THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* is completed with the issue of the second volume. The publishers have sent a copy of the volume for review.

It is a large volume. No reviewer can be expected to discuss its contents from the beginning to the end. Let us look for a little at the last article.

The last article has been written by Professor Sanday. Its title is PAUL. No greater satisfaction can come to an editor than the satisfaction of placing the most important subjects in the most competent hands. In the second volume of this Dictionary the most important subject is St. Paul. Should any one wish to dispute that, in face of such topics contained in this volume as MESSIAH, NEW BIRTH, SERMON ON THE MOUNT, SIN, SON OF GOD, he will at least admit that it is the topic of most importance for the moment. For 'we are on the eve,' said Principal Iverach, in last month's EXPOSITORY TIMES, 'we are on the eve of a great controversy, the issues of which are more momentous than any that we have ever had.' It is the controversy whether Jesus or Paul is to be considered the Founder of Christianity.

And where should that controversy be recognized if not in an article on St. Paul in a Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels? We do not say that if it had not been for the controversy there would have been no such article. But there would not have been the same necessity for offering it to Professor Sanday. He knows that the controversy is coming. He is intimately aware of every sign of it. And although he builds his article on larger lines than is demanded by the alternative 'Jesus or Paul,' yet he keeps the alternative before him and gives his judgment unmistakably.

Professor Sanday's PAUL is the last of a series of articles which are placed together in an appendix. It may be read by itself. The others, to get the good of them, should be read together. They are all on the estimates which men have formed of Christ, and the influence He has had in the world. They are an attempt, as it were, to say what Christ has been to men at the date of the publication of the Dictionary. Will the Dictionary do anything in the way of giving Him a larger place and a more spiritual influence?

There are few who realize what the editing of a dictionary means in the present day. There are few who realize what it means even to see that each article possesses an adequate, and not overweighted, bibliography.

How near can one come to the assertion of the Divinity of Christ without asserting it? Dr. James Drummond comes very near. He does not assert the Divinity of Christ. He deliberately denies it. But we can take his denial more thankfully than the assertion of some apologists.

Dr. Drummond, who recently retired from the Principalship of Manchester College, Oxford, has been giving himself to the preparation for the press of a volume of Systematic Theology. He may not acknowledge the word 'systematic.' He even tells us that he has omitted certain doctrines. Nevertheless it is what we mean by Systematic Theology, and we could wish that all our systems hung together as systematically. The title of the book, however, is simply *Studies in Christian Doctrine* (Philip Green; 10s. 6d. net).

Where is it that Dr. Drummond approaches so near to the assertion of the Divinity of Christ? It is when he comes to speak of the death of Christ upon the cross. Where else should it be? It is when he speaks of 'the love which bore the cross' on Calvary. Where else *could* it be? 'The love which bore the cross,' he says (we must quote his very words), 'was not merely the kindness and affection of a man; for love is not the accident of flesh and blood, but belongs to the eternal realm. The regard which all men feel for kindred and friends may be said, in distinction, to belong to the natural order; but the love which is a pervasive character of the soul, and, without waiting for sympathetic objects, flows perennially from the deep springs of its own independent life, is of heavenly origin. "Love is from God, and every one that loveth has been born from God" (1 Jn 4^7). It was, then, the Spirit of God himself living and working in him, that spoke to the world in Christ; it was Divine love that sustained him on the cross, a Divine pity and pardon for sin that bore the scorn and shame. And may we not add Paul's thought, that the love of God was shown, in that he "spared not his own Son" (Rom. 8^{32})?'

We must speak in figures, he hastens to add. No doubt. When we speak of the things of God we must always speak in figures. But how near Dr. Drummond's figures are to the facts which the Church has held to throughout the ages of its existence. 'And so,' he goes on, 'we may say with all reverence, and knowing the inadequacy of our speech, that the heart of the infinite Father is touched when, through love to sinful man, he puts his Spirit upon his Beloved, and sends him forth to pain and death that he may establish a Divine kingdom in the world.'

This is true of all saints, says Dr. Drummond, true 'in its measure.' It is so. And when he adds that the light of heavenly love which is the reconciling power of the world 'reaches its focus on the cross,' we may be well content to let him add that it is diffused in many-coloured rays through a multitude of souls. We may be well content; for the essential thing is the reconciliation. And Dr. Drummond does not find the reconciliation in any of those many-coloured rays of love which are diffused through a multitude of souls. He finds it in the love of God in Christ. He finds it in the love of Christ on the cross.

'Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called' (1 Cor. 1^{26}). They saw it at the beginning. We see it still. We see it in India, and have been somewhat stumbled by it there. We see it at home. We see that when a poor man becomes rich his sons reject the God of their father. We see that when an ignorant man gives his sons a liberal education they use it to turn his hope into shame. He was persuaded that neither death nor life would separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord: they can discover no lordship in Christ or love in God.

No doubt it is inevitable that if the gospel makes its appeal to everybody it should count

its greatest number of converts among the masses. That is so just because they are the masses, just because they are the greater number. But St. Paul means more than that. He means that the converts from among the mighty and the noble are not in proportion to their number. And that is what we mean still. But it does not seem that the fact has received all the attention which it deserves. For the amazing thing about it is that when this disproportion is spoken of by the preacher it is always spoken of as a matter for rejoicing.

The Rev. William Allen Whitworth was a preacher. There was published recently a volume of Mr. Whitworth's Sermons, called *Christian Thought on Present-day Questions*. There has now been published another volume entitled *The Sanctuary of God* (Macmillan; 4s. 6d. net). In the new volume we find Mr. Whitworth considering the question why so few of the mighty and the noble are called. We find him rejoicing, as a preacher rejoices, that not many wise men are called.

He thinks that St. Paul rejoices in it. He thinks that St. Paul rejoices not merely in the fact that a great many of the 'low' and the 'foolish' are called. For he could not but rejoice in the fact that the gospel is preached to the poor. He thinks that St. Paul absolutely rejoices in the fact that the disproportion between the numbers of the rich and the poor is greater than it ought to be. For it is the glory of the gospel that it makes no appeal whatever to the wise or the wealthy. Mr. Whitworth believes that we have not yet taken Christ's words at their full value, when He rejoiced in spirit, and said: 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

But surely, if the gospel is true, the wise man should be the first to recognize it. Yes, if the wise man is the first to recognize every kind of truth. But that is not so. For there are different kinds of truth. And while the wise man may be the first to recognize the truth that he is wise in, he is just on that account likely to be the last to recognize the truth which is outside the range of his wisdom.

Mr. Whitworth takes an example. He is courageous enough to take Harnack. What is Christianity? asks Harnack. What is *anything*? asks Mr. Whitworth. The answer depends upon our faculties and capacities. What is the sun? It is the source of light to those who have the faculty to see. If there are creatures who have not that faculty, it is not the source of light to them. What is the sun? It is a source of heat. If there are creatures who are not affected by heat, it is not that source to them. What is the sun? It is a centre of attractive force. But there are those who have not the capacity to investigate motion. It is not an attractive force to them. The sun may have other properties of which we know nothing. But there may be other beings who can discern these properties.

What, then, is Christianity? Three things. It is a gospel; it is a call; it is wisdom. It is a gospel to the suffering and the unhappy. It is a call to the worldly and the sensual. It is wisdom to the wise.

First, to the suffering and the unhappy, Christianity is a gospel of comfort and hope. Are they unhappy for their own sins, or for the sins of others, or for the burden of evil which sin has brought into the world? The gospel does not ask. It is enough that they are unhappy. To all who suffer it says, 'Come unto me.' It says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' It says, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'

To the man of the world, Christianity is not a gospel, it is a call. It is a call to temperance and self-control, to righteousness and justice, to a

higher standard of morals. Sin has its pleasures: it calls to the worldly man to leave them. The world has its pleasures: it calls to him to rise above them. The flesh has its gratifications which are neither sinful nor hurtful: it calls to him to crucify the flesh with its affections and desires. To the man of the world it says, 'How hardly shall they that are prosperous enter the kingdom.'

To the wise man Christianity is wisdom. It presents the deepest problems which his mind can occupy itself with, the deepest and the most fascinating. For the problems of Christianity are at once spiritual and of immediately pressing importance. It presents, for example, questions about God. Now there are many interesting things that the wise man may consider about God. But amongst these things is this, that God is a God with whom he has to do. Does he consider that? The wise man considers whether God is; does he also consider that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him?

Now then, when Christianity is offered to the sufferer as a gospel of solace, to the worldling as a call to the higher life, to the wise as the most exalted wisdom, which of the three will be most eager to accept the offer of grace? There is no need to ask. The worldling has no desire to be raised to a higher life. The wise man takes time to think. Felix was a worldling. He trembled, but said, 'Go thy way—when I have a convenient season.' The Areopagites were wise men. Some of them mocked; others said, 'We will hear thee again of this matter.' To the worldly and to the wise, Christ is ever saying, 'Verily I say unto you that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.'

