

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR FLINDERS PETRIE has completely ruined one of the most interesting and well-worked of all our pulpit illustrations. In the second part of his quarterly called *Ancient Egypt* (Macmillan; 2s.), he has a note on 'Mummy Wheat'; and he tells us, without the slightest manifestation of remorse, that the notion that wheat found in mummy coffins has life in it, and will sprout when sown, is all a mistake.

How does he know that it is a mistake? Well, he has tried it. First of all, however, he says that we should scarcely expect wheat which has lain for hundreds or even thousands of years to retain vitality. Modern wheat dies within a few years. 'Even three or four years will kill a large number of wheat grains, and ten or twelve years leaves scarcely any alive.' But he has tried it.

He tried it five-and-twenty years ago. 'When I was at Hawara in the Fayum, twenty-five years ago, I found a great store of corn. It was only late Roman in date; a period from which a large quantity of complex organic matter usually remains, enough to putrefy when wetted. It was not therefore nearly so likely to be sterilised as wheat from earlier ages. There was a large amount, many bushels, so that the oxygen would not act so much on the middle of such a mass as on a small quantity. I took the fullest and

finest grains, and planted them next day, so that there should be no time for subsequent changes by exposure. I planted the seeds in rows, in every degree of moisture, from soft mud to merely damp earth, in a sheltered place by a canal. Every possible chance was thus in their favour. There was not a trace of sprouting; and in two or three weeks merely spots of brown decay stained the earth.'

How then did the belief arise? Professor Flinders PETRIE makes several suggestions to account for it. Perhaps it arose at the very first in this way. Some unopened coffins were once presented by Ishmail Pasha 'to a great personage.' They were brought to England. On being opened some grains of wheat were found inside them. The grains were planted. They grew. They bore seed. Every astonished person saw a crop of mummy wheat with his own eyes. But before the coffins left Egypt they lay for some time in stables, with fresh modern corn running all over them.

Have not tourists in Egypt, however, bought mummy wheat and taken it home and sowed it, and again with their own eyes have they not seen it spring and grow up? There could be no mistake about it, because they bought it in sealed brown pots, just as they had been found in some

coffin. The tourist did not know, says Professor PETRIE, that pots are cheap and easily sealed, and that in Egypt there is a nice flourishing trade in them.

Perhaps there is another source of error. Professor Flinders PETRIE is very tender with it. But he thinks it just possible that when a great man returns from his visit to Egypt with some corn, gives an interesting account of the possibilities to his gardener, and hands over the seeds to be planted with the greatest care and every advantage in the greenhouse, 'it would require a stern moralist to deny him the satisfaction which he fondly anticipates.'

Finally Professor PETRIE thinks that it would be a serious matter for us if it were found to be a fact that mummy corn after a thousand years or more of oblivion could bring forth the astonishing results it has been credited with. In all cases the crop raised from this wheat has been particularly rich, and the flour of the best quality. But within these years cultivation and selection have greatly improved the corn plant. At least that is the universal belief of agriculturists. If this mummy wheat yields such wonderful results, all our agricultural progress is a delusion. Professor PETRIE does not doubt that the wheat is good modern wheat, and the particularly fine crop is due to the care which has been given to the rearing of it.

The Schweich Lectures for 1913 were delivered by F. Crawford BURKITT, M.A., D.D., Norrisian Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge and Fellow of the British Academy. Their topic was *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford University Press; 3s. net).

The best known of the Apocalypses is the Book of Enoch. And the Book of Enoch is best known because it is quoted in the Epistle of St. Jude. 'Wandering Stars,' says Jude, 'to these Enoch

also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgement upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

That this is a quotation from the Book of Enoch cannot be gainsaid. As a matter of fact, the words quoted are the last sentence of the opening paragraph of the Book. It is no mere illustration, no coincidence of ideas. 'Enoch' is quoted by name as inspired prophecy.

Now this fact has given the Church's attitude to the Epistle of St. Jude a curious history. Jerome tells us that in his day, inasmuch as a testimony is quoted from Enoch, an apocryphal Book, the Epistle is rejected by most. And suspicion, if not rejection, has pursued it down to our own day. Distinguished scholars, moved at least partly by the same fact, have placed the Epistle in the second century A.D., and have questioned the right of the author to call himself the brother of James.

