

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

‘A MINUTE study of the mere words of Scripture,’ said Dr. Maclaren recently, “though it may seem like grammatical trifling and pedantry, yields large results. Men do sometimes gather grapes of thorns; and the hard, dry work of trying to get at the precise shade of meaning in Scripture words always repays with large lessons and impulses.” A more emphatic testimony to the truth of that statement could scarcely be found than the volume of *Ordination Addresses and Counsels to Clergy*, by the late Bishop Lightfoot, issued a few weeks ago by Macmillan. That it is a volume of deep interest goes without saying. But it is worth saying that, of the greater portion of it, the deepest interest arises from the study of mere words, and that just because of the large lessons and impulses which they are made to yield.

Take as an example Phil. ii. 3, “Do nothing of party spirit, nor yet of vain glory” (*μηδὲν κατὰ ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν*). After pointing out that two distinct habits of mind are here condemned and rejected, a distinction more or less obliterated by the common text (*ἡ κενοδοξίαν*), Dr. Lightfoot asks what these two tempers are. Briefly, he replies, “they are the spirit which unduly exalts party, and the spirit which unduly exalts self.” “The one is *eritheia* (*ἐριθεία*). I need not remind you that this word is confused with *eris* (*ἔρις*), and translated ‘strife’ in the Authorised Version. But its true significance is thus obliterated, and the force of the passage before us disappears. It denotes the temper, habit, principle of action of the *erithos* (*ἐριθος*)—the hireling, the hired servant, the hired

canvasser, the hired partisan. Thus it designates party-spirit generally; for, though no actual money may have passed into his hands, the partisan, consciously or unconsciously, is influenced by the motive of gain. It may be influence, or success, or reputation, or the getting one’s own way, or the humiliation of one’s enemies, or some other low aim. But in some form or other gain to self, through the triumph of party, is the underlying motive. Though the direct object is not self, yet ultimately this spirit may be traced to self. But in the other word, *kenodoxia* (*κενοδοξία*), self is the immediate as well as the ultimate aim. The whole motive concentrates itself on self. It is the inflated estimate of one’s own ability, one’s own reputation, one’s own position and importance.”

Equally interesting is Dr. Lightfoot’s treatment of the paradox of Gal. vi. 2, 5: “Bear ye one another’s burdens;” “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Dr. Lightfoot admits the paradox, holding that such self-contradiction is sometimes necessary to the expression of the highest truth. “It is worth observing, however,” he goes on, “that though the same word, ‘burden,’ appears in both places in the English Version, this is not the case in the original (*ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε· ἕκαστος τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει*). The difference seems to be a matter of deliberate choice. There are burdens of various kinds—physical, moral, social, spiritual—which befall a man; trials which come and go, troubles which may be shared or removed, a miscellaneous aggregate of anxieties and vexations and oppressions. These are his *barē* (*βάρη*). But over and

above all these—though not perhaps independent of these—there is one particular load, which he cannot shake off, which he must make up his mind to bear, which he is destined to carry on his own shoulders (it may be) through life to the end. This is τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον, his *pack* (as it were), a well-defined particular load, which is his and not another's, which never can be another's."

This "pack"—Dr. Lightfoot thinks the Apostle is using another of those military metaphors in which he delights—may be some physical disability, some intellectual hindrance to our ministerial efficiency, something in our social or domestic surroundings, or it may be some neglect or recklessness or sin in the past, which has hung a weight about our necks. "The sin may be repented of; the pardon may be assured. But the temporal consequences of the sin remain, and will remain, so long as we have breath. This is the most irksome and the most painful form which a man's individual burden can take."

If Dr. Lightfoot's interpretation of "Every man shall bear his own burden" is the correct one, may there not be a hidden reference in the words to St. Paul's own "thorn in the flesh." Dr. George Matheson, in his new work on the *Spiritual Development of St. Paul* (Blackwood, 5s.), holds decidedly by the belief that the apostle's thorn was physical and not moral, and concludes, from various data, that it was an affection of the eyes. The argument which seems to Dr. Matheson to prove conclusively that the thorn was not a moral stain is this: Had it been moral—a heated temper, a jealous disposition, or a lustful passion—we cannot conceive that, when the Apostle prayed for its removal, he would have received or imagined that he had received, a denial to that prayer. Besides, in the case of a moral defect the grace of God is never sufficient for us, does not profess nor desire to be sufficient for us. The climax of the moral life is not grace, but glory.

