

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE miracles were first considered the chief defence of the Gospel, and then they were considered that part of the Gospel which most required defending. How does it stand with them now? Have we let them go, and found the Gospel better without them?

It is conceivable. Dr. Abbott writes about 'the kernel and the husk.' We do not give in to Dr. Abbott. Nobody gives in to Dr. Abbott now. He is a pariah to the unbeliever no less than to the believer. But have we not felt that after all the miracles did not matter? After all, have we not said to ourselves, the miracles *are* the husk? The kernel remains. The kernel is Redemption by the blood of Christ.

Redemption by the blood of Christ! 'No part of Christian phraseology has been in recent years more adversely criticised than that which is connected with the idea of redemption through blood.' So writes Professor Howard Masterman in the *Hibbert Journal* for July. In the pages of the *Hibbert Journal* itself he has sufficient evidence for his statement. If the husk has gone, the kernel has not been long in following it.

Shall we let Redemption by the blood of Christ follow? Professor Howard Masterman does not think we should. He does not deny that redemp-

tion by blood 'comes out of a cycle of thought which belongs to primitive stages of religious development.' But he does not think that it is the last condemnation of a doctrine to admit that it is old. On the contrary, the fact that it has lived so long seems to him to be in its favour. It is possible, he thinks, that its survival shows that in redemption by blood there is a truth of the religious life which cannot be expressed so well otherwise.

Mr. Howard Masterman is Professor of History in the University of Birmingham, and he feels the force of the modern objection to redemption by blood. He feels it to the full. He acknowledges that to him it is startling language. He had almost called it crude. He seems to think that it goes beyond the facts, for he says that if religious phraseology is to appeal to the wayfaring man it must 'surprise by a fine excess.' But of course it is a metaphor. And he does not see why a metaphor which is common enough in other spheres should be denied entrance into the sphere of religion.

We say, 'He shed his blood for his country's salvation.' We say, 'The nation was saved by the blood of her noblest citizens.' We say, 'Blood is thicker than water.' We speak of 'blood relations' and of 'nobility of blood.' And when a

Salvation Army captain leads off at some street corner with—

There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins ;
 And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains,—

we need not be astonished or disgusted as though we never heard or used such language. We should consider what it means.

Now, when we consider, we find that it means a personal experience on the part of that Salvation Army captain. A change has taken place in his life. He is no longer the man that he was. And he is persuaded that that change has come through a death that happened long ago, the influence of which is still at work in the world. *You* may say that he has ceased to disobey the ordinary laws of life, and is now seeking to understand and obey them. *He* says that he has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. You escape the anthropomorphism. He has the sense of personal relationship, and in that lies the secret of power.

And the very phrase which the Salvation Army captain uses has its appropriateness. It may have come to him out of the far past. There is no offence in that. It has simply come along the lines of an experience which has been similar to his all the world over. It has, says Professor Howard Masterman, an appropriateness that no other phrase would probably supply.

For, in the first place, it expresses *cost in moral movement*. 'It expresses the idea that the process of evolution is no easy and plain ascent up the scale of being, but that man's progress at every stage must be bought by sacrifice of personal comfort or inclination to larger issues.' At the very foundation of this religion there lies a story which commits the believer to the true rather than to the easy path. For he knows that the sacrifice of which he sings was a voluntary sacrifice. The secret of the appeal of the blood of Christ is in

these words, 'No man taketh my life from me : I lay it down of myself.'

In the second place, it suggests *the supreme value of life*. What does all this language about blood mean? It means that the thing of supreme value—the thing that a man finds worth giving—is himself. All other gifts are external, unsatisfying. The blood of Christ becomes a challenge. 'As I have loved you.' The martyr knows that blood poured out for him asks for nothing less in return.

And then, finally, the blood of Christ expresses *personal union with Christ*, as no other phrase can express it. That is what the unbeliever objects to. That is what he calls crude, primitive, savage. But it is true. It is as true to-day as ever it was. The blood of Christ was shed on Calvary, but the earth did not cover it there. It has life to-day. It enters into those who believe on Christ. It enters into their blood. We arouse the anger of some descendant of the Scandinavian sea-kings, and we say that we have aroused in him the blood of his Norse ancestors. Surely, says Professor Howard Masterman, when we come upon unexpected traits of goodness in a man who has been brought within the Christian influence, we are entitled to say that we have aroused in that man the blood of Christ. Surely we may permit him to say that by the blood of Christ he has been redeemed from iniquity.

And then Professor Howard Masterman plainly says that you and I and all of us would be less startled by the phraseology of the blood of Christ if we had a larger experience of the discipline of suffering and a deeper sense of sin.