Professor BURKITT points out that the argument is all the other way. The one thing quite certain about the early Christians is that they were enthusiasts; those who joined them joined because they were enthusiasts, and the first expressions of their hopes and fears were unrestrained and sometimes crude. The early Christians were 'full of new wine.' We are more likely to find bad literary and historical criticism in an 'early' Christian document than in a 'late' one: 'moderation' is likely to be the mark of the second generation rather than the first. And it is more likely that the Epistle of St. Jude belongs to the first century than to the second just for the very reason that it quotes as inspired prophecy the uncanonical Book of Enoch.

But the Book of Enoch ought to have a deeper

interest for us than that which comes from the quotation in the Epistle of St. Jude. For, says Professor BURKITT, it is only when we study Matthew, Mark, and Luke against the background of the Book of Enoch that we see them in their true perspective. He even declares that the best known sayings of Jesus appear in their true light only 'if regarded as *Midrash* upon words and concepts taken from Enoch, words and concepts that were familiar to those who heard the Prophet of Galilee, though now they may have been forgotten by Jew and Christian alike.'

Take the saying about the Unclean Spirit reported in Mt 12⁴³⁻⁴⁵ and Lk 11²⁴⁻²⁶. 'The unclean spirit,' said Jesus, 'when it is gone out of the man passes through waterless places, seeking rest and finding none; then it says, "To my house I will return from whence I came forth," and on coming finds it swept and garnished. Then it goes and takes with it seven others worse than itself, and they enter and dwell there—and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.' Matthew (12⁴⁴) adds that the house was empty, as well as swept and garnished, and this addition receives most of the weight when the parable is explained in the pulpit. But Professor BURKITT doubts if it is more than a gloss added by the author of the first Gospel to bring out the sense.

In any case he is sure that the notion is altogether wrong which takes the parable as conveying information about 'the natural history of demons and demoniacs.' Jesus gives no information at all. He simply assumes the then popular belief about demoniacs and the cause of their affliction. Now that belief is set forth in the fifteenth chapter of Enoch. There we are told that the demons are the progeny of the heavenly sons of God and the earthly daughters of men. They are 'spirit' like their fathers, but they cannot rise far from the surface of the earth, the home of their mothers, and they are evil, 'oppressive, destroying, attacking, wrestling, casting men upon the ground,

making them run mad, spirits that can eat nothing but fast all the time and thirst and dash themselves about. And these attack the sons of men and women, because they have come forth from them.'

Our Lord gives no information of this kind. He simply assumes this doctrine, using it as a vehicle for the truth He wishes to teach. Professor BURKITT does not suggest that the passage in Enoch was present to the mind of Christ. But he does suggest that it lay behind the scene described as familiar imagery, just as the vision of Daniel lay behind the passages that speak about the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven.

The sensation caused by *Foundations* was not so great as the sensation caused by *Lux Mundi*, and the sensation caused by *Lux Mundi* was not so great as the sensation caused by *Essays and Reviews*. There is progress, at least in panic. There is also progress in consideration. The 'Essayists' wrote and died; the editor of *Lux Mundi* lived to become Bishop of Oxford and to astonish the world with an orthodox 'Open Letter'; the editor of *Foundations* has at once endeavoured to satisfy troubled consciences by issuing *Restatement and Reunion* (Macmillan; 2s. 6d. net).

Mr. STREETER endeavours to set troubled consciences at rest by showing that the things which disturb them in *Foundations* are theological things. And theology does not matter. 'The centre of gravity in Christianity,' he says, 'does not lie in theology.' At the best it represents but one aspect of the life of the soul. And the great majority of men have to set that aspect aside. Only the few can ever be theologians; Christianity is for the many. Why should *Foundations* trouble us? 'It was not with regret, but with exultation, that the words were spoken, "I thank thee, Father, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes."' "

The editor of *Foundations* rejoices to repeat these words. With these words in his mind he resolved to present 'the essential elements of the Christian message in such a way as to render it independent of all those subtleties of historical criticism or metaphysics, the hazardous and conjectural nature of which are best known to those who have most closely studied them.' He found that he could do this in six sentences. Six main ideas, he found, contain the essence of the Christian message. Each of these ideas is infinitely expansive in its practical application. But each is so ineffably simple that it can be set forth in a single intelligible sentence.

