

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

'THE Emotional Decline and Fall of the Stars' is the subject of an article by Professor Nash of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in a recent issue of *The New World*. The stars have touched the imagination of man from the earliest times. They touch it still. But their touch no longer issues in good conduct, because it no longer inspires to passion and devotion, making large and generous conduct possible. The stars have fallen from their highest estate. Professor Nash traces the history of their fall.

The history begins in Babylon. It was in Babylon, so far as we yet know, that Astrology was born. And Astrology is the study of the stars in their good and evil influences over men. The stars gathered to themselves a large and potent part of all the influences with which Nature encompasses man. Astrology sought to bind the influences that were evil and let loose the influences that were good. Thus Astrology became the trade of the most powerful, and the stars had a supreme commercial value.

Nor was the power of Astrology always exercised for ill. In some degree the imagination of man was touched to finer issues, and the spiritual touch issued in right conduct. Then Astrology was great gain. And more than that. From the

astrological, that is to say, the devotional, study of the stars, came much mathematical knowledge. For it is so often observed that when man sets out to do one thing he does another, that Professor Wundt has raised this habit to the dignity of a law, and has called it by the dignified name of 'the law of heterogeneity of motive.' Under this law the Romans set out to defend their altars and hearths and ended by establishing the Roman Empire, which gave Christianity its grand opportunity. And under this law the Chaldæans of Babylon studied the stars to determine the time and extent of their good and evil influences, and founded the great science of the accurate measurement of Time.

Or shall we not rather say it was God, making the error as well as the wrath of man to praise Him? For when we pass from the Babylonians to the Israelites we find the error in Astrology exposed. God is one, and there is none beside Him. The stars are the creatures of His hand and unworthy of man's worship. It may be that there was a time when Israel went to church with the Babylonians and worshipped the host of heaven. It may be that a recollection of that time survives, as Vatke urges, in Amos 5⁵. But that time is past. God telleth the number of the stars, He calleth them all by names. Israel and

they acknowledge a common Master. The God of Israel is the Lord God of Sabaoth. The Hebrew prophet pours his scorn upon the city that has only astrologers, star-gazers, monthly prognosticators to stand up and save her. The stars have greatly lost their high commercial value.

But the gain of man is equally great. It may be that the Israelites never could have made the calculations or devised the instruments to measure time accurately. But they rescued the imagination of man from a quagmire of myth; they gave the soul of man an object worthy of its worship; they delivered his daily life from superstitious dread and degradation. And it is better to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God than accurately to tell the time of day.

Still the worship of the stars lived on. We pass by the Greeks, who worshipped the beautiful rather than the good or evil in the stars. Plotinus, the deepest mind in Greek philosophy after Aristotle, calls them brothers, reproaching the early Christians for calling the basest men so while they refused to call the sun their brother; but he does so more imaginatively than religiously. To the early Christians themselves there were two extremes to guard against. On the one hand, they claimed the kinship of the visible world with God, against the Gnostics who gave everything material to the devil. On the other, they refused with the heathen to worship the stars as gods. 'Nor is it,' says Origen, 'with a view to depreciate these great works of God's creative power, that we thus speak of the sun and moon and stars, but because we perceive the inexpressible superiority of the divinity of God and of His only-begotten Son.' The Hebrew prophet said nearly as much as that, but he was a voice crying in the wilderness; now the meanest of the followers of Christ can use the words of Origen. The stars have fallen far.

For a time in the Middle Ages they rose again and regained not a little of their influence. Even

Roger Bacon ascribed the failure of the Crusades to the astrological wisdom of the Saracens. The stars began again to rule the religious life of man. They also touched his poetic imagination, as Dante is abundant witness. And now science, that had once among the Chaldæans been debtor to theology, returns her debt. Leonardo discovers that the stars are of the same nature and governed by the same laws as the earth. They told him that by showing the earth to be a star he had raised it much in dignity. What he did was to reduce the stars from their illegal religious influence over the mind and soul of man. That the earth may rise to the stars, the stars must come down to the earth. And now, with Kant, we may admire the stars above us and the moral law within us beyond all else, but it is not as independent objects of worship, it is as illustrations of the universal reign of law, of the universal rule of a beneficent Lawgiver. The stars are not less admired, but they are not worshipped. Religion has given place for ever to imagination, and God is supreme.

Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh
and strong.

The new issue of the *Journal of Theological Studies*, the issue for July to September, contains an article by Professor Sanday on St. Paul's equivalent for the 'Kingdom of Heaven.'

