

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

WHERE were the disciples assembled on the Day of Pentecost? St. Luke says 'they were all together in one place'; and again he says that the sound 'filled all the house where they were sitting.' What house was it? Professor Chase believes that it was the Temple.

The question arises at the very beginning of his new book on the *Credibility of the Acts of the Apostles* (Macmillan). For Dr. Chase says that we cannot get into touch with the author of the Acts till we observe that he gives the fulfilment of Christ's promise of the Spirit the foremost place in his record. But St. Luke is interested in men. He is not interested in dates and places. He therefore makes the fulfilment of the promise unmistakable and impressive, but he is not careful to tell us where it occurred. That it occurred in Jerusalem there is no doubt; Dr. Chase believes that it also occurred in the Temple.

Does not St. Luke tell us that, both before and after the day of Pentecost, the apostles were 'continually in the Temple'? He tells us also that they went to the Temple at the appointed hours of prayer. Dr. Chase believes that the Master had consecrated the Temple anew for them. He counts it probable that they went with Him to the Temple on the eve of the Passover, and that

it was there they listened to His prayer of consecration, recorded for us in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. Now it was the custom of the priests to open the gates of the Temple at midnight, both at the Passover and at Pentecost, in order that before the morning sacrifice they might examine the offerings of the people as they crowded in. If other pious Jews were at the Temple when 'the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled,' Dr. Chase cannot believe that the apostles were anywhere else.

And the language of St. Luke fits the Temple best. St. Luke says 'they were all together in one place.' St. Paul twice uses almost the same phrase of assembling for worship (1 Co 11²⁰ 14²⁸). St. Luke says that 'it filled all the house where they were sitting.' The 'house' is the regular term, both in the Septuagint and in Josephus, for the chambers of the Temple. St. Luke says again that 'the multitude came together.' 'The multitude'—note the definite article (τὸ πλῆθος)—is St. Luke's own expression for the worshippers in the Temple courts (Lk 1¹⁰, Ac 21³⁶).

Well, if it was the Temple, what then? Then, says Professor Chase, certain obscurities in the narrative are at once disposed of. The presence of large numbers of Jews of the Dispersion, and

the immediate gathering of 'the multitude' to the place where the apostles were sitting, are both explained. The worshippers, waiting in the Temple courts, heard at once of the occurrence, and flocked to the chamber where it took place. And it is easy to understand how a large crowd could be accommodated there, and could listen to St. Peter's speech. It is not so easy if it was a house in one of the narrow streets of Jerusalem.

Has the President of Queens' College proved his point? He passes at once to a deeper and more debatable matter.

He passes to the wonder of the day of Pentecost: 'There appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them.' There are two ways of regarding this statement. The one way is to put it entirely aside as mythical; the other is to accept without understanding or questioning it. Are there only two ways? Dr. Chase thinks there must be a third.

It is possible, he thinks, to understand it. Now Dr. Chase does not deny the supernatural in the New Testament. But when he seeks to 'understand' this miracle, he finds it easiest to explain it away. He accepts the miracles in the Gospels and, apparently, in the Acts of the Apostles. But this miracle is different. It belongs to a different order. It stands alone. And he thinks that at the moment when the illuminating Spirit was poured upon the Church, it was the sunlight, the sunlight of a new day, that smote upon the apostles. 'Was it unnatural,' he asks, 'that Christians should see a deeper meaning in the sun's rays streaming through the colonnades and the arches of the Temple and resting upon the apostles, and, connecting the sight with the wonders of apostolic utterance which ensued, should play upon a not uncommon use of the word "tongue," and speak of "tongues like as of fire" resting on the apostles?' And he concludes that 'in the compressed narrative of the Acts at this point St. Luke has blended the language of

history and the language of the allegorical interpretation of history.'

'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished.' What did our Lord mean by saying that? The 'things' belonged to the end of the world. Did He mean that some of those who were then alive would see the end of the world? Or is it our records that are astray? The words occur in almost identical language in all the three first Gospels (Mt 24³⁴, Mk 13³⁰, Lk 21³²). They are always introduced by the emphatic 'Verily.' It is hard to say that the Synoptic Gospels are untrustworthy, it is harder to say that the Lord was mistaken.