Archdeacon Farrar has often been blamed for making so much of St. Paul's thorn. It may be said that Dr. Matheson makes more of it. As we have stated, his conclusion is that it was defective vision, not total but partial blindness. One could well pardon Dr. Matheson if he dwelt long upon

this. But, however much the interest of the narrative is deepened by our knowledge of the personal reference, it is no personal motive that gives the "thorn" so large a place in Dr. Matheson's book. It is because he finds in this "thorn in the flesh" the key to the interpretation of St. Paul's spiritual history. To trace the working out of this interpretation would be to transcribe the greater part of Dr. Matheson's able and eloquent volume. To give it in bald outline is to do the book a grievous injustice. Let it suffice to mention that he believes the thorn to have been given at the time of the conversion. Now, to a Jew, a physical defect was a mark of Divine displeasure. Paul's first thought, therefore, was that God had branded him, and he was unfit for being a missionary. Like another Jonah he fled from his mission, fled to the deserts of Arabia. There he prayed the first of those three prayers—"I besought the Lord thrice"—that it might be taken away. The prayer was denied; and Paul learned that, *notwithstanding* his defect, he was called upon to preach the gospel. This was his first spiritual crisis. Two more had yet to come; for, as with his Master in Gethsemane, the struggle and the prayer were thrice repeated. The first conflict took place under the shadows of Sinai; the second is most closely associated with Antioch; and the third experienced its fiercest hour in connection with the Church of Galatia. Thus the "thorn" is made to determine the course of the Apostle's spiritual development, and to mark its successive stages, till at last it comes to be counted a *privilege*, an infirmity in which he was enabled to glory.

Dr. Matheson's *Spiritual Development of St. Paul* is an able book—large-hearted, spiritually-minded—yet it is not his greatest book. Not long since we read, for the second time, his *Growth of the Spirit of Christianity* in its two handsome volumes. That is his *magnum opus* still, and contains more than the germ of his subsequent writings. Again and again we have been reminded of its pages as we read this latest volume; which was natural, for this would serve very well as an introduction to the earlier book. But not only is the new book not the greatest, but it seems to be more open to challenge. And challenged it certainly will be. Many who would find profit in its pages will be

unable even to enter in because of the barrier, or rather want of barrier, in the shape of any theory of inspiration at the opening. Some will question the inferences that are made from familiar passages, and not a few will deny the interpretation of the passages themselves.

We may refer to an instance of the last which will be sure to be called in question. In the December number of the *Contemporary Review* an article may be found by Miss Frances Power Cobbe, under the title of "The Two Religions." Its purpose is not clear, but its meaning is plain. The religions of mankind, says Miss Cobbe, are usually of two orders only—namely, the worship of POWER, and the worship of GOODNESS. Then she says that "among the Hebrews, in the time of Joshua and the Judges and of David, the history would indicate that the worship of Jehovah was still little better than a barren Power-worship, the character attributed to Him being grossly cruel; witness"—and then we have the story of Agag, the harrows of iron, and the brick-kilns. Dr. Matheson, though without these references, and probably without these thoughts, holds on the main point with Miss Cobbe. He says: "The Jew's first admiration of kingdom was derived from the contemplation of the universe. He looked upon the face of nature and beheld there the impress of power. The objects which excited his wonder, the objects which stimulated his inspiration, were the physical forces which manifest themselves in dynamical strength. His very first conception of Divine action in the universe was the conception of a *rushing mighty wind moving on the face of the waters*, and bearing down all opposition to its will. From this time forth the attribute which, above all others, he beheld in Deity was power." The words which we have italicised refer to Gen. i. 2, which we are accustomed to read in the translation: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"; but which Dr. Matheson seems to translate: "A (rushing) mighty wind moved on the face of the waters." This translation, we say, will be challenged. For, although a possible rendering of the Hebrew—as any one can see by reading Mr. Wratislaw's paper in this issue—it receives but scant support from the modern commentator. Says Delitzsch (*New Commentary on*

Genesis, Vol. I.), "Certainly *ruach* means 'breeze' and 'spirit,' the verb (רוח) however, cannot be used of the wind, but indicates that the action of the Spirit is similar to that of a bird, as Milton says:—

'Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss.'