Thus Mr. Whitworth makes his distinction. But he does not forget that the suffering and the worldly and the wise are not always sharply distinguished. He does not forget that the three may be found in one man. If that is so, then to that man Christianity comes with a threefold appeal. It appeals to him spiritually, morally, and intellectually. Is he a sufferer? It appeals to him as a gospel. Is he of the world? It appeals to him with a higher moral code. Is he a philosopher? It appeals to him as a new and ultimate philosophy. And by this threefold appeal men have been won to Christ. Mr. Whitworth names Lord Shaftesbury, and also Mr. Gladstone ('whose life we are all reading just now'). But he says, and this is the thing to be considered, that when these men are won to Christ it is not by the appeal to their conscience; it is not by the appeal to their intellect; it is by the appeal to their common human need. It is by the welcome tidings of pardon for sin, of grace here, and glory hereafter.

What is sin? The Shorter Catechism answers, 'Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.' We are not so much interested as our fathers were in the Westminster Catechism and its answers. But we are quite as much interested in sin. And this is exactly how we understand it. When we pray we say that we have left undone the things which we ought to have done, and that we have done the things which we ought not to have done. Our language may be more poetical and less precise than the language of the Shorter Catechism, but our meaning is the same. Where did the Westminster Divines get their definition of sin?

Not from the Gospels apparently, and not from Christ. In the excellent English translation by Dr. Warschauer of a German book on *Jesus and His Teaching*, written by Erich von Schrenck (James Clarke & Co.; 3s. 6d. net), there occurs this sentence, 'Jesus never uses the word "transgression," and does not regard sin in relation to the Law at all.'

The Jews, says von Schrenck, were always afraid of transgressing the Law. Paul had stood for a long time under this Jewish pharisaical system,

and his conception of sin remained tinged by his experience of it as opposition to the Law, so that all his life the sinner appeared to him as the transgressor of the Law. But Jesus lifted sin out of relation to the Law, and brought it into relation to God. He found the true life of man regarded as consisting in legal observance; He made it consist in personal communion with the living God. And He spoke of the sinner, therefore, not as a transgressor of the Law, but as a debtor to God.

Is von Schrenck right? If he is, what is to be done with that form of words which occurs in the Prayer Book version of the Lord's Prayer? The petition is, 'And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' There is no form in which that petition is so frequently made. We know that it does not come from the Authorized Version; that the makers of the Prayer Book went back as far as Tindale for it. Were they mistaken? Have they represented our Lord as using a form of words which it was not possible for Him to use?

The leading article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January has been written by Professor J. M. S. Baljon, of Utrecht. Its title is 'Contributions from the History of Religions to the New Testament.' But the field in which Professor Baljon has made his reputation is the Textual Criticism of the New Testament. What has he to do with Religions?

He might answer that at present we all have to do with Religions. But he has a better answer than that. Textual criticism, exegesis, and introduction are not ends in themselves. They are means to an end. The end is the accurate representation of primitive Christianity. Now if anything should occur to affect that representation, if any movement should arise claiming to alter seriously the account which the New Testament gives of the origin and early history of Christianity, it may become the duty of the critic or the expositor to arrest his proper studies and examine that movement. For if it is a movement that alters the very materials upon which he is working, he may find that much of his labour is misdirected or even thrown away.

Such a movement has arisen. It is known in Germany by the name of *religionsgeschichtliche Methode*, which, being freely translated by Professor Baljon, is 'The Aid which the Study of Religions provides for the Study of the New Testament.'

It is a *method*, you observe; simply a method of study. Could anything be more inoffensive? Perhaps the inventors of the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode* have profited by the infinite mischief that was done to literary criticism in calling it by a name that seemed so arrogant as 'Higher' Criticism. This is only a method of study. Yet if the Higher Criticism smote traditional Christianity with whips, this method is capable of chastising it with scorpions.

It is a method of studying the New Testament to discover what there is in it which has been borrowed from other religions. Now that also seems inoffensive enough. And it *is* inoffensive if it is properly conducted. But who is to conduct it properly? Dr. Baljon says that much depends upon the 'religious view-point' of the man who engages in the investigation. The man who sets out with a low estimate of the claims of Christ will find more legend and less history in the Gospels than the man who starts with a high regard for His claims and a strong veneration for His person.

There is therefore a certain responsibility lying upon every one of us. We may not be able ourselves to search the New Testament for traces of Mithraism; but we may consider the antecedents and scrutinize the motives of the man who does.