An American writer, whose name is the Rev. J. Louis M'Clung, writes on this great *crux interpretum* in the *Bible Student* for February and March. He does not believe that our Lord was mistaken. To hold by the infallibility of Jesus he counts the fundamental principle of all true exegesis. Nor does he believe that the Gospel reports are untrue. He believes that the whole difficulty has arisen from our misunderstanding the words 'this generation.'

Mr. M'Clung has examined the use of the phrase 'this generation' in the Gospels. He comes to the conclusion that it does not refer to time. It does not describe the generation then alive. It is ethical. 'This generation' is a shorter way of saying 'a sinful and adulterous generation.' On the lips of our Lord it is a terse description of all those in all time who are outside the Kingdom of God.

To the mind of Christ there have always been two classes of men in the world, and only two—the children of this world and the children of the Kingdom. On one occasion He calls the children of this world 'the children of this world *in their generation.*' He did not mean in the particular

generation in which He was living. On another occasion He said, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man shall also be ashamed of him when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.' Was this retribution to be confined to those who were alive when Jesus was incarnate on the earth? Clearly, it applies to those who shall deny Him throughout all the generations of men. Therefore, says Mr. M'Clung, the phrase 'this adulterous and sinful generation,' or more shortly 'this generation,' applies to those who remain without the circle of His confessors in all time to come.

When, therefore, our Lord said, 'This generation shall not pass away till all these things are accomplished,' He meant to encourage His disciples. He had called them that they might go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He encourages them now to go and preach with all earnestness. For He says that their redemption will not be accomplished until 'this generation' is ready to pass away. Now there is but one way in which 'this generation' can 'pass away.' It is by being absorbed in the Kingdom of God.

Some reference was made last month to the American Revised Version and its new translations. One of the new translations mentioned was this: 'Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious' (Ac 17²²). The English Revised Version has, 'I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious.' The difference is more than the difference between a courteous and a curt form of speech. Which of these translations is right?

Professor Chase has no doubt that the English translation is right. In his new book on the *Credibility of the Acts* he says, 'The opening words of St. Paul's speech at Athens, though they are often interpreted as expressive of commenda-

tion, are in reality words of rebuke not wholly unmingled with contempt.' And he translates: 'In all things I perceive that ye are very superstitious.'

Dr. Chase justifies his translation in a footnote. He quotes Theophrastus; he quotes Menander and Aristotle. These writers use the word which St. Paul uses here (*δεισιδαίμων*), and they use it with reprobation. And then he says that in point of fact the words of the apostle (*ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους*) express St. Paul's view of heathen idolatry already noticed by the historian: 'His spirit was provoked (*παρωξύνετο*) within him, as he beheld the city full of idols.'

And Professor Chase will not allow that the comparative softens the censure, as Field contends. On the contrary, he holds that it hardens it. In the previous verse St. Luke has said that the Athenians spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. There is no softening of censure there. There is the keenest expression of it. And yet it is the comparative that is used (*ἢ λέγειν τι ἢ ἀκοῦειν τι καινότερον*). He will not even allow that the *ὡς* is softening. That little word certainly removes all impression of rudeness, for it is as much as to say 'in my opinion.' But even that word does not mitigate the sweep or the severity of the apostle's censure.

In the *Journal of Theological Studies* for the present quarter the Rev. G. H. Box, M.A., deplors the indifference with which Christian scholars regard the archæology of the Jews. There were Christians once, he says, who studied Jewish institutions, and found the study profitable for the interpretation of Christianity. He names Edersheim, Delitzsch, Weber, Biesenthal, and Caspari. But where are their successors? He can name only Dr. Charles Taylor in England, and Strack and Dalman in Germany. He hopes that, when the English translation of Dalman's

great work *Die Worte Jesu* appears, 'some improvement' will take place. But in the meantime critical results are quite unnecessarily one-sided and tentative because Jewish scholarship is so scarce.

Of the problems which a closer study of Jewish antiquities might solve, the most important perhaps is the connexion between the Christian Eucharist and the Jewish Passover. Was the Last Supper a Passover? If it was not, how is it so like a Passover? Where and when did it take on the features which even in the Synoptic Gospels at once suggest, and are manifestly meant to suggest, the Jewish Passover?

Mr. Box takes these questions in order. The first question is, Was the Last Supper a Passover? The Synoptic Gospels distinctly say that it was. St. Mark (14¹²) says that on 'the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover,' the disciples inquired where the Passover was to be eaten. Now the Passover, that is, the Paschal lamb, was sacrificed on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan. On that evening, which after sunset was reckoned the fifteenth of Nisan, the Passover was eaten. And the Synoptic accounts imply that on the same evening the Last Supper took place. Thus the Passover and the Last Supper would have coincided, and the Crucifixion would have occurred in the afternoon of the following day, which, according to Jewish reckoning, was still the fifteenth day of Nisan.

But the Fourth Gospel has a different account. When such passages are compared as Jn 13¹ 18²⁸ 19^{14, 31}, it is seen that according to this Gospel the Crucifixion took place in the afternoon of the *fourteenth* day of Nisan. It is a day earlier than the representation in the Synoptics. Then the Crucifixion would coincide with the slaying of the Paschal lamb, and the Last Supper would take place on the evening previous to the Passover.

Now the first explanation that occurs to a

random reader is that the writer of the Fourth Gospel wanted to represent Christ as the true Passover 'slain for us,' and so made His Crucifixion and the slaying of the Paschal lamb correspond. Mr. Box does not think so. He thinks that if the Synoptics and St. John conflict,—and he believes that they do conflict,—St. John is right and the Synoptics wrong.

For, in the first place, the evidence of the Synoptic accounts contradicts itself. The contradiction is in the words, 'On the first day of unleavened bread when they sacrificed the Passover.' They did not sacrifice the Passover, says Mr. Box, on the first day of unleavened bread. The first day of unleavened bread was the fifteenth day of Nisan, but they sacrificed the Passover on the fourteenth. There are other contradictions and there are other inconsistencies with Jewish usage in the Synoptic narratives. But this contradiction and inconsistency seems to Mr. Box to be 'absolutely decisive.'

In the second place, it is significant to Mr. Box's mind that there is no mention in the Synoptics of the Paschal lamb. The Fourth Gospel says that Jesus Himself was the Paschal Lamb, and St. Paul agrees with that. 'Christ our Passover,' says the apostle, 'has been sacrificed' (1 Co 5⁷). The Synoptics say nothing about this. They imply that Christ was sacrificed a day later than the Paschal lamb.

Again, there is a striking difference between the custom of the Passover feast and the Synoptic account of the Last Supper. At the Passover each person drank out of his own cup; at the Last Supper all drank out of one cup. And, finally, there is a difference between St. Luke's account and the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark. It is in regard to the number of the cups. As it is now generally agreed, St. Luke, according to the best text, mentions only one cup; St. Matthew and St. Mark mention more than one.

For those reasons Mr. Box concludes that the Last Supper was not a Passover. What was it, then? He believes that it was the weekly *Kiddûsh*.

The weekly *Kiddûsh* was a service in the home. It took place on Friday evening, according to our reckoning, just after the Jewish Sabbath began. Its purpose was the *sanctification* of the Sabbath, for so the word *Kiddûsh* means. Whilst the father and his sons are absent at the Friday night service in the synagogue, the mother prepares the table for the evening meal, and lights the extra candles in honour of the day. When the father and sons return they find the table spread, and two loaves instead of one placed at the head of it where the father is to sit. They are covered with a napkin. Near them stand an empty cup, and a bottle filled with wine. The family take their places at the table. The father chants the praises of the virtuous wife out of the Book of Proverbs (chap. 31), and the ceremony of the *Kiddûsh* begins.

First the story of the Creation and of the Rest on the seventh day is read out of the Book of Genesis. Then the father fills the cup, and as he holds it up he pronounces the blessing of the Sabbath day, ending with the words, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hallowest the Sabbath.' Then he drinks from the cup and hands it to his wife. She hands it to the children and others at the table. When they have all drunk of it they wash their hands. And when they have sat down again the father utters the benediction for the bread, and cuts one of the loaves, taking a piece to himself and distributing pieces to the others. Then the ceremony of the *Kiddûsh* is over, and the ordinary evening meal begins.

The points of similarity between the *Kiddûsh* and the Lord's Supper are evident. Both are family meals. At both there is but one cup,

which is passed round to all at the table. And the order of the service is the same.

The last statement will be challenged. The order of the *Kiddûsh* is, first the cup, next the washing of the hands, and then the distribution of the bread. The order in the accounts of the Lord's Supper is, first the breaking of the Bread, and then the Cup. And even if Mr. Box is right in following Edersheim, who believed that for the washing of the hands our Lord deliberately substituted the washing of the disciples' feet, still there remains the fact that in the *Kiddûsh* the wine precedes the bread, while in the Supper the breaking of the Bread comes first.

Mr. Box replies that the breaking of the Bread does not come first in the account which we have in St. Luke. There, 'according to the true text,' only one Cup is mentioned, and it comes before the Bread. Moreover, this is the order which St. Paul twice follows (1 Co 10^{16, 21}). It is true that in one familiar passage (1 Co 11²³⁻²⁸) St. Paul reverses that order, saying, 'For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread.' Mr. Box believes that St. Paul in this passage is quoting a liturgical formula. Before he wrote that passage there had begun a movement towards identifying the Lord's Supper with the Passover. Features of the Passover feast were introduced into the celebration of the Supper. The order of the Cup and the Bread was changed. And already the new practice had got expressed in liturgical language, which St. Paul allows himself to adopt because of its familiarity to his readers.

If this difficulty in regard to St. Paul demands more evidence for the order which is claimed by Mr. Box, he is ready to furnish it. In the *Didache*, the most venerable and unimpeachable authority outside the New Testament, the order is first the Cup and then the Bread. This is the passage after the translation of Dr. Taylor—

'And as touching the Feast of Thanksgiving [Eucharist], thus give ye thanks :

'First, concerning the cup, We thank Thee, O our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy child, which Thou hast made known to us by Thy child Jesus. Thine be the glory for ever.

'And concerning the broken bread, We thank Thee, O our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou hast made known to us by Thy child Jesus. Thine be the glory for ever.

'As this broken bread was once scattered in grains upon the mountains, and being gathered together became one; so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth unto Thy kingdom. For Thine is the glory and the power, through Jesus Christ for ever.'

It is the business of the Christian prophet—accept the word instead of theologian, it is better—to declare what he has been taught of the things of the Spirit. It is the business of the student of natural science to tell what he has learned of the phenomena of nature. But sometimes the student of natural science has something to say about the things of the Spirit. And then he should be listened to. It may be true that he will not listen to the prophet speaking of natural science. It may be that when he speaks of the things of the Spirit he speaks to deny their existence or even their possibility. Still he should be listened to. If he has nothing to teach, he has a soul to save. And he may speak for other men of science who have the same attitude to the things that are unseen and eternal, but are silent.

Sir Henry Thompson published an article in the *Fortnightly Review* for March on 'The Unknown God.' He has now republished the article through Messrs. Frederick Warne, under the same title. He was in no hurry to publish. The materials for the article were collected upwards of twenty years ago. He was in no anxiety to publish. Even when it was written,

the article was written for himself alone. But he believed that the paper, brief as it is, might be to others what it had been to himself, 'a veritable *Pilgrim's Progress*,' and that is why he published it.

Sir Henry Thompson is an agnostic. He never uses the name, and he may repudiate it. But he is an agnostic as Professor Huxley, who claimed to have invented the name for himself, was an agnostic. He does not believe in revelation. He believes only in research. He believes that all the knowledge that man possesses or has ever possessed has come from the exercise of his natural faculties. There is but one way he says of gaining knowledge, and there never has been but one,—'the patient, diligent examination of natural phenomena on a large scale.' In one part of his paper he gives a brief outline of the history of man's progress,—man's 'long and painful progress',—and his purpose is 'to demonstrate that he has attained his present position solely by his own unaided efforts.'

Sir Henry Thompson does not believe in prayer. The student of nature, he says, must be both a cultivated and a truly religious man. But his religious feelings do not suggest to him the validity of the Christian practice of prayer. He knows that 'all events must follow the laws of nature, which are unalterable.' He does not pray 'to a Deity,' therefore, for gifts of any kind, not for the recovery of the sick or protection from personal danger, not even for the means of 'moral or mental improvement.' No doubt, he says, the act of prayer on the part of one who believes in its power to move the Deity to bestow a precious boon, brings consolation to the feelings of the applicant. It is a spiritual sedative which affords indescribable relief and enjoyment to many. Nevertheless, the only prayer is, 'not my will, but Thine be done.' And he hints that 'the sensible Christian' should be grateful that that is the only acceptable prayer. For 'what a chaos would the world present if short-sighted men could interfere

with the working of the laws which determine the course of events !'

Is this Sir Henry Thompson's *Pilgrim's Progress*, then? No, it is not this. All this is pure agnosticism, and it is agnosticism with the stretch of Professor Huxley's, who not only said, 'I do not know,' but also, 'No more do you.' Mark the title of the paper: it is 'The Unknown God?' When Sir Henry Thompson could only write 'The Unknown God' he was in the City of Destruction. His *Pilgrim's Progress* lies in the mark of interrogation.

Sir Henry Thompson believes in God. He never names Him. He even refuses to name Him. He says that the names by which God has been known—whether Jehovah, Theos, Jove, or God—carry associations with which he cannot agree. He therefore accepts Mr. Herbert Spencer's phrase, the 'Infinite and Eternal Energy.' But he believes in a God of wisdom, almost in a God of love.

He finds God's wisdom in phenomena. For nothing will persuade him to go beyond phenomena. It is a curious situation. He finds the Unseen and Eternal in the seen and temporal. He finds Him there, because the very regularity of the laws of nature which make prayer impossible is a sufficient, and to Sir Henry Thompson irresistible, proof that God is very wise.

And he finds God's love in the life of His living creatures. For He has made them, and are they not happy? They would be happy, he hears the unbeliever in his '*Pilgrim's Progress*' answer, if it were not for suffering and for death. So Sir Henry Thompson sets himself to consider the suffering and death that are in the world; and he ends by saying that, in spite of suffering and death, God's creatures are happy, and God is a God of love.

For it is a mistake, he says, to suppose that death is a time of pain. 'I shall venture to

state,'—these are his words,—'as the known result of long and careful observation of the phenomena which then occur, that a really painful death from disease is never witnessed.' There may have been suffering before death, but even that may now be avoided; thanks to one of the most recent of man's scientific researches—the inhalation of anæsthetic vapours. It may also be that death caused by terrible wounds on the battlefield, by the accidents of daily life, or the tortures of the Inquisition, is painful enough. But death by disease, death in its most usual forms, Sir Henry Thompson believes to be always preceded by a considerable period of insensibility. There may be automatic movements which distress the bystanders, but they are not felt by the subject of them. The surrender of life by man generally, and by the lower animals almost universally, is accomplished without suffering.

By the lower animals almost universally. For, in the first place, Shakespeare greatly erred when he said that the poor beetle we tread upon feels a pang as great as when a giant dies. The sense of pain corresponds with the development of the nervous system. The dog and the horse therefore, which have had their emotional powers much developed through intercourse with man, are susceptible to pain, and may suffer much if they are not relieved as man is by anæsthetics. But there are countless species of living active beings whose nervous system is so little developed that pain can scarcely be felt by them.

And, in the second place, when death occurs through violent means, as in the state of nature it so often occurs, it is mostly painless. For the fierce Carnivora seize their victim at a vital spot, as by the neck at the top of the spinal cord, and at once destroy sensation. It is called instinct. It is due perhaps to the necessity of preventing retaliation, now crystallized in that universal habit which we call instinct. But its result is to make death painless, and to prove to Sir Henry Thompson that God is a God of love.