Why should we have to look for an equivalent? The Kingdom of Heaven is a leading conception, Dr. Sanday says 'perhaps the most central of all,' in the Gospels. Why is it not a leading conception of the Epistles?

There are those who would answer at once, Because the Epistles do not reflect the teaching of Christ. Back to Christ, they cry; back to the ethical Christ of the Sermon on the Mount, and leave the theological and rabbinical hair-splitting of St. Paul alone.

Dr. Sanday does not answer so. That there is a difference between the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles he freely acknowledges. The Gospels are 'simple, pellucid, profound with the profundity that comes from elemental ideas and relations, and that is quite consistent with great apparent artlessness of expression.' The Epistles are 'involved and laboured, only at times emerging into real simplicity of language, often highly technical, and, if profound, not seldom also obscure.' It is a contrast which strikes the eye at once, and it represents 'not only two styles of writing, but two distinct types of thought.'

What does this mean? It means, says Dr. Sanday, that we can trust the Gospels. It means that the teaching of our Lord as it is recorded in the Gospels has been preserved substantially as it was given. But it does not mean that we cannot trust the Epistles. Their theology is their own. It has neither corrupted the teaching of the Gospels, nor been mixed up with their teaching to its own obliteration. We can trust both the Gospels and the Epistles just because they are different.

No doubt if they were diverse as well as different our confidence might be shaken. We should then probably throw the Epistles overboard and join the cry of 'Back to Christ.' But it is not so. There is a continuity of thought between them. It has not yet been fully traced—Dr. Sanday hopes that that promising field will yet be worked—but it is there. And Dr. Sanday chooses this central conception of the Kingdom of God in order that he may show that it is not absent from the Epistles though it is found there under another name.

That other name is 'the Righteousness of God.' Dr. Sanday traces the history of the Righteousness of God, first as it came to St. Paul from the Old Testament, and then as it was developed through the apostle's own experience. 'There is

perhaps hardly any word in the Old Testament that was so rich and full of meaning as this word *Righteousness*, especially as applied to God.' But for St. Paul it had all that meaning and more. For him the whole Gospel is summed up as a revelation of the Righteousness of God. For it was through the operation of that Righteousness that it became the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed. But when we try to express in untheological language what St. Paul meant by the Righteousness of God, we find that it was simply *God at work in the world*. And when we try to express in unmetaphorical language what Christ meant by the Kingdom of God, we find that it was precisely the same—*God at work in the world*.

The language, says Dr. Sanday, is different. 'The language of the Gospels turns on a phrase that runs all through the Old Testament, beginning with the Books of Samuel and ending in the Book of Daniel, to be kept alive in the popular Messianic expectation. The language of St. Paul is based perhaps mainly on that of the Psalms and the second part of Isaiah. But the contents of the two cycles of language and of thought is substantially the same; or it only throws into relief slightly different aspects of that which has a fundamental identity. The central and cardinal point of the Christian dispensation is the same, whether we call it the "Righteousness of God" or the "Kingdom of Heaven." In either case it is the goodness and love of God, actively intervening to guide, redeem, sustain, and bless His people.'

Under the editorship of Mr. J. W. Rowntree, a series of *Present Day Papers* are being published monthly by Messrs. Headley Brothers. The number for July contains two articles. The one is a somewhat thin review of Dr. Stalker's *Christology*. The other is an able and popular article by Professor Peake of Manchester on 'The Permanent Value of the Pauline Theology.'

Professor Peake's paper is apologetic. There are those who deny that the Pauline theology is of any permanent value, and Professor Peake writes to answer them. But a man may be as scientific when he is apologetic as when he is not. Professor Peake is scientific. He goes out to meet the enemy as far as he can go without giving himself away. And then he verifies each step of the argument by appealing to a consciousness that is practically universal.

First, of all, however, he asks what it is that has made men deny the permanent value of St. Paul's theology. And he answers that it is chiefly that far-reaching change which has come through the breakdown of the old doctrine of inspiration. When inspiration was verbal, St. Paul's theology was all of value, all equally of value, and all equally of value for all time. It is not verbal now, and we must seek some new basis on which to ground our acceptance of the Pauline theology.

There are other reasons for the denial of permanent value to St. Paul's theology. There is the rise of 'Biblical Theology,' which has enabled us to trace within the New Testament itself divergent types of doctrine. There is the vague yet actual enmity to all theology as barren speculation or dogmatic assertion. And there is the assumption that the progress of physical science has cut away the basis of the Pauline system.

There are these reasons for the rejection of the Pauline theology. But the chief reason is the surrender of verbal inspiration. We can no longer preserve the Pauline theology by simply saying it is there, we have to consider what it is that is there, we have to rest its permanence upon its worth.

Now, in estimating the intrinsic worth of the theology of St. Paul, Professor Peake begins, as we have said, by coming out as far as he can to meet the enemy. He begins by claiming that

St. Paul knows his subject. His subject is religion. There are masters in science and in art, and we give them reverence. St. Paul is a master in religion, and we ought to give him at least respectful attention. The claim may seem a light one, but it delivers from the superciliousness that will not even look at what St. Paul has to say.

But when it is granted that St. Paul was a religious genius, how far does that carry us? He was not a greater religious genius than Jesus. The complaint is that the teaching of Jesus is simple and ethical, and all that is necessary for salvation, and St. Paul has corrupted it. He may have been the greatest *theological* genius that ever lived. So much the worse for him and us. It was the bread of Christ's simple ethical religion we wanted, and St. Paul has offered us a theological stone.

Professor Peake stops the adversary there. *Is* the teaching of Jesus all that is necessary for salvation? Jesus Himself never says so. He always says the opposite. He always urged that what He taught was of less account than what He was and what He did. Now St. Paul had to do with what Jesus was and did. After the 'teaching of Jesus' was over, there occurred His death. His death altered the whole situation. St. Paul had to take the death of Jesus into account as well as His teaching. And Jesus Himself said that His death was the explanation of His teaching and His life. 'The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom.'

We have made a step forward. We began by claiming that St. Paul, speaking about things religious, was at least worth listening to. We have now to claim that he fixed his attention most on what was of most religious significance—the Death of Christ. He tried to explain that Death. It is something that his explanation is in harmony with that of St. Peter and St. John. No doubt it is theological. But theology is indispensable. If we think at all about religion, we cannot help

becoming theologians. 'Carlyle, who sneered at the Christian world rent in twain over a diphthong, in later years grew wiser, and confessed that what was involved was no mere subtlety of theologians, but the very essence of Christianity itself.'

It is quite true that St. Paul's explanation of the death of Christ is theological. But that does not mean that it is not religious, it does not mean that it is not ethical. The Sermon on the Mount, claimed as the ethical or religious gospel of Jesus, is in reality highly theological. And, on the other hand, even the most theological of St. Paul's dogmas are full of instruction in right living. Take the pre-existence of Christ. Beautiful and moving as is the earthly life of Jesus seen in itself, much more impressive is it when set against the background of eternity. He who was poor, for our sakes *became* poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.

St. Paul's explanation of the death of Christ is theological, but how ethical is its theology. Was His death the death of a martyr, a death to remind us that we can make our deaths sublime? It was much more than that. He who died, died for our salvation. In dying, says St. Paul, He gave more than knowledge, more than example; He let loose motive power to render the knowledge ethically effective, the example operative in life and in death. That motive power is ours through *union with Christ*. It is a theological conception; it is even highly mystical, for it means union with Christ in His sufferings, death, and resurrection. But how practical are the conclusions St. Paul draws from it, how commonplace are the duties he links to it. St. Paul believed himself to be one with Christ, and it was that oneness that enabled him to realize victory over sin and life in conformity with God's will.

Thus the Pauline theology, even when it is most theological, is of value to-day, when the cry is for an ethical gospel. It is both ethical and

a gospel. For it sets before us the highest standard of morality, and it gives us the power to reach it.

But is it not largely composed of false exegesis and discredited history? Professor Peake is half inclined to give away St. Paul's exegesis. He calls it scholasticism. He says that to the dialecticians St. Paul became a dialectician; he claims that he could Rabbinize with the best of them. But even his Rabbinism, he says, was not the hair-splitting of the Rabbis. It was never logic for logic's sake, but for the sake of some precious and vital truth. And as for St. Paul's use of history, even if it is true that science and historical criticism have discredited the truth of the story of Adam, it is quite evident, says Professor Peake, that St. Paul's system is not bound up with the historical character of the Garden of Eden. For his doctrine is not so much historical as psychological. It never occurred to him to doubt the historical truth of the story; it is all the more remarkable that his doctrine is so constructed as to be really independent of it. 'In the historical Adam he has little interest, but he is deeply interested in the psychological or theological Adam.' When he does speak historically, he says that it was Eve, and not Adam, who was the first in the transgression. But when he speaks theologically, Eve drops out of view, 'in *Adam* all die.'