Professor Baljon acknowledges the right. And

for himself he tells us plainly that while he does not hold by any such rigid doctrine of the inspiration of the New Testament as the ancient Jews applied to the Old Testament, or the Muhammadans apply to the Quran, on the other hand he is convinced that Christianity is the work of Christ, and that He is—'I shall not say Founder of our religion, but Mediator and Lord, as He has been to the Christian Church these nineteen centuries.'

Does Professor Baljon find foreign elements in the New Testament, then? He does. And why, he asks, should he not? Does not a good Reformed theologian believe in the existence of 'common grace'? And did not the early Fathers hold that when Christ went down to Hades, Plato came forward to greet Him and was glad at His appearing?

He finds Plato in the New Testament. He finds him in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. The subject of the Prologue is the Logos. That is also the subject of the whole Gospel. For Dr. Baljon discovers the keynote of the Gospel in the 14th verse of the first chapter: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.' Now he believes that the doctrine of the Logos was not found by St. John in the Old Testament. At least not directly and not wholly. For five hundred years of religious development lie between the Old Testament and St. John. He believes that the doctrine of the Logos was derived from Philo, who in turn built upon foundations that were laid by Plato.

Again, he finds the influence of the Greeks in St. Paul. St. Paul's antithesis of flesh and spirit, and other parts of his psychology, are Hellenistic. So is the method of allegory which he applies to the interpretation of the Old Testament. Professor Baljon thinks that the Apostle to the Gentiles would not have spoken of 'this Hagar' as 'Mount Sinai in Arabia' if the Greeks before him had not been driven to allegorize the stories of the gods in Homer and Hesiod in order to make them less offensive to the taste of their time.

He finds also reflexions, or at least phrases, of the Greek religion in St. Paul's references to a 'mystery' that had been hid, and to the 'seal' of Baptism. Besides the knowledge of the Divine which was within reach of those uninitiated in the mysteries of Greece, there was a knowledge which was attained only by the initiated; while that sacred and solemn ceremony which gave admission to fellowship with a Greek divinity was sometimes spoken of as a 'seal.'

But Professor Baljon is on surer ground, or at least he has more material to work upon, when he comes to the Apocalypse. We are already familiar with the discoveries which Gunkel and Bousset have made here. And if Professor Swete can say that 'of modern commentators, Bousset has helped me most,' we need not fear to follow the wary footsteps of Professor Baljon.

His first example is the seven eyes which (in Rev 5^6) are described as the 'seven spirits of God which are sent forth into all the earth.' This, he contends, cannot be taken from the seven-branched candlestick of Exodus, or from the candlestick of Zechariah's vision, although the prophet declares that the seven lamps are 'the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.' Here, he says, we are compelled to call in the help of the star-gods of the heathen. The sun, the moon, and the five great planets, which were the heathen gods of light, were accepted by the Jews as angels of God, and were placed as guardians over nations, rivers, and lands. Thus they became the 'eyes' of God, and were represented in public worship by torches. But Dr. Baljon warns us that more definite than that we cannot be, and he says that when Gunkel identifies the seven stars of Rev 1^{16} as the Small Bear he 'goes too far.'

The next example is the birth of the Messiah in Rev 12. This is a prophecy. That is to say, when it was written the Messiah was not yet born. This section, therefore, cannot have been written by a Christian, but must be the work of a Jew. Nor can the idea have been native to any Jew. For with the Jews the angels are always male. Female divinities are wholly alien. Here, then, in this woman who gives birth to the Messiah, we have a reflexion of the heathen ideas of the Queen of Heaven, whose very insignia she is made to wear.

These things Dr. Baljon calls 'fixed points' in the study of the New Testament. They may not amount to much, but he believes that they must be accepted. Then he comes to Buddhism.

Now it is very likely that one day a pitched battle will be fought between Christianity and Buddhism. And the very centre of it will be the question whether there are elements derived from Buddhism in the New Testament. There are differences between Christianity and Buddhism which the Buddhists, when the day of decision comes, will find it hard to account for. There is especially this difference, that Buddhism proclaims salvation from suffering, while Christianity offers salvation from sin. But if the Buddhists succeed in showing that the whole story of the miraculous birth of Jesus is modelled on the story of the birth of Buddha; or if they can show (according to Seydel) that one of the sources used by the Synoptists, especially by St. Luke, was a Buddhist Gospel, the struggle will be a prolonged one and the issue may be incomplete.

