earliest dug-out to the *Olympic* and the *Mauretania*. In religion also the past is never irrelevant; it is a guiding series of lights, and it has to be prolonged.'

Now as Mr. GLOVER proceeds to make known the advantage to the individual Christian of a Christian Society, he comes inevitably to the doctrines that are held. For it is the doctrines that a man holds that make him differ from other men. No doubt, as St. James expresses it, if a man is to *show* that he has faith, he can do it only by his works. But it is his faith that makes him the man he is. It would seem, therefore, that doctrine is the great individualizer. It is so. Yet Mr. GLOVER believes, and believes with all his

might, that no doctrine of vital worth can be held securely by any man unless he finds that it is held also by other men.

For the vital doctrines of Christianity are very difficult. They are difficult to comprehend. They are most difficult to make the venture of life on. What is the history of the Church but the history of conflict about doctrine? One individual, seeking to express the relation of the Son to the Father, says *homoiousios*, of similar substance; another *homoousios*, of the same substance. Other individuals range themselves on either side; and the modern Carlyle laughs sardonically at the spectacle of a Church rent in twain over a diphthong. But at last the Christian Society determines that 'the same in substance' is the only Catholic doctrine. And even a Carlyle lives to see that the continued existence of the Church depended on that diphthong.

Very well, let the individual find his doctrine of the person of Christ. Is it possible for him to find it and be fully persuaded of it without once referring it to the history of Christian doctrine? Mr. GLOVER says that there are three great difficult doctrines which have kept the Christian society alive, and which in return the Christian society has kept for the individual. He does not think it possible that any Christian man or woman can be fully persuaded of any of these doctrines, so difficult are they, if no reference is made to the experience of the Church.

The first is the doctrine of Grace. Mr. GLOVER seems to say that the doctrine of Grace is peculiarly a doctrine of the individual. He quotes the remark lately made, that men, as a rule do not care much about the doctrine of Grace till they reach the age of thirty, and he says that there is an element of truth in it. For it is not till we get a just measure of our own forces and deficiencies that we care to ask for Divine aid.

When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
The youth replies, I can.

But the man in middle age is less ready with that answer. 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?' is more apt to be his thought. Christianity is, in short, 'the religion of all poor devils,' as the German Jew Börne said of it. And the man who appreciates the doctrine of Grace is the man who is conscious of failure, conscious too that he can no longer wrestle against failure, and is ready to accept whatever is offered him.

So for a moment it seems as if Grace were altogether a thing for the individual. But the doctrine of Grace is found to be a most difficult doctrine. To believe that all the past is forgiven, to believe that every new hour's needs bring ever new supply of Grace—to believe, that is to say, just when we are most despondent, that we are accepted in the Beloved and have grace given to help us in every time of need—that is difficult indeed. But the experience of those who have gone this way before is invariable and overwhelming.

'Difficulty round about and within'—these are Mr. GLOVER's words,—'a deepening consciousness of weakness and inadequacy, and the experience that, with a daily surrender to God's will and a daily acceptance of His power flooding life with joy and peace and helpfulness, all things become possible—these are the foundations on which the Church's doctrine of Grace rests; and they have been well tested in the centuries.'

The second doctrine is the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is curious, is it not, that Mr. GLOVER should put the doctrine of Grace first, and the doctrine of the Incarnation second? But he is considering the individual, and assuredly in the experience of the individual grace is before incarnation. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life'—that is God's order. But the believer's order is the belief first, the fact of the forgiveness, the joy of grace, and then the amazing discovery that it is

the end of a great scheme of redemption laid out by the love of the Almighty.

Now who can believe the doctrine of the Incarnation without reference to the history of the Church? We sometimes hear it said that we should all be Unitarian if it were not for the Bible. Let us add 'and the Church.' For this is a great and difficult doctrine, and we need the testimony of 'all the saints who from their labours rest.'

What is their testimony? It is that they died for Christ. For what Christ did they die? Says Mr. GLOVER, 'There is something even ludicrous in the idea of a man dying for the crucified phantom of the Docetist. Who could die for a Jesus who devised a conjuring trick in order to avoid death Himself?'

For life is sweet, says Mr. GLOVER. And he remembers Borrow. 'There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?' Life is sweet to the Christian saint, as sweet as to the Spanish gypsy.

Heaven above is softer blue,
 Earth around is sweeter green!
 Something lives in every hue
 Christless eyes have never seen:
 Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
 Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
 Since I know, as *now* I know
 I am His, and He is mine.

And yet the Christian saints did not refuse to die. They did not, when the Church was at its quietest and best, put themselves in the way of martyrdom, but they did not put themselves out of the way of it. For they knew that He who died for them was no other than the only begotten Son of God. And thus, 'to men who in every fibre of their thinking are individualists—as so

many of us are apt to be—who will each start anew to think the world out, wavering and shifting as to truth and the criteria by which it may be judged—there is something awful, something wonderful, in the great spectacle of the Church in its solidarity standing one great witness to a faith which the individual, with his short range, working on preconceptions imposed on him by his day, would pronounce impossible and incredible. It is something to realize that in every age men have found it impossible and incredible, and have committed themselves to a faith that went beyond their understanding and been justified.’

The third doctrine is the doctrine of the Judgment. That the doctrine of the Judgment has held a place in the history of the Church, and has held it so prominently and so long, is one of the puzzles of this time. There is no doubt, be it ever so puzzling now, that our fathers believed in the Last Judgment. But how did they believe in it? Here is the marvel. The doctrine

of the Judgment became to them a mighty force for righteousness. That a Judgment there would be, and that the Judge would be Christ their Saviour, gave them a standard of righteousness of the loftiest kind. So lofty was the standard that in every age it was found to be unapproachable. The reach, in Browning’s phrase, ever exceeded the grasp. And yet its height has been justified by history. There are those who explain the progress of human morality by the use of the word Evolution. It is merely a word to juggle with. ‘Historically,’ says Mr. GLOVER, ‘nothing has helped mankind forward so uniformly and so steadily as the concentration of the Church’s thought on its Master and its Judge.’

‘We believe that He will come to be our Judge.’ The belief is our inheritance from the Christian Society. Let us repeat it to such good purpose that for each one of us this most difficult doctrine of the Last Judgment may be a power making for righteousness.

The Pilgrim’s Progress.

BY THE REV. JOHN KELMAN, D.D., EDINBURGH.

The Second Part.

WE have now reached the last section of the journey, from the Delectable Mountains to the end. The special feature of this portion is indeed that which more or less characterizes the whole of the Second Part of the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the comfort and welcome that there are in Christianity for the weak. It is peculiarly interesting to notice the emphasis laid upon this by so robust a man as John Bunyan. The tenderness of such characters as his need not, however, surprise us. In the midst of his rough strength there is an extraordinary sensitiveness and an imaginative delicacy which may well prepare us for such compassion and understanding of those who are not strong like himself; and if at times the weak brother becomes troublesome, or even allows

himself to trade upon his weakness, Bunyan will answer your remonstrance by a reminder that he himself and all his stronger readers have also much in them that needs toleration.

The Delectable Mountains.

Here we are met at the outset by the usual care of the weak. This is the place of spiritual vision and understanding, and here the strong must choose and find their spirituality for themselves, while the shepherds will need to give all their attention to the feeble. ‘So the feeble and the weak went on, and Mr. Great-heart and the rest did follow.’

On the whole the passage is not quite so open-air and breezy as the corresponding passage in the