

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

'I HAVE tried in this book, with the aid of human reason, which God gave us to use in His service, and of human experience in history and life, to set down the fixed points, as it were, of the Christian system, which joined together make up that framework upon which each will construct his own picture of ultimate reality.' These words come from the Preface to a competent, popular, and readable outline of Christian Doctrine from the pen of the Rev. Leslie SIMMONDS, M.A., Assistant Priest of All Saints, Margaret Street, London—*The Framework of Faith* (Longmans; 8s. 6d. net).

This book is one of a series of books, 'The Teaching of the Church Series,' planned to be of help to 'the Parish Priest and his Workers, as they reply to the challenges of this generation with the challenges of Christ.' How far it succeeds in its purpose may be gathered from an account of one of its chapters. There are chapters on the Existence, Nature, and Revelation of God, the Nature of Man, God-Made-Man, Redemption, The Church, and Man's Final Destiny. Let us examine the chapter on the central theme of Christian Doctrine, which is 'God-Made-Man.'

In the first part of the chapter the point is well made that Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation. It is founded not upon an ethical standard or a way of life but upon a Person who claimed Divinity for Himself, and who from the day of His Resurrection has been acclaimed as both God and

Man. In the third part of the chapter there is given a good conspectus of the teaching of Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is on the middle part that we concentrate, where the attempt is made to expound the doctrine of the Incarnation.

The first Christians were ready to worship Christ as God, while at the same time acknowledging Him as Man, without any questions as to how Godhead and Manhood could be united in one Person. But as the years passed it became essential, not only for the proper understanding of the faith but also for the safeguarding of it from attacks from without, that it should be set forth in terms of the current thought of the Patristic Age. This effort culminated in the Definition of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which contains the main outlines of the orthodox Christology.

In the Definition of Chalcedon the dogma of the Two Natures in One Person was laid down. But the question had been asked, and is still asked, How can we conceive of Godhead and Manhood as being joined together to compose one Person? The key is only to be found, as Mr. SIMMONDS says, in the mystery of personality. Now personality is not the same thing as the individual soul. There is a reality behind both the soul, with its quota of powers of intellect and will, and the body, with its collection of limbs and organs and nerves. And this reality we call personality.

'A human being is compounded of the common stock (which is human nature) together with something, different in each being, which distinguishes him from all the rest of mankind. In mathematical language, an individual is a constant, plus a variable. The constant is our common human nature. The variable is personality.'

As personality is not an assumption but a reality, we must conclude that at the creation of each new being there is added to that common nature an eternally distinguishable mark. But in Christ the place which, in other individuals, is occupied by a created human personality is taken by the uncreated and eternal Person of the Word of God. That is the only possible way in which it can be explained how the Word became flesh.

This explanation secures the true unity of God and man in the one Christ. His Manhood was not swallowed up in His Divinity. He remained in full possession of that common stock, that human nature, which He shared with other members of the human race. Nor, on the other hand, was there in Him a dual personality. The human personality which results in the ordinary course of God's creative power was replaced in His case by the Divine.

Moreover, through this explanation alone the true relationship of the two natures can be realized. The Manhood of Christ is seen to be the instrument of His Godhead, the active channel of the Divine power and truth; just as in the human body the hand is the living instrument of the brain. It is not in spite of the taking upon Himself of human nature that God reveals Himself to men, but by the means of a complete human nature whose powers are used as instruments and channels of the Divine Personality.

Students of Christology will here recognize an attempt to present in a modern way that Cyrillian theology of the Incarnation which was endorsed by St. Thomas and by the Protestant Reformers, and which remains the standard of Christological orthodoxy. It is, however, not easy to see how reality may be ascribed to the 'constant,' which is

our common human nature, apart from the 'variable,' which is personality. An impersonal human nature appears to be a mere abstraction.