The familiar example of those 'vain traditions' by which the Pharisees made the word of God of none effect is the plucking of the ears of corn on the Sabbath day. Another example has just come from Jerusalem.

There is much excitement at present in Jeru-

salem. Its occasion is the death of Dr. Herzl, the leader of the Zionist movement. The liberal and progressive Jews are in favour of the Zionist movement, and they use peculiarly Jewish methods of advancing it. A young Ashkenaz Jew, says a correspondent of the *Guardian*, showed a friend a slip of paper which contained the Hebrew characters—

ה. ה. ש. א. ג. ה.

He told this story. A century ago a great Rabbi in Vilna (Russia) died. When his will was read, directions were found that a letter which he had addressed to the Rabbis in Jerusalem should not be opened until one hundred years had elapsed. The hundred years have elapsed. The Jerusalem Rabbis received the letter and opened it. It contained nothing but those Hebrew characters. And what do those Hebrew characters mean? One after another tried to read them. At last the riddle was solved. A great Rabbi read the writing and gave the interpretation. It was—ה Jehovah; ש"א = shall raise up; ג = Dr.; ט = Theodore; ה = Herzl.

But there are conservative Jews who are opposed to the Zionist movement. They will not have Dr. Herzl to reign over them. For they think that by his imprudent declaration that the Sultan was in need of money, and would be glad to sell Palestine to the Jews for a few millions, he has shut them out of the country. The Sultan heard of it. There were laws in existence which prohibited Jews from entering; he at once enforced them. European Jews were compelled to lay a deposit on landing, as a pledge that they would not remain in the country more than thirty days. The time was afterwards extended to three months, and the Jews have little trouble in getting round the restriction altogether. Still it is trying to have to resort to bribery. And they do not cherish the memory of Dr. Herzl.

But the chief objection to the Zionist movement is religious. The local Talmudical colleges have discovered that the Zionist movement is a purely

secular one. They declare that Dr. Herzl was an agnostic. They say that the Abarbanel Library, where the memorial service was held after the news of Dr. Herzl's death reached Jerusalem, is dangerous to religion, for it is opened on the Sabbath. Young men who ought to be in the synagogues, or the Talmud Torah schools, studying Mishna and Gemara, are found in the Abarbanel Library reading the newspapers. Now there may be nothing in the Law or the traditions against the reading of newspapers on the Sabbath day, but the newspapers are often placed on the tables uncut, and the Sabbath is profaned by the manual labour of cutting them.

On July 15 was published the first number of a new quarterly journal called *The Celtic Review* (Edinburgh: Norman Macleod; 2s. 6d. net). Its acting editor is Miss E. C. Carmichael, with whom is associated as consulting editor the Professor of Celtic in the University of Edinburgh, Mr. Donald Mackinnon. The scope of *The Celtic Review* will be wider than religion, but it will embrace religion. Our purpose in noticing its first number is to direct attention to an article by Mr. Alfred Nutt on 'The Critical Study of Gaelic Literature.'

For many months some of the Church papers have had their correspondence columns crowded with letters on the Criticism of the Old and New Testaments. The *Guardian*, the *Record*, the *Rock*, the *Church Times*, the *Church Family Newspaper*, *Church Bells*,—all have been under the flood. And what does it signify? It signifies that even yet there are very many educated men who do not see that the Bible is literature and had sooner or later to submit to the process of criticism through which all the literature of the world has to pass. They resent the criticism of the Bible. They resent the very name of criticism. They seize on the adjective 'higher' and, without waiting to consider what it means, call it presumption. They look upon the whole movement as the unmistakable

evidence of the activity of Antichrist in our midst.

Now it is not to be denied that Antichrist is in it. But only in the way of spoiling it. The movement is a movement in the march of truth. And Antichrist is there to thwart it, to misrepresent it, to arouse prejudice both for and against it, to prevent it, if he can, from doing the work which God has sent it into the world to do. For, all the world over, criticism is now at work. And all the world over, except in the sphere of the Bible, its work is recognized as joyfully beneficial.

It has just entered the sphere of Celtic literature, and its worth has been at once recognized. For, in the first place, it has enabled the student of Celtic literature to see that the inheritance of the Gaelic race (with which Mr. Nutt has most immediately to do) is not only in chronicle, genealogy, architecture, and such well-recognized sources of history, but (to use Mr. Nutt's own words) 'that saga and saint's legend, ballad and romance, vision and satire, elegy and lyric eulogium of nature, are elements of first-rate importance for the realization of such a story of the Gaelic race as shall be of general and world-wide, and not merely racial and provincial, significance.' And, in the second place, it has given the student of Celtic literature the power to extract this truth out of these unlikely elements. For, in spite of the awful examples which the newspaper columns contain, criticism is as little liable to err in the hands of a well-trained critic as the surgeon's knife in the hands of a disciplined and merciful surgeon.