Thus St. Paul's theology is of value to-day alongside of the latest scientific possibility. Its prominence, however, rests chiefly on its being an accurate transcript of experience. The problems with which St. Paul had to deal were permanent problems. They are vital for ourselves. St. Paul's solution was his own, and it depended on his view of the Christian facts. But he was so endowed as to make his experience and his solution marvellously representative. He had a deep conviction of sin, and his sense of sin did not proceed merely from dread of God's wrath. It arose from his profound consciousness of dis-

harmony with the moral ideal. He was deeply concerned for conduct. He had a genius for morality.

And inflexible moralist as he was, he was also a man of the most marvellous richness and depth of feeling. He would be anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake, his kinsmen according to the flesh. And yet it was towards Christ that all the passionate ardour of love which possessed him was turned. With his genius for morality he combined a genius for religion of the most transcendent kind.

And yet, again, he was not swept away from sobriety by the flood-tide of feeling which bore him on its bosom. 'The visionary who was caught into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, the enthusiast who saw in the ecstatic phenomena of the Corinthian Church the gifts of the Spirit and himself spake with tongues more than they all, yet knew how to keep these revelations and gifts in their proper place.' It is the almost irresistible temptation of religious leaders whose career is marked by such phenomena, to set an inordinate value upon them, especially when they are themselves endowed. It is no small tribute to the sanity of St. Paul's mind that he relegated such things to a position of very slight importance compared with the fundamental graces of faith and love, and that he tested their value not by their extraordinary character, but by their fitness for edification.

And to this enthusiasm for morality, this passion for religion, this cool practical sagacity, St. Paul added a genius for speculation. 'It touches us with wonder,' says Professor Peake, 'and at times almost with awe, to see how easily he moves amid the most intricate problems, how sure and steady is his flight in the rarest atmosphere of speculation.' And so his theology, which took its rise in experience, in a many-sided marvellously profound experience, is always being verified in new experience, and Professor Peake believes that it will

continue to be so verified. Deep still calls to deep as his experience is answered in our own.

The doctrine of the Atonement seems to have fallen out of the company of those things that most deeply interest us. Age after age it absorbed attention beyond every other doctrine. In the last generation it was the centre of theological debate. In our generation it has been pushed aside.

It has been pushed aside by the doctrine of the Incarnation, which shows at once that it is not the Atonement in its large and legitimate sense that has been displaced, it is only that narrow and illegitimate view of the Atonement which would confine it to the *death* of Christ. The Atonement can never lose its interest, for it is the source of that power of God unto salvation on which we all depend. The Atonement, in short, is the modern equivalent for the Cross, when both are used in their large and rich meaning.

Some time ago the editor of the *Christian World* invited a number of theologians to tell him briefly what the Atonement meant to them. Their articles have now been republished by Messrs. Clarke of London in a generous volume (crown 8vo, pp. 376, 6s.), under the title of *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*. It is not to be supposed that the writers were chosen at haphazard. Nor is it to be supposed that they were chosen so that they should certainly annihilate one another. But whatever the choice, the result is marvellous confusion. One writer says there is an Atonement, but there can be no theory of it. Another says there is no Atonement. Another—and he is the man we should take to first—tells us that to return to the Atonement as an expiatory sacrifice is the only hope that is left for the Church.

This is Dr. P. T. Forsyth of Cambridge. There is no spiritual history of our time more instructive than that of Dr. Forsyth. A Scotsman and a

theologian by birth, he took the way to England quite early, because he feared there was no room in his native land for the utmost breadth of theological speculation. Then he fought his way back. Not back to Scotland, but to that creed which has had much of the making of Scotland, and to the expiatory doctrine of the Atonement.

But Dr. Forsyth would not admit that in those early days he was all wrong. In the balance of doctrine he was wrong. But even when he made subordinate things central, and central things, like the Atonement, subordinate, he was wrong only as the learner is wrong. He has gone back to the Atonement, not only to the fact of it as the centre of all spiritual life, but even to the theory of it as the centre of all theology; but the new theory is different from the old. Before telling us what that doctrine of the Atonement is which he holds to-day, Dr. Forsyth tells us what it is not.

It is not a doctrine which says that God has to be reconciled. We have outgrown, he says, the idea that God was in Christ reconciling Himself to the world. We know now that the satisfaction made by Christ flowed from the grace of God and did not go to procure it.

We have also outgrown, he says, the idea that Redemption cost the Father nothing. We realize now that the Son could not suffer without the Father suffering. We realize that a forgiveness which cost the Forgiver nothing would lack too much in moral value or dignity to be worthy of holy love or rich in spiritual effect.

We have also outgrown, he says, the idea that Christ took our punishment in the quantitative sense. We see now that what He suffered was not the equivalent punishment of sin—so much punishment for so much sin. We see that it was the judgment of sin, its condemnation that was laid on Him. But that, we further see, means very much more than the human travail, the

sympathetic suffering of a Man. We see that it was the condemnation of sin in the flesh.

Dr. Forsyth does not say we have outgrown, he says we are only just escaping from, the idea that God, being a loving Father, had nothing to do but forgive us. He calls that the modern and sentimental idea of love. And he says it is an immoral love that has no moral hesitation about mercy. God was not in Christ reconciling Himself to the world, and yet there are conditions in the very nature of God Himself that have to be satisfied. And these conditions come within our reach. For they bear so closely on the dignity of man that Dr. Forsyth is constrained to say that the dignity of man would be better assured if he were shattered on the inviolability of the holy law of God's nature, than if that law were ignored so that he might simply be forgiven.

But there is the opposite idea. There is the idea that forgiveness was impossible till God's justice was appeased by the death of Christ. Dr. Forsyth says we have outgrown that.

And he says we have left behind us the idea that the satisfaction of Christ was made by mere suffering. There was suffering in Christ's Atonement, but only as its condition; it was not suffering that gave it its worth, it was obedience. It is true that the effect of the Atonement would not have been won if Christ had passed to heaven from the Mount of Transfiguration. He had to be obedient unto death. But that was not because there is saving value in the mere act of dying. It was because the obedience had to be shown and the righteousness of God acknowledged in every part of man's experience, especially in that final and so vital a portion of his experience which we call death.

And so, says Dr. Forsyth, we can no longer separate Christ's life of obedience from His expiatory death. He was obedient, not merely in death, but *unto* death. But this, he adds, is not a

tuning down of His death ; it is a tuning up of His life. His whole life was expiatory. Each miracle cost, and was preceded by, a small Passion. He was in deaths oft before He died the outward death. And it was on this account that He could forgive sins during His life.

Dr. Forsyth hopes that we are giving up the idea that in order to glorify God we may twist Scripture to our liking. Scholarship, he says, has given up the idea that justification in St. Paul means making just. He hopes we are ready to give it up also. So he hopes that as we are ready to acknowledge that justifying means declaring just, we are also ready to acknowledge that the 'righteousness of God' means the gift of God as a status conferred on us, not the ethical attribute of God conveyed to us.

He believes that we are about to leave behind us the hazy idea that having the fact of the Atonement, we need no theory of it. The Crucifixion is a fact, but the Atonement is the explanation of the Crucifixion and what accompanied it. It is a fact assuredly, but it is a fact 'that can be separated from theory of some kind only by a suffusion of sentiment on the brain, some ethical anæmia, or a scepticism of the spiritual intelligence.'

We are also about to abandon the idea that an adequate theory of the Atonement can be drawn from our own personal experience. It is too vast a subject for any single experience. Our single experience, besides, is too subjective to be the measure of a fact which has an objective ground and is inseparable from the death of Christ. We must add to our experience the experience of the Church. And more than that, we must add to the Church the Bible.

Finally, Dr. Forsyth hopes that we are beyond the idea that expiation and forgiveness are mutually exclusive. It is as old as Socinus, and we ought to be past it now. If the crime is expiated, said Socinus in answer to Anselm, the account is cleared, where is the need for forgiveness, where is the room for grace? Socinus was right if it is the quantitative theory of the Atonement that we hold, so much suffering for so much sin. But if our theory is that the obedience is the expiation and the Atonement is an atonement in kind, not in quantity, then it is of the grace of God to accept it as adequate for every man, and He is left free to pardon as every man repents and believes on the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Ne Illotis Pedibus.

BY THE REV. DAVID SMITH, M.A., TULLIALLAN.

Εἶτα βάλλει ὕδωρ εἰς τὸν νικτήρα, καὶ ἤρξατο νίπτειν τοὺς πόδας τῶν μαθητῶν, καὶ ἐκμάσσειν τῷ λεντίῳ ᾧ ἦν διεξωσμένος.—John xiii. 5.

It was customary, alike in Palestine and in Greece, that, when guests came to the house of their entertainer, they were received by slaves, who took off their sandals and poured water over their hot and dusty feet (Lk 7⁴⁴; cf. Becker's *Charicles*, exc. 1 to sc. vi.). And this custom has been regarded as sufficient explanation of that scene in the Upper Room. Our Lord's purpose was to teach His disciples humility, and it was

certainly a very striking enforcement of that lesson when He, their Lord and Master, went round the astonished circle and wrought on each that menial office.

Obvious and sufficient as this explanation may at the first glance appear, it is not without its difficulties. The feet-washing was customarily performed on the entrance of the guests ; but here it was not until the supper was over (if *γενομένου*