That leading representative of the new orthodoxy, Professor Emil Brunner, does not appear to uphold the Chalcedonian formula of the Two Natures in One and its Cyrillian interpretation in quite the same way as this. He allows personality to the God-man, in the sense of created human personality, but what he does not allow is human personality in the moral sense. He distinguishes between 'person' and personality in the moral sense, and says that in the secret places where ordinary human beings possess sinful personality Jesus Christ possesses the eternal and Divine 'Person' of the Logos. So long as the Divine and the human are regarded as disparate entities there is perhaps no better way of expressing the Christian sense of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

The Rev. William PATON, M.A., D.D., the well-known Secretary of the International Missionary Council, has published his 'Social Service Lecture' for 1939 under the curious and *démodé* title, *The White Man's Burden* (Epworth Press; 2s. 6d. net). There is nothing *démodé* about the lecture, however. And the title is in the nature of a challenge, as one might say: 'Is this to-day the attitude we should adopt towards the dark races? Does this century-old phrase really express what we feel about our duty and opportunity in regard to peoples whom historical events have more or less put in our charge?'

The situation, to begin with, is not what it was. The dark races have become highly vocal. They are inclined to insist on their own point of view. They want to do, and not only to be done for. They are getting a self-consciousness. The most obvious example of this is India, but it is true all over. And the problem Dr. PATON sets in his lecture is a terribly urgent one: What *is* our duty to-day?

He reminds us that, speaking quite generally, there are two distinct standpoints in the Christian camp. There are the social reformers, who contend that our task is to bring in the Kingdom of God, so to shape the structure of human society that it will correspond to God's will. Our immediate duty is to deal with conditions that prevent the Kingdom coming—economic exploitation, malnutrition, and the like. Whatever the Kingdom of God means, it means at least a human society on this earth remoulded after the mind and will of Christ.

On the other side there are those who, in the words of the German statement at the Madras Conference, believe that 'the Church has not to bring into force a social programme for a renewed world order or even a Christian State.' Of course the Church must give itself to works of Christian compassion. But our immediate task is to preach the gospel, to win men to God, to present a Saviour to sinners. The Church of Christ is an interim body between the times of God, who has sent the Saviour and will send Him again.

It is not enough to say that both these contentions are sound. We must get beneath them to fundamental principles if we are to deal rightly with the concrete matters that really concern us. And so Dr. PATON sets out to state four positions which, after endless discussion with men of many nations, he holds to be true and to be defensible on Christian and Biblical grounds.

In the first place, the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus and in the thought of the New Testament is always something that God brings in, never something that man achieves. 'The Kingdom will come in' (Dr. Edwyn Bevan is quoted), 'by some display of God's power and glory, which all men, whatever their wills may be, will not be able to help seeing.' And yet this is to happen *here*. The Kingdom is brought in by God in His own time, consummating the whole earthly process of which the Incarnation and Death and Resurrection of the Son, Jesus Christ, are the supremely significant points, transcending in its perfection the

whole temporal process and yet governing it as the end to which it is directed and by which it is judged.

In the second place, He who shall come is He who has already come. To believe in Jesus Christ means that His mind is for us normative. It must govern our action; and so far as action by the individual is controlled by the general structure of society, Christians cannot help but strive to mould that society so that it may be easier for men to obey the mind of Christ. It will not do to say that any Christian action directed to the system and not only to the individual is un-Biblical, Utopian, and idealistic. A Christianity which sets the social system outside the area of Christian discipleship and effort has in fact very little to say to the actual world in which we live.

Further, is not the heart of the business simply the question of sin? The challenge to a Utopian Christian social movement lies in this fact of human sin. There is no reason that should prevent us doing all we can to bring about a juster and happier order of society, provided we remember that this demands the redeeming of men's souls as well as the illumination of their minds. It is not enough to set out fine ideals and programmes before us. We must remember that they have to be handled by, and on behalf of, those who are everywhere handicapped by frailty and folly and failure.

Dr. PATON's fourth point is just what St. John says in the First Epistle: 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' It is perhaps here that we find the best ground for uniting the different strains of Christian thinking. It is the effect on the one who has, and yet remains indifferent to the need of him who has not, that is the serious evil.

These are Dr. PATON's fundamental principles which should govern our thought and action in regard to the problems of race as a whole. And Dr. Paton proceeds to apply them trenchantly in three directions: to social and economic factors, to political factors, and to race. In the case of the

social and economic factors Dr. PATON discusses the results of Western influence on the East, both bad and good. In spite of much good that has been done, there is an enormous weight of evil to be set on the other side. And Dr. PATON is clear that the remedy must be social as well as individual.

'It must surely be plain that in these conditions we have to face not only the uplifting and converting . . . of great masses of individual men, but also and equally the alteration of systems which profoundly influence the life of those individuals. In India the social order moulds 350,000,000 people every thirty years into its own image. Social changes produce moral results; the approach of the reformer and of the missionary alike must be both individual and social.'

Under the head of 'political factors' Dr. PATON discusses the acute question of our position in India, and his statement on this momentous problem is one of the wisest, most balanced, and satisfying we have seen. It amounts to this: We must as Christians insist upon the moral principles which alone justify the continuance, for a time, of the government of one people by another. Further, if it is true that we can help India to do justice to her minorities, and that without that help people whom historical events have entrusted to us must suffer, we must be sure that this is not a cloak for motives of a different sort. Finally, it is abundantly clear that the period of transition from complete dependence to complete independence ought not to be short, and that the best guidance we can give is needed. Let us provide this, in order that India may as soon as possible be able to assume her own burden.

It will be understood from this rapid summary how valuable a contribution this experienced and wise observer has made to the problems both of missionary policy and of international and social relations. And it ought to be said that in all Dr. PATON writes he has in view not only the individual but the Church. It is when we gather our ideas of Christian reforming, he says, into the bosom of the Church that we get away from the

conception of Christianity as merely ideas to be applied. It is life to be lived and power to be known. It is in the Church that racial pride can be overthrown, political life can be judged by a Christian insight, and social disintegration can be stayed by the power of a new bond of fellowship.

Science has acquired a very great prestige in our time, and its dicta are received by many with reverential awe. There is a popular idea that science provides us with the only reliable knowledge we have. 'Scientific' has almost come to be a synonym for 'true.'

This is not the view held by leading scientists themselves. Some of them have been at pains to warn us that science by its very nature cannot possibly cover the whole field of reality. Its methods are adapted to certain specific ends. It is like a net specially constructed to catch certain kinds of fish, and which therefore allows much else to pass through its meshes.

The scientist aims at giving a picture of the world that shall be purely objective, quite independent of any particular individual's way of looking at it. He assumes the rôle of an unbiassed spectator, standing apart from the thing he is observing, taking the greatest care not to interfere in any way with its action, and he strives to depict the object as it really and truly is. If he succeeds then he will be able to point to it and say, 'There it is, standing out there in time and space, undistorted by human fancy, no product of the imagination, but an independent entity firm as a rock and providing the only sure foundation on which men may build.'

Is such knowledge possible, or if possible can it be regarded as complete? Is it a full and adequate representation of reality? Leading scientists would repudiate such a suggestion with an emphasis which it would be impossible to exaggerate. Max Planck, the author of the Quantum Theory, declares that the difference between reality and the scientific

representation of it is as great as the difference between a cow and the picture of a cow, while Sir James Jeans remarks on 'the growing conviction that the ultimate realities of the universe are at present quite beyond the reach of science, and may be—and probably are—for ever beyond the comprehension of the human mind.'

Two difficulties in the way of regarding scientific knowledge as adequate and complete will readily occur to any thoughtful mind. One is that the scientist can only observe the world through the medium of some organ of sense, and can only make a representation of it through some activity of his own mind. How can he be sure that in passing through this medium reality has not suffered some distortion or obscuring? The most rigorous experiment must always in the last resort be controlled and influenced by the observer's own perceptions, and though it may be checked by the work of a thousand other observers they all suffer from a like limitation.

The other difficulty is that the scientist, when he stands apart from the world as a mere observer, puts himself thereby deliberately out of the picture. The world which he observes is not the complete world, but the world *minus* the observer. Now, however modest the scientist may be, we must insist that he is an essential part of the world, and that a description of reality without him is incomplete. But there is no possible way by which he can remedy this, however willing he may be. The eye may see everything round about it, but it can never possibly see itself. So the scientific observer can never abstract himself from himself, so as to get an objective view of himself. Who, then, is going to observe the observer? If you say, 'Bring in another observer,' then that other observer is *eo ipso* excluded from the picture. And as all intelligent beings who can be objectively observed may themselves become in their turn observers we can see how large and important elements in the realm of reality cannot be brought under scientific observation.