The first idea is that Christianity is a disposition of the soul: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' The second is a course of action resulting from that: 'If any man would be my disciple, let him take up his cross, and follow me.' The third follows as a consequence: 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' These three go together. They form a chain of effort—unfortunately not of accomplishment. So universally is the effort without accomplishment that on every hand the question is asked, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' The three sentences which remain tell us where the sufficiency comes from.

First, there is the promise of a response on the part of the Divine to such feeble efforts as we may make: 'Knock, and it shall be opened unto you'; 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Next, there is the assurance that failure can be retrieved: 'For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And, lastly, there is the sure and certain hope that the end will be reached: 'This is the promise which he promised us, even life eternal.'

But Mr. STREETER is not content with six simple

sentences. He expands them into paragraphs, two of them into a good many paragraphs. In every case his purpose is to show that there is nothing in them which gives the wise and prudent an advantage over babes.

Manifestly that is so with the first. 'Love God; love thy neighbour'—there is no refinement of casuistry here, no intricacies of dogmatic definition, no elaboration of ceremonial ordinance. It is true that there has been progress and development since these words were spoken; but they have consisted only in men's seeing more clearly where to look for the manifestations of God—the Divine, the Ideal—and in their becoming more sensitive to new directions and particular instances in which the principle 'Love your neighbour' should be applied. This advance, however, depends less on the trained intellect of scientist, scholar, or philosopher, than on the instinct of the heart of those who have striven to follow Christ.

Of the second, 'Let him take up his cross, and follow me,' Mr. STREETER does not make much. The 'cross' is the daily trial and task of life. Did the followers of Christ seek out crosses once? It was unnecessary.

The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we need to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

The only question that can ever be asked is, How far? And the answer is, As far as He carried it who went before.

On these first two points and on the last two Mr. STREETER has little to say. He deliberately says little in order to give himself to the third and fourth points.

The third point is: 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' Mr. STREETER dwells at greater length

on this point because he believes that it contains the essence of Christianity. Well, if this is the essence of Christianity, then Christianity is precisely that which Nietzsche detested. It is the religion of self-denial and suffering. For the will of God is done by suffering, especially by suffering innocently. It is a direct contradiction to the natural human instinct that pain hurts and is to be avoided. Pain is not to be run after. But it comes. And when it comes it has to be accepted. The cup of agony has to be drained, however bitter it may be, with the words, 'Not my will, but thine be done.'

How do we know that the will of God is to be done by suffering? We know because so Christ did it. His is the perfect life, and His life was the acceptance not of His own will, which would have given Him pleasure, but of the will of God, which sent Him to Gethsemane and Calvary. And if the life of Christ on earth was a life of suffering, then is the life of God in heaven a life of suffering also. For, says Mr. STREETER, 'if the life that Christ led is the highest life of all, it must somehow or other be the life which God leads; and if we want to picture to ourselves the life of God, we shall picture it to ourselves *not* as resembling the manner of the kings of the Gentiles, lording it in pomp and luxury, but rather as like the life of the Son of Man, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

That is why we know of the doctrine if we do the will. Doctrine of any kind is known to be of God, if it leads us to God, if it keeps us in touch with God. And that means, if it encourages us to say, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt.' This is the universal testimony of sainthood. There may be in theology voices many and their sound most uncertain, 'but an appeal to the witness of the followers of Christ, to the *consensus sanctorum* of all the Churches and all the Ages, elicits an answer like the voice of a trumpet, and it gives no uncertain sound.

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is He sure to bless?
Angels, Martyrs, Prophets, Virgins
Answer, "Yes!"

It tells us that if we follow Christ we inevitably attain a freedom and a fullness of life hitherto not experienced; and that this is accompanied by an opening of the eyes, a quickening of the spiritual sense, a training of the moral "taste," or whatever one may choose to call it, which enables us to see by direct perfection that this *is* the highest and best life.'

With the fourth point Mr. STREETER enters a new atmosphere. Up to this point he has dwelt in the atmosphere of attainment. If we love God and our neighbour, if our love issues in a passion for service, and if in that service we shrink from no sacrifice, we shall find that we have obtained peace; and not only peace but also the knowledge of God, a direct intuitive knowledge of God and the things that belong to God. But there is that 'if.' Mr. STREETER sees that that 'if' is there. He sees that it is a big 'if.' He sees that it is altogether too big an 'if' for us, that 'the condition is one which we are in nowise able to fulfil.' The astonishing thing is that, seeing all that, he does not see that it turns the whole of what he has said upside down.

Does he see it? There is the least suspicion that he does. For he tries to pursue the same course of reasoning still. That 'if' being there, and being impassable, it is necessary, he says, that we should obtain assistance to get over it. What assistance do we obtain? Mr. STREETER does not seem to be quite sure. First, he says a change must come, and quotes the passage, 'Unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' But immediately after he lets that go, and falls back on prayer, meditation, and work. These, he says, 'are the keys to unlock the gate, the gate that at first seems strait, that leadeth unto life.' And that he does not mean conversion here is evident since that is the point that follows.

Now it is, without any question, the teaching of our Lord, and it is the teaching as assuredly of all the Apostles, that conversion—call it what you will, and make it what you please—conversion comes first. Till that has taken place, none of all the things of which Mr. STREETER has been speaking can begin. Conversion is the recognition of the 'if.' It may be recognized early in life or late, the recognition may be followed by a crisis, or an imperceptible drawing to God. But it involves always the acceptance of God in Christ as the beginning of a new life. Then follow all the things which Mr. STREETER has put before it—love to God and man, the acceptance of the cross, the doing of the will of God and the knowledge of the doctrine. Then follow also prayer, meditation, work, and what else there may be to aid us to keep in the love of God; and finally the assurance of a life that is eternal.

Our Lord never dreamt of saying to any one who had not faced that 'if,' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself—*unless in order to make him face it.* When that interesting Scribe came asking, 'What must I do?' He answered, 'Keep the commandments.' The Scribe answered, 'Who is my neighbour?' It was his attempt to get over the 'if.' Jesus showed him that he could not get over it in that way. He showed him that there was no way of getting over it on his present course of life. No one can keep the commandments, however clearly he sees the sum of them, by simply keeping them. He must lay all that method aside and try another. And the other method to try is to begin at the beginning, repenting, trusting, loving. He must enter the new life as a child—or, as in the inimitable figure, he must be born again.

Study: Travel in New Testament Lands.

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I.

Two visits to the East had greatly strengthened a conviction of mine, that in studying St. Paul far more than the usual amount of stress should be laid on the Eastern background of the Apostle's personality, and that literary knowledge of the East must be supplemented by travel. To this view I gave expression in my book on St. Paul¹; and it has fared with me as I might have expected. I have met with warm approval, especially from those who themselves know the East, and scornful repudiation, especially from those who obviously do not. The most valuable to me is the approval in principle of a man who, in the enthusiasm of his own great knowledge of Asia Minor gained by explorations extending over many years, objects to the shortness of my visits, though he fully recognizes the importance of the theory that guided me: I refer to Sir William M. Ramsay.²

¹ *Paulus*, Tübingen, 1911. (*St. Paul*, London, 1912.)

² *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day*, second edition, London [1914], p. 447: 'But I am glad to

Greatly as I am pleased to have the approval, at least in principle, of this great pioneer scholar, I am no less astonished at the misconception underlying his detailed criticisms of my journeys. Sir W. M. Ramsay judges my travels by the explorer's standard,³ although I have always spoken of them as journeys for study purposes, never as explorations. Thus the proper point of view for considering the question is altogether shifted, and it is important for me therefore to go into the discussion in some detail. The gratitude and esteem I feel for Ramsay the traveller and Roman citizen would alone forbid me to ignore his criticism.

I have no intention to discuss here all the details of Ramsay's criticism. But all that I do not touch on here (the climate of Asia Minor, the zone of the olive-tree, the heights of places visited agree with him that geography is so important in Pauline study.)

³ For example, p. 443f., where he uses the word 'exploring' more than once.