For רוח means, according to its root, to keep the wings loose, so that they touch and yet do not touch, and then both to brood with loose wings over and to hover down in flight upon anything." So Dods (*Book of Genesis: Bible Class Handbooks*), "The expression *hovered over* could not be used of 'a great wind.'" But such a criticism of Dr. Matheson will be beside the mark. For the question is not, what does the modern commentator say? nor, what does Dr. Matheson say? but, what did the Jews believe to be the translation of these words? And, although the rendering of the LXX. is ambiguous, like the Hebrew, there can be no doubt that the current Jewish interpretation was of "a mighty wind" and not of the Spirit of God, as the paper already referred to abundantly shows.

That Dr. Matheson himself does not translate the words "a mighty wind," we happen to know; or, if otherwise, he has changed his mind on the point within the last two years, and is now prepared to cancel the first page of his most suggestive little book of devotion, *Voices of the Spirit* (Nisbet, 1888, 3s. 6d.). There, using the Authorised Version as translation, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," he begins: "Before God said, 'Let there be light,' He said, 'Let there be Spirit.' It was the keynote of all His voices to the human soul." And then: "O Thou Divine Spirit, whose breath preceded all things, I am seeking to invert the order of Thy work. I am asking for other things before Thee. I am crying for light, for sun and moon and star, for the green herb, for the bird of heaven. I am forgetting that without Thee the light would not charm, the grass would not grow, the bird would not sing. Come Thyself first of all, and move upon the face of the waters."

In THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for December the subject of the Intermediate State was touched upon. Since then an important contribution has

been made to that subject by Canon Luckock, who has published a volume under the title of *The Intermediate State between Death and Judgment* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1890, 6s.). On the direct point of our note—the meaning of the words “Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,” Ps. xvi. 10, and Acts ii. 27—Dr. Luckock takes the other side. He admits, however, that the words are “capable of a meaning which would limit the reference simply to the death and burial which preceded the Resurrection of our Lord, for hell, or *Sheol*, is often used in the Old Testament for the grave, and the soul of man not infrequently indicates his person merely; “indeed, it has been even at times regarded as a synonym for his body.” In proof of which he quotes the three passages, Lev. v. 2, vii. 25, Ps. xlix. 15; and then adds in a footnote: “Beza so translated it here (Acts. ii. 27), Non derelinques *cadaver* meum in sepulchro, but changed it in a later edition because he said (Ed. Test. 1582) some persons were offended by the rendering.” Dr. Luckock’s objection to this interpretation is twofold. “To accept this interpretation,” he says, “would be a distinct narrowing of the real significance of which the expression is capable; moreover, it would render the introduction of the clause, ‘He descended into hell,’ into the Creed otiose and needless, for it already contained the declaration that He ‘was dead and buried.’” To which those whose standpoint is different from Canon Luckock’s would reply that the *real* significance, judging from Scripture language, is just this which he calls “narrow” and no more; and that the Creed must take care of itself.

Canon Luckock’s volume, notwithstanding its ability and fairness, will have no influence with those who have studied the subject and still hold with the Westminster divines that “besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.” For how can they be agreed in belief who differ so widely upon the authority for their belief? To Canon Luckock the Westminster assertion shows “a startling recklessness of fact.” But suppose the sole authority for his belief were the Scriptures themselves, and that “the primitive Fathers” were in evidence only as fallible interpreters of that Word, then the

startling recklessness would in all probability disappear.

Is it too much to say that the acceptance or rejection of the doctrine or dogma of Purgatory depends upon the interpretation given to the single statement in 1st Peter (iii. 19), that Christ “went and preached to the spirits in prison”? In the case of those who have studied the subject no doubt it is. But for the general reader it probably is not. And yet it is notorious that it is one of the most difficult passages, if not the most difficult and variously interpreted passage in the New Testament. The Methodist papers have recently had the subject of the Intermediate State much *en evidence*, and of course this passage has had its share of attention, as one may see by consulting *The Christian Advocate* (Nos. 38-45, 1890), or the *Primitive Methodist World* (Nos. 396-407). *The Expository Times* had a short note on the text from an exact scholar (Vol. I. p. 148); and Dr. Witherspoon, of Louisville, contributes a paper upon it to the November issue of the *Homiletic Review*.

After laying down with clearness and convincing force the conditions which a sound exegesis of the passage must obey, Dr. Witherspoon says that those who concede these principles “must be brought to the conclusion of Principal Cunningham, the eminent theologian and ecclesiastic of Scotland, who, in his admirable work, *Historical Theology* (T. & T. Clark, 2 vols. 21s.) summarily disposes of the subject in the following brief but emphatic paragraph:—

‘With respect to the very obscure and difficult passage in 1 Peter iii. 19, about Christ’s going and preaching to the spirits in prison, I must say that I have never yet met with an interpretation of it that seemed to me altogether satisfactory. Among the many interpretations of it that have been given, there are just two in support of which anything really plausible, as it appears to me, can be advanced, viz., that which regards the preaching thus spoken of as having taken place in the time of Noah, and through the instrumentality of Noah; and, secondly, that which regards it as having taken place after His resurrection, and through the instrumentality of the Apostles; the

latter view is ably advocated in Dr. John Brown's *Expository Discourses on First Peter*. If either of these interpretations be the true one, the passage has no reference to the period of His history between His death and His resurrection."

Notwithstanding all this, Dr. Witherspoon proposes a new theory. Let us present the points of it; for though not altogether new, as he says, it has new points in it, and a cogency in the way they are put. Christ, says S. Peter, was "put to death in the flesh (*σαρκί* the dative of the part affected); indeed it was that He might become subject to death that "the Word was made flesh" (*ἐγένετο σὰρξ*). This "flesh," then, is His mortal body. But He "was quickened in the spirit" (*πνεύματι*, same dative). What is this "spirit"? In 1 Cor.

xv. S. Paul calls the present body "a natural body" (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*) to distinguish it from the "spiritual body" (*σῶμα πνευματικόν*). Here S. Peter calls the former simply flesh (*σάρξ*); what hinders then that he should call the latter, the spiritual body, simply spirit (*πνεῦμα*). "In which (resurrection body) He went and preached to the spirits in prison." Now, the verb "preached" here (*κηρύσσω*) is simply "published" or "proclaimed;" and this proclamation was not the gospel, but the fact that He had obtained the victory over death and had completed His work. This proclamation was so far-sounding, says S. Peter, that it reached even (*καί*) to the men of Noah's day, now spirits in prison on account of their sin and unbelief,—even to them came tidings of the fulfilment of all Noah's predictions in the victory of Christ over death and the grave.

Professor Huxley and the Destruction of the Gerasene Swine.

I.

BY THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

I HAVE read your able paper with great interest. I do not like, however, the conclusion at which Bengel arrives. And I am not at all afraid to take up Huxley's challenge, and show that, if we accept the Gadarene district as the scene, there is still, according to Josephus, no ground for his verdict.

II.

BY THE REV. PRINCIPAL J. B. M'CLELLAN, M.A.

The only true, and the complete and irrefragable answer to Professor Huxley's attack on our Lord's miracle of the Expulsion of the Unclean Spirits, and the concomitant destruction of the Gerasene Swine as "illegal and immoral," appears to me to lie in a nutshell, and, unless I am mistaken, it is already suggested by the editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES in the January issue in the phrase "origin of evil."

The answer, however, is this, and Professor Huxley cannot be allowed to escape from it. He sets up and attacks for "illegal and immoral" conduct a man of whom the world has never heard. The wielding of all his weapons, therefore, is simply a beating of the air. Whether Professor Huxley believes in the Gospels or not, is immaterial to this issue: he takes them as the source of the narrative

he impugns. He is bound, therefore, to take the agent whose conduct he arraigns as the agent *presented by them*, not an agent *whom they do not present*, or he is at once convicted of the fallacy of the *ignoratio elenchi*. Now the agent whom they present (rightly or wrongly it matters not, I say, to the issue) is the *Christ of the Gospels*, the Christ whom these spirits in this very narrative recognise as "*Son of God*," the Christ who does "*the works which the Father hath given Him to do*" (John v. 36), and of which works it is said, "*The Father who sent me, He doeth the works*" (John xiv. 10). The act of *this agent*, therefore, the agent *represented by the Gospels*, is an act of *divine agency*, and consequently its "legality and morality" in the "destruction of private property" (whether the Gerasenes were Jews or not, this again is immaterial) is exactly the same as the "legality and morality" of destruction of private property, or of life itself, by flood or fire, pestilence or famine, or any other "sore judgment" of the Almighty Lord of all things and of all men. I must leave it to Professor Huxley to say whether he will arraign the Almighty Owner or not. If he presume to do this, he cannot and will not stop at the Gerasene miracle. Believers in Professor Huxley's Theology and Philosophy may admit that he has convicted and overthrown his own phantom, but he has utterly failed to weaken or even touch the Gospel record of the Christ.