The most frequent objection in the newspapers to criticism is that it is a creature of Evolution. Everything nowadays has to have a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The critic criticises the first chapter of Genesis, it is said, because it is too wise for the youth of the world. If his Evolution did not compel him to find progress everywhere, he would let the story of the Creation stand as it

is. Why can he not see that God is able to bring men and matters into the world full-grown?

The critic answers that God may be able, but He does not do it. Evolution is not the plaster-cast into which the critic must crush his discoveries. It is itself a discovery. It is in the line of the mind's working. To our time and to our mind has been given this vision, that in God's wide universe no Athene springs armed from the head of Zeus, but all is orderly, progressive. When the Son of God came into the world, the event was great enough for the song of angels, but the shepherds were sent to find a babe.

The critic's very first business is to set literature in touch with time. 'Who wrote the Book of Genesis' is of less consequence than 'When was it written.' Moses, Hammurabi, Homer were the spokesmen of their day and generation. When the literature of a nation is set in touch with the nation's history, it at once, in Mr. Nutt's words, ascends from the merely racial and provincial into world-wide significance. For God's method of beginning with the babe is His universal method. 'The true history of Israel,' says Mr. Nutt, 'could not be written until the various stages of a literature, extending over centuries, but arbitrarily bound up within the covers of one volume, had been discriminated and arranged in chronological order; and before we can essay the true history of the Gaelic race, we must classify and date the literary monuments which it has bequeathed to us.'

It is, for us at least, only when literature is set in touch with time that it is seen to be in touch with eternity. We do not find God in the Bible until we have found man in it. 'Elijah,' says James, 'was a man of like passions such as we are, and he prayed.' Set the three in their place: Elijah—James—us. Great stretches of time lie between. But of like passions all three, all finding the need of prayer, all finding prayer a 'problem.' When we have found Elijah, a man, a man of his time among the men of his time, and when we have

found him praying, we go with new confidence to the throne of Grace, saying not 'Where is God?' but 'Where is the God of Elijah?'

In the *Reader Magazine* of America for the month of August there is found an article by Mr. Israel Zangwill on 'Roosevelt and Russian Scandal.' What have we to do with Roosevelt and Russian Scandal?

The story is this. In October 1903 Mr. Mosely took out to America a band of trained men of science, men specially trained in the science of education, to consider and see whether America's pre-eminence was due to her superior methods of education. On leaving New York, Mr. Mosely and his Commissioners travelled straight to Washington, and were received by the President at the White House. It was Wednesday the 28th day of October. They were all there, and President Roosevelt delivered an address. It was 'a most interesting address,' and in the midst of it there was 'a notable passage.' The Commissioners were all struck with that passage. They all reported it. But when the Report was published, it was found that not two of them had reported it in the same way.

Hear Mr. Zangwill. 'We will begin with Mr. Mosely: "One notable passage in President Roosevelt's speech was his reference to his belief that while education could not make a country, the nation that neglected to educate its people would be assuredly undone in the long run." Here is a proposition with an air of balanced wisdom, clouded perhaps by the indefiniteness attaching to the term "education," but still with the epigrammatic ring of a genuine gnome. But what is my astonishment to read in the report of Mr. John Whitburn, Member of the Education Committee of Newcastle-on-Tyne, "President Roosevelt said, when addressing the members of the Commission at the White House: Education may not save a nation, but a nation would certainly be ruined without it."'

What does Mr. Zangwill mean? He means that the Synoptic Gospels are not to be trusted. He means that when you find St. Matthew saying, 'If a man die, having no children'; and St. Mark, 'If a man's brother die, and leave a wife behind him, and leave no child'; and St. Luke, 'If a man's brother die, having a wife, and he be childless,' you conclude that they are not to be trusted as true historians. He means that the criticism of the Gospels has done away with their Christ.

Mr. Zangwill does not once mention the Gospels or the Christ of the Gospels. But there is no doubt of his meaning. He quotes other five versions of President Roosevelt's saying by other five men. They all differ a little, and he professes the utmost astonishment. Now, he says, these men are not peasants or fishermen; they are educational experts and specialists, picked out to report upon the very subject of the training of the mind to accurate perception and execution. If they cannot be trusted to give an accurate report of a great man's words, how much less the writers of the Gospels. That is his meaning.

But now, suppose that Mr. Mosely and Mr. Whitburn had *not* differed. Suppose that their report had been identical, word for word. Would Mr. Zangwill have been satisfied that he had obtained an accurate account of what President Roosevelt said? He would not. He would have simply said that the two reporters had agreed to say exactly the same thing, or that the editor of the Report had made them agree. He would probably have concluded that the Report was 'cooked' throughout.

Mr. Zangwill is not alone. This is one of the most common ways, and it is perhaps the most successful way, in which Christ is discounted in our day. You cannot believe in Him because you cannot find Him. The Christ of the Gospels is a contradiction, and there is no other. For Mr. Zangwill is not concerned with the Gospels, any more than we are. He is concerned with Christ. When

he hints that the Gospels are not to be trusted, he means that the Messiah has not come.

But it does not follow. Mr. Zangwill says that seven trained reporters of a saying of President Roosevelt do not agree upon that saying. He proves that they do not. Does he conclude that President Roosevelt never existed? Does he conclude that he is not President? Does he even conclude that he did not utter that saying? He does none of these things. He merely draws our attention to the familiar fact that different reports of a saying may be substantially true without being verbally accurate, and that their very difference tells us that we have more than one good witness to the saying.

‘For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God take away life, but deviseth means that he that is banished be not an outcast from him.’ So said the Wise Woman of Tekoa (2 S 14¹⁴). The translation is not certain, for the text is not pure. But the rendering of the Revised Version will do. The words are more than the Wise Woman of Tekoa knew.

At least we think so. We think they must be more. It was her idea of God. Only in Israel could a Wise Woman be found with such an idea of God. But we cannot believe that even in Israel could any one be found able to express all that her words carry with them. They carry with them the story of the Prodigal Son and the Cross on Calvary.

They express the Wise Woman’s idea of God and of man. Of man she says that when he is dead he is dead. We must all needs die, and when we die we are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. When we are dead we are dead, and that is the end of us. Better see to it that we do not die.

She began to move David. Joab had sent her.

No man ever knew his master better than Joab knew David. He did not always agree with his master. He sometimes thought the king foolish. He sometimes thought it his duty to save the king from himself. It was Joab himself that was the fool. Looking at them both from this far distance we are bound to say that the diplomatic Joab, one of the greatest statesmen and generals of all time, was more of a fool than David. And when he was most diplomatic he was most a fool. He was a diplomatic fool now. He should not have sent the Wise Woman to David. Still, he knew his master thoroughly. And he knew the words that in the mouth of the Wise Woman would move the king.

When we die we die, she said. Better not let us die. If Absalom dies, he is dead. Had not the king better see to it that Absalom does not die?

Did she know what she was saying? She did not know. She thought that the death of the body ended the life of the person. She thought there was nothing so calamitous, nothing so irretrievable, as the death of the body. She urged the king to send for Absalom in case he should die. If he dies he is as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. Better bring him home before he dies. She did not know that Absalom was dead already.

For banishment is death. There is no other thing worth calling death. When Jesus reached the house of Jairus He found the mourners making a noise. ‘Give place,’ He said, ‘the maid is not dead’; and they laughed Him to scorn. But He knew that she was not dead. For He had come to give the dead life. But not Jairus’ daughter, not the widow’s son, not Lazarus. He had not come to recover this one and that one from the grave. He had come to seek and to save the lost. He had come to get the banished home again. And when, in His own story, the prodigal returned from the far country, He purposely made the

father say, 'This my son was dead, and is alive again.'

It is banishment that is death. It is separation. The death of the body does not separate. It often unites. 'To depart and to be with Christ' is often its proper definition. 'She that liveth in sin is dead while she liveth,' for she is banished from God. Absalom was dead already.

The Wise Woman did not know that Absalom was dead already. She did not know that banishment was death. But she knew the thing that follows that. She knew that God does not send anyone into banishment. This was her great discovery about God. This was the great discovery of the nation of Israel about God. As she put it, 'God doth not take away life.' We read, 'So God drove out the man.' But we know that the man drove himself out. We read Cain's bitter complaint, 'Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid,' but we know that Cain drove himself forth. In the New Testament it is put very plainly. 'And not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country.' Nay, even in the Old Testament, David did not banish Absalom. It came to pass that Absalom fled. God does not send anyone into banishment.

Nor does God keep any one in banishment. All the while that His banished ones are away He is longing for their return. Again her thought is a great one, but it is almost an unconscious thought now. She is thinking of David rather than of God. But this thought of David is a true thought of God. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son the reader is taken to the far country to follow the fortunes of the prodigal. But all the while that the prodigal is spending his substance in the far country, what is the father doing at home? He is longing for the prodigal's return. The historian of Absalom's career is a little more communicative about the father than the historian of the prodigal. 'So Absalom fled,' he says, 'and

went to Geshur, and was there three years; *and the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom.*'

Joab knew that. He sent the Wise Woman to the king because he knew that the soul of the king was longing after Absalom. Joab did not sympathize with the king. He counted the king's longing after Absalom folly and self-indulgence. And we? When the prodigal has come to himself, and can plainly be seen on his way back, we rejoice that the Father should run to meet him. That much we have learned from Jesus. The Pharisees did not know even that. But that the soul of the Father should be longing after the prodigal while he is away in the far country wasting his substance in riotous living, and that he would have done everything to bring him back, —we have not learned that yet.

We say that if God really longs to bring the prodigal back, He has nothing to do but fetch him. Surely He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Yes, He does. But He cannot fetch a prodigal home until the prodigal is ready to come.

David's heart longed after Absalom. David, you say, could have sent for Absalom to come back. He did send. And he sent too soon. Absalom was not ready to return. What a story it is from this point onward to the end. Absalom is brought back before he is ready to come. He is a petulant wilful child still. 'See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there: go and set it on fire.' Joab suffered for it that Absalom was brought back before he was ready to come. Absalom suffered for it also. But David suffered for it most of all.

God never makes the mistake which David made. He never brings us back before we are ready to come. His soul is consumed in longing for our return, but He must wait. The utmost that He can do is to devise means so that His banished may not be banished from Him for ever.

'He deviseth means.' This was the Wise Woman's greatest word. What did she understand by it? She understood that God devises means to bring men back before they are ready to come. She knew no better than that.

And David knew no better than that. Her words touched the king. He gave the order, 'Go therefore, bring the young man Absalom back.' He did not want to consider if Absalom was ready to return. He did not consider what means God devises to make His banished ready.

What means does God devise? What means should David himself have devised to make Absalom ready to come back? He should have left his throne and gone out to Absalom in his

banishment. We know no other means. God Himself seems to know no other.

Though he was rich, yet if David the king, for Absalom's sake, had become poor, going out to Geshur and sharing his banishment, he might have won the heart of Absalom. Then would the banishment of Absalom have come to an end. No doubt it would have been death to the king, for banishment is death—a desperate remedy. But the case was desperate, and we know no other remedy for it. 'Who, though He was rich'—rich in the fellowship of the Father, there is no other riches but that,—'yet for our sakes became poor,' crying, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' He was wounded for our transgressions. He was banished even unto death.

Peter 'the Venerable' of Cluny.

A SKETCH FROM MEDIÆVAL CHURCH HISTORY.

BY PROFESSOR G. GRÜTZMACHER, PH.D., HEIDELBERG.

THE title of 'the Venerable' is given to Peter of Cluny by Friedrich Barbarossa of Hohenstaufen. And unquestionably the abbot of Cluny is a pure and noble type of the monastic piety of the Middle Ages. The congregation at Cluny had already left behind it the culminating point of its greatness when Peter was put at the head of the widely ramifying spiritual community, but he succeeded in still bringing about a renaissance of the decaying order. The star of the Cistercians had already risen in full splendour in the heaven of religious orders, and to it belonged the immediate future, until it faded in its turn before the order founded by the most remarkable saint of the Middle Ages—St. Francis.

Peter, like all his predecessors in the office of abbot, was of very noble birth. The Cluny order of monks is still quite an aristocratic institution. The family to which Peter belonged, probably that of the lords of Montboissier, was settled in the Auvergnés. The year of his birth is not certain, but it was either 1092 or 1094. He grew up in a home of exemplary piety, four of his six brothers

choosing an ecclesiastical career, and only two clinging to secular pursuits. His mother, Raingarde, trained her children to strict reverence for the Church. When that fiery preacher of penance, Robert of Arbrissel, uttered his call to repentance, Raingarde, too, vowed that, after the death of her husband, she would become a nun. In the Cluny priory of Marçigny she carried out this resolution, and there she died in 1134. In a letter full of grateful filial love, Peter communicates to his brothers the death of the best of mothers: her body was devoted to work, her heart to penitence.

In the Cluny monastery of Souçilanges-Clermont Peter grew up, and as a Latin stylist developed a skill which put him almost on a level with Bernard of Clairvaux. His marked ability led the Abbot Hugo I. to appoint him prior of Vezelay, and afterwards of Domne. Then came the dark days, when Abbot Pontius held sway at Cluny, and completely deranged the finances of the monastery by his boundless luxury and excessive display. When his dissolute administration became intolerable,