Problems of this sort are dealt with by Professor

John MACMURRAY in *The Boundaries of Science* (Faber & Faber; 7s. 6d. net). It need hardly be said that the treatment is exceedingly fresh and thought-provoking. In the sub-title the book is described as 'A Study in the Philosophy of Psychology,' and Professor MACMURRAY deals principally with the branches of science which concern themselves with the various aspects of human conduct, because in them the limitations or boundaries of science are most clearly seen. We can only indicate very briefly some of the lines of thought pursued.

'Science is a characteristic activity of the Western societies of the modern period.' This is very apt to be forgotten in the halo which is now thrown around modern science. It seems often to be regarded as some sort of final and absolute truth in contrast to the imperfect ideas and formulations of other ages. A sociological study of the modern period, however, shows science as one of its natural products. When the human mind threw off its shackles at the Renaissance there arose a mighty wave of discontent with things as they were and a keen desire to master and improve the environment. This movement has been, of course, opposed throughout by a conservative spirit which resents all change, and resents it most keenly where science threatens to touch on man's own life and conduct.

Accordingly progress was first made in the realm of the inorganic, where only the material environment was affected. 'The material world is less highly charged with emotion than the field of organic or personal life. The social inhibitions which prevent the investigation of the material world are consequently more easily overcome. The mind will resist any interference with its customary attitudes to the world in the field of biology or psychology much more strongly than in the field which physics studies.'

The next stage was the introduction of scientific method into the field of the organic. This stage corresponds roughly with the nineteenth century. And now the final stage is reached to-day in the application of scientific method in the field of

psychology. As science has thus widened its scope there has been a continual tendency in the direction of a materialistic interpretation of phenomena. The physicist has tended to interpret the organic in terms of the inorganic. The biologist has tended to over-emphasize what is common to human and animal life, and to ignore the differences which centre in the intentional character of all typically human action.

Now a difficulty begins to emerge for science. It is somewhat similar to that which confronts the complete sceptic. If his theory of scepticism is true, then he must be sceptical of the truth of his own scepticism. In like manner the scientist, if he concludes that the world is a materialistic system in which every event is rigidly determined by pre-existing conditions, must in consistency include his own scientific theory in the system. He must regard it as the inevitable product of certain pre-existing conditions over which he has no control, and consequently his theory cannot be true, for in such a system questions of truth and falsehood are quite irrelevant.

This difficulty comes to light most clearly in the new psychology, which claims to give a scientific account of the operations of the human mind. The theory maintains that all human behaviour is a reaction to a stimulus. If this is true then the production of the theory also is a reaction to some stimulus, and belief or disbelief in it is a similar reaction. 'What, then, can be meant by asking whether the theory is true? The question whether it is true can only be another reaction to a stimulus.' All the same the psychologist in producing his theory evidently means it to be taken as really true and not a mere reaction to a stimulus.

This difficulty leads to a glaring inconsistency when the practice of psycho-therapy is based on

the new psychology. In the theory the subconscious is the real determinant of conduct, and the conscious is the unreal. But in the practice of psycho-therapy this is reversed. The aim is to bring to light elements of the subconscious in order that they may be controlled by the conscious. 'If, then, we were to take the theory at its face value, we should have to conclude that if the theory were true the practice based upon it would be impossible; and since the practice is not merely possible but practically successful, the theory could not be true.'

This antinomy is resolved when it is recognized that there is an element in human behaviour which is not observable by science, the very element which makes it characteristically human. 'It is the determination or modification of the observable, objective behaviour by subjective intentions. It is, in fact, what is referred to in human behaviour by the term "reason".' The knowledge which science gives is merely instrumental. The question whether it becomes an instrument of good or evil is from the purely scientific point of view irrelevant. 'Whether it is employed for good or bad purposes, for construction or for destruction, to increase happiness or to increase misery, depends upon the character of the intentions which it serves. If there can be no knowledge which enables us to unify or harmonize the very many inconsistent intentions which human beings seek to realize, then there can be no way open to us by which we can control, to the slightest extent, our own destiny or the future of the societies to which we belong. Whether the result of science will be to increase the intensity and horror of an inherently meaningless existence or will lead to peace and the increase of human happiness must be a matter of pure chance about which we can literally do nothing at all. . . . For myself, I find such a conclusion not merely abhorrent, but completely absurd.'