Professor Baljon has given twenty years' study to early Christianity. Recently he has spent himself upon a thorough investigation of these very claims. He has also called Professor Calland to his aid. And he has come to the deliberate conviction that there is not a trace in the Gospels of the influence of Buddhism, whether conscious or unconscious.

Then he turns to Mithra. His account of the worship of Mithra is masterly. And although he owns his obligation to Professor Cumont, he has some discoveries of his own. Now, that there are parallel passages between the religion of Mithra and Christianity is, he says, clearer than the day. Mithra is a Mediator between God and man, as Christ is. His earthly career is to him hardship and strife, to man blessing and salvation, as with Christ. When he is born, shepherds appear and kneel in adoration. And then, of course, there is the visit of the Wise Men, who are claimed to have been adherents of Mithraism. But Professor Baljon does not believe that they were adherents of Mithraism. And as to those interesting coincidences, they are interesting and no more. 'I take them to be accidental,' he says, 'and see no dependence of Christianity upon the Mithra cult, nor of the Mithra cult upon Christianity.'

It is true that in the history of the Church Mithraism made itself felt. We acknowledge it to this day. For in the course of the fourth century the commemoration of Christ's birth was changed from January 6 to December 25, in order to agree with the commemoration of the birth of Mithra. This was done probably with the object of weakening the Mithra cult, by giving its chief festival a Christian atmosphere. But it is the New Testament that we are concerned with at present. And Dr. Baljon cannot find in any part of the New Testament more than a few cases of interesting coincidence or a few examples of universal religious symbolism.

'The result I reach is this'—and his words are well worth quoting: 'The influence of strange religions upon primitive Christianity is not very important. He who would interpret Christianity can do so by means of the Old Testament, the later Judaism, and Hellenistic philosophy. By doing this he walks the old and tried way. But, above all things else, let the full light be concentrated upon the person of Jesus Christ, who is the Creator or rather the centre of the religion

that names itself after Him. If history in general cannot be understood without the significance of those exalted personalities who gave the impulse to any great movement, and who cannot be interpreted as mere products of their times, how much more does this apply to the sacred history of the origin of Christianity, in view of the person of Christ! To us He is the only-begotten Son of the Father, who has revealed the Father unto us. Give Christianity confidently a place by the side of other religions. Christianity contains whatever is noble and divine in them, and much that they do not contain. Christianity recognizes the problem of sin, and proclaims the atonement of the sinner with God. Safely compare the Christ with Buddha or whomsoever you please. He raises Himself above them all, even as the Jungfrau in all her virginal glory rises high above her surroundings. The 'seeing' (ὁρᾶν) of the Son of Man, becomes a sight of admiration (θεωρεῖν), and the admiration ends in worship. *Sol Justitiae, illustra nos!*'

Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

By the Rev. W. C. Allen, M.A., Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford.

These are very simple words, and yet how they quicken the imagination. 'The kingdom of heaven'—is it the New Jerusalem which St. John saw coming down from God out of heaven, alight with the glory of God, splendid with its twelve gates, and its walls of gold, and its river of sweet waters, and its trees of life? Or is it the Church of God, the society of the faithful, the blessed company of all true-hearted saints, bearing through the ages of the world the gospel of God's goodness, terrible as a bannered army? Or is it the wide-spreading land towards which our eyes are turned, in which the king shall reign in righteousness, and princes rule in judgment?

And then the keys. To us English people the phrase suggests the barred gate or the locked door to be opened only by those who have the keys. And all this given to one man. 'I will give unto *thee* the keys.' No wonder that the figure of St. Peter has assumed a gigantic place in the imagination of men. What a position to hold! Janitor of the kingdom of heaven!

Or once again, how the words stir our imagination as we think of the influence that these short and simple syllables have exercised in European history, of the great system of ecclesiastical government built upon them, of the appeal made to them to-day, as through the nineteen centuries of Western civilization, in support of claims to authority over Christian men, and to their obedience. And truly any man or body of men would rightly claim our solicitude and interest, if we knew that they could, in fact, open to us the door into that land of the blest, or throw back the gates of the city of God.

Let me give you one simple instance from a bygone age of the influence of these words upon the minds of simple men.

In the year 664 A.D. a conference of Christian bishops was held at Whitby. There were some matters of dispute between Christian men, and the king of Northumbria wished to see if some agreement could not be arrived at. He listened to the arguments on this side and on that until one speaker urged that the custom which he advocated had the authority of St. Peter. No further argument was necessary. 'I will not decide,' said the king, 'against the keeper of the door, lest when I come to the gates of heaven he shