

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

It has caused not a little amazement throughout the country that in the great year of the war certain members of the Church of England should have forced a controversy on the reservation of the Sacrament. What reason do they give?

The Rev. Darwell STONE, Principal of Pusey House in Oxford, will answer that question. He has written a book for the purpose, and has given it the name of *The Reserved Sacrament* (Scott; 2s. 6d. net). Dr. Darwell STONE is one of the men who demand the reservation.

Now in the history of the Christian Church the reservation of the Sacrament for private worship is a development of comparatively recent origin. There was no such custom in the early Church. The distinguished living Roman Catholic theologian, Father Herbert Thurston, has even made the following statement: 'In all the Christian literature of the first thousand years no one has apparently yet found a single clear and definite statement that any person visited a church in order to pray before the body of Christ which was kept upon the altar.'

There is a single example, occurring as early as the middle of the fourth century, which has to be examined. It is the case of Gorgonia, the sister of St. Gregory. St. Gregory himself tells the story.

It is the story of his sister's recovery from a great illness. He says: 'Despairing of any other help, she betook herself to the Physician of all, and waiting for the dead of night, at a slight intermission of the disease, fell before the altar with faith, and, calling on Him who is honoured thereon with a great cry and with every kind of entreaty, and pleading with Him by all His mighty acts accomplished at any time, for she knew both those of ancient and those of later times, at last ventured on an act of pious and splendid boldness; she imitated the woman the fountain of whose blood was dried up by the hem of Christ's garment. What did she do? Placing her head on the altar with another great cry and with a wealth of tears, like one who of old bedewed the feet of Christ, and declaring that she would not let go until she was made well, she then applied to her whole body this medicine which she had, even such a portion of the antitypes of the honourable body and blood as she treasured in her hand, and mingled with this act her tears. O the wonder of it! She went away at once perceiving that she was healed, with the lightness of health in body and soul and mind, having received that for which she hoped as the reward of hope, and having gained strength of body through her strength of soul. These things indeed are great, but they are true.'

The question turns on the meaning of the

words, 'Him who is honoured thereon.' The Roman Catholic theologian takes these words to be a general reference to the honour paid to our Lord when the Liturgy is celebrated, and the treasuring of the Sacrament by Gorgonia a gathering up of remnants which happened to have been left on the altar from the Celebration of the Liturgy. 'Gorgonia,' he says, 'visited the altar as God's resting place, and then put out her hand in the hope of finding some few crumbs or traces of the sacred species, such as would hardly fail to be left where the Liturgy was frequently celebrated.'

The Anglican theologian thinks otherwise. 'It is always difficult,' he says, 'to be sure of the meaning of an isolated passage; but it is far more probable that Gorgonia went to the altar and took the reserved Sacrament from a receptacle either on it or near it, and, imitating those who in the days of our Lord's mortal life had laid hold of His garment or His feet, touched her body with His Sacrament as a means of miraculous healing than that she looked for and found crumbs of the Sacrament accidentally left there. If so, the passage is an instance of very remarkable recourse to the reserved Sacrament as a means of offering prayer and receiving supernatural help.'

Apart from that doubtful instance, it is admitted that no evidence remains of the existence of such a custom as the reservation of the Sacrament throughout at least the first thousand years of the Church's history. The first clear example is found in the *Ancren Riwle*, which probably belongs to the early part of the thirteenth century. 'In it the anchoresses are directed what devotions to use when first rising and while dressing; it then proceeds, "When ye are quite dressed, sprinkle yourselves with holy water, which ye should have always with you, and think upon God's flesh, and on His blood, which is over the high altar, and fall on your knees toward it, with this salutation, 'Hail, Thou Author of our creation! Hail, Thou

Price of our redemption! Hail, Thou who art our Support during our pilgrimage! Hail, O Reward of our expectation!'"

There has been no reservation of the Sacrament in the Church of England hitherto for the purposes of private worship. Why is the demand made in the stress of the war? Dr. Darwell STONE's answer is that the demand is made just to meet the stress of the war. First he says that 'since the outbreak of war in August 1914, a great and pathetic emphasis has been laid on the need of reservation in military hospitals and at the front.' That refers to reservation for the benefit of the sick and dying, which is not the same thing.

But, he says (and the second reason is the real reason), there are those who, travelling abroad, have become accustomed to prayer before the Sacrament in Roman Catholic Churches, and now desire the opportunity of practising the same at home. It may be a question whether such a desire should be encouraged or not. Some will say that a little enlightenment would be more after the mind of Christ. Dr. STONE has no hesitation in giving it encouragement.

And he has no doubt that the prayer is, and is meant to be, the prayer of adoration. 'Those,' he says, 'who enter the place where the Sacrament is reserved are called to acts of worship. He Who is there present is the divine Lord Who was born of Mary and baptized and tempted, Who taught and healed and suffered, Who died and rose and ascended, Who is now at the right hand of the Father. All that He can claim of human love and adoration is due to Him in His sacramental presence. The worship which the Christian soul pays to Him when the Sacrament is consecrated is paid also as it is reserved. It includes the utmost response of which the soul is capable. If it differs at all from the worship which would be His if He were to manifest His visible presence, the difference is not because of anything in Him but only

because the soul might attain to something higher if the sight of the Lord were vouchsafed.'

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The disappearance from the New Testament of a great predestinarian text will not cause the consternation now that once it would have done. There may even be very many who will rejoice. And some will say, 'I told you so; the New Testament never was Calvinistic, and never could be.' But the rejoicing must not be too hot-headed. The text is not Pauline. And while St. Paul remains it will require much hardihood to say that the New Testament nowhere teaches predestination.

The text is in the First Epistle of St. Peter. The whole passage, according to the Revised Version, reads in this way: 'Because it is contained in scripture,

Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:

And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.

For you therefore which believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve,

The stone which the builders rejected,

The same was made the head of the corner; and,

A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed' (1 P 2<sup>6-8</sup>). The predestination is in the last words: 'whereunto also they were appointed.' 'It is,' says Dr. Rendel HARRIS, 'one of the strongest pieces of predestinarian doctrine in the New Testament.' It is Dr. Rendel HARRIS himself who has brought about its disappearance.

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He is working on the subject of early Christian testimonies upon which he has published a volume, with the title of *Testimonies* (Cambridge: at the University Press). It has for many years been suspected that, in their controversies with the Jews, the early Christians made use of collec-

tions of quotations from the Old Testament. Dr. Rendel HARRIS has come to the conclusion that one such collection was in existence very early in the history of the Church, so early that it could be used by St. Paul and St. Peter, not to speak of the authors of the Gospels. He calls it the primitive Testimony Book.

This Testimony Book was used to convert the Jews. If they would not be converted, it would serve to controvert them. It contained certain passages from the Old Testament, especially from the Psalms and the Prophets, which could be shown to refer to Christ, and to have been fulfilled in the actual life of Jesus of Nazareth. Is it possible that in making these quotations the author or authors of the Book of Testimony were not always careful to assign a particular quotation to its own author? Dr. Rendel HARRIS thinks it is quite possible. In that way he is inclined to account for the fact that in our best manuscripts, and so presumably in the original text, of Mk 1<sup>2</sup>, a quotation from Malachi is assigned to 'Isaiah the prophet'; and a quotation from Zechariah (as we now possess that prophet) is attributed in Mt 27<sup>9, 10</sup> to Jeremiah. But that is not the point at present.

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The point which Dr. Rendel HARRIS makes at present is that the same two passages which are quoted from Isaiah by St. Peter are also quoted by St. Paul in Ro 9<sup>32, 33</sup>, and that they are quoted in the same order and in nearly identical language, so that it cannot be called a mere coincidence. Not only is the language in St. Peter and St. Paul alike, but in both it is quite unlike the language of the Septuagint. It follows that both were using some other translation than that of the Septuagint. The conclusion at which Dr. Rendel HARRIS arrives is that they both used the primitive Book of Testimonies.

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But how does that touch the predestinarian text in First Peter? It does not touch it. Dr. Rendel HARRIS, so far as we remember, has no violent

antipathy to Calvinism. He knows what he finds in St. Paul. He was content to find something similar in St. Peter. But as he pursued his study of the Book of Testimonies he came upon the Epistle of Barnabas. There he found the same passages from Isaiah and the Psalms quoted as in the First Epistle of Peter and the Epistle to the Romans, and again not from the Septuagint but some other translation. Clearly Barnabas also had the Testimony Book before him and was quoting from it.

But in quoting from it he made one momentous alteration. The words in St. Peter which are spoken of the unbelievers *he refers to Christ*. Dr. Rendel HARRIS caught the hint at once. Instead of 'whereunto they were appointed,' he translated the words in 1 Peter 'whereunto he was appointed,' and the predestinarianism of the passage fell away from it.

Is it possible to come into touch with God apart from Jesus Christ? Jesus said of Himself, 'I am the way and the truth and the life (or as we believe the translation ought to be, when the Hebraism is removed, 'I am the true and living way); no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.' If that text is authentic, and the meaning of it as plain as it appears to be, it follows that a vast quantity of what is called Mysticism at the present day is either paganism or vapouring. Either it fails to come into contact with reality anywhere, or if it does the reality is Antichrist.

The Ven. Willoughby C. ALLEN, M.A., Archdeacon of Blackburn, has published a volume of addresses, sermons, lectures, and papers. Its title is *The Christian Hope* (Murray; 4s. net). It opens with four ordination addresses. In one of these addresses Mr. ALLEN answers the question, 'Is it possible to come into communion with God apart from Christ?' His answer is that it is not possible.

By 'coming into communion with God' he means

so as to obtain a revelation superior to or more immediate than the revelation through Christ. No doubt the ancient Hebrews came in some sense into touch with God. No doubt to the modern Hindu there comes some knowledge of God, through conscience or the external world. God has never left Himself without witness. But what is meant at present is such intercourse with God as surpasses the Christian revelation; a knowledge of God that is at least equal to that made ours in Christ Jesus and obtained by direct vision, spirit meeting spirit without the aid of the Incarnate. Mr. ALLEN declares, without hesitation or qualification, that no such communion is possible.

Why is it not possible? First because of the words of Christ already quoted, words in which no 'mystic' has ever yet discovered an intelligible meaning. And next because 'in the Divine-human Person of Jesus Christ there is revealed the whole Godhead.' Let us see what Mr. ALLEN means by that.

He means that while there are three 'Persons' in the Trinity each Person is God, and the whole of God. He speaks, of course, of revelation; we know nothing of God otherwise. Jesus Christ has revealed to men all that they know of God. As the Incarnate Christ He revealed God to men by word and deed and person. In every 'I am' there was a personal revelation. 'I am the light of the world,' because the purpose of light is to enable men to see, and in Him men saw the fulness of the Godhead bodily. There was then no means of obtaining a vision of God that passed Him by.

But He is here no more 'bodily.' All revelation is now by the Spirit, the third person in the Trinity. Is it not possible that the revelation of the Spirit may pass beyond the revelation given through the historical Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God? No, it is not possible.

For in the first place, the revelation in Christ is

and always must be the revelation of the whole mind of God. The Spirit also reveals the whole mind of God, but cannot surpass or supersede or be in any way independent of the revelation made in Christ Jesus. And in the second place, the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Since the Incarnation He has no relation to us, no existence for us, apart from Christ. When the Spirit comes to us, He comes to say, 'Jesus is the way and the truth and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by Him.' He says it as unreservedly as Jesus Himself said it when He was with us.

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The Rev. William TEMPLE, son of the great Archbishop, and himself a force to be reckoned with in the conflict with evil, has written a book to which he has given the title *Mens Creatrix* (Macmillan; 7s. 6d. net). The book was planned, he says, in the year 1908, 'when I was a junior don engaged in lecturing on Philosophy. At that time I had the presumption to believe that I was myself destined to be a philosopher.'

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The book throws no light on the word 'presumption.' Five-sixths of it are philosophical. And no fault is to be found with the philosophy. But Mr. TEMPLE'S interest is not in philosophy; it is in theology. Not presumption but inclination has led him to lay down philosophical and take up theological studies—the pressure upon him, let us say, of heredity, environment, the calling of God to leave speculation to others and become a witness to the truth which he has found true.

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Did he not know this in 1908? He knows it now. The war, which has made so many things clear, has made it clear to him that for him at least the gifts and calling of God are that he might always be ready to give an answer to every man that asks concerning the faith that is in him. But, whether he was conscious of it or not in 1908, he was even then a theologian. The whole philosophical argument of the book is to the end that philosophy is incomplete and unsatisfying.

Even then it would have been impossible for him to write a book that was philosophical wholly. But now the philosophical part, good philosophy as it is, gives him little satisfaction. He is at his best when he passes to

assert Eternal Providence  
And justify the ways of God to men.

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The scheme of the book is this. Philosophy 'begins with experience, and may include within that all which we can mean by "religious experience"; it may even give to this the chief place among the various forms of experience; but it begins with human experience and tries to make sense of that. If it reaches a belief in God at all, its God is the conclusion of an inferential process; His Nature is conceived in whatever way the form of philosophy in question finds necessary in order to make Him the solution of its perplexities. He may be a Person, or an Imperial Absolute, or Union of all Opposites—whichever will meet the facts from which the philosophy set out.'

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'But religion is not a discovery of man at all. It is indeed an attitude of man's heart and mind and will; but it is an attitude towards a God, who (or which) is supposed to exist independently of our attitude. In particular, Christianity is either sheer illusion, or else it is the self-revelation of God. The religious man believes in God quite independently of philosophic reasons for doing so; he believes in God because he has a conviction that God has taken hold of him. Consequently, in theology, which is the science of religion, God is not the conclusion but the starting-point. Religion does not argue to a First Cause or a Master-Designer or any other such conclusion; it breaks in upon our habitual experience—"Thus saith the Lord." It does not say that as nature, in the form of human nature, possesses conscience, therefore the Infinite Ground of nature must be moral; it says that God has issued orders, and man's duty is therefore to obey.'

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The issue is certainly clear. Is it true? What

evidence is there that God has made a revelation of Himself to man, and that that self-revelation constitutes religion? In regard to Christianity Mr. TEMPLE is very emphatic. In particular, he says, Christianity is either sheer illusion or else it is the self-revelation of God. What right has he to say that? What evidence does he offer?

The evidence that he offers is by no means great in amount. Nor, with the exception of one emphatic fact, is it very arresting. The truth is, Mr. TEMPLE makes no attempt to make it arresting. He seems to think that it is quite possible to have too much evidence. 'If evidence were complete and cogent,' he says, 'faith would become dependent upon intellectual proof and intellectual apprehension of the proof. It would thus lose a great deal of its spiritual quality and value.'

Too many items of evidence are, in any case,

unnecessary. For there is one undeniable fact, and it is sufficient. It is the fact of love.

Whatever may be true of the love of man for man, it is certainly true of the love of man for God, that man never loves God until God first loves man. 'We love,' says St. John, 'because he first loved us.' 'We cannot will to love God if we do not love Him; and if we do, there is no need to will, except for a deepening of the love. The issue lies with Him, not with us. At His own time He will call out from our hearts the response to His own love by the full manifestation of it in its irresistible power. So far as we have felt it, we prepare ourselves for a fuller response; so far as we trust those who tell us of it, we prepare ourselves to respond when the time shall come. But in the end the work is His. The work is His; yet we are not abolished or absorbed. It is our hearts that love, but it is His love that draws our hearts to Him. "The love of Christ constraineth us." "We love, because He first loved us."'

## The Meanings and Teachings of the Present Visitation.

BY THE REV. H. J. WOTHERSPOON, M.A., D.D., EDINBURGH.

THERE has been criticism of the word *Visitation* as used in the deliverance of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in appointing a special Commission of the Church upon the moral and spiritual issues of the war, as though it implied some peculiar bitterness in the Divine attitude to those involved in present dealings. But the word is really perfectly neutral. In the Old Testament God may be invoked to visit the heathen and their iniquity (Ps 59<sup>5</sup>), or to visit His vine, Israel, and to cause His face to shine upon it (Ps 80<sup>14</sup>). In the New Testament the day of Israel's visitation, which it did not know, is the day of the Son of Man and of His offered salvation.

### I.

The General Assembly speaks of this which has come upon the world as a visitation—and the

word implies *God*. We believe in a moral universe, in which things do not happen without purpose; we believe in a rational universe, in which things do not happen without meaning; we believe in a spiritual universe, in which man is always face to face with God's justice and God's love. There is nothing without God; the most impious of all scepticisms is that which says, *The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil*. There is a visitation; this catastrophe has roots in the past; it has a history; and Heaven has purposes through it. The scene of its evolution has been the human heart, and the history of it is a history of human alternatives and choices—of human hesitations and determinations—of human beliefs and disbeliefs. Therefore God is everywhere in this history, for God is in contact with the human heart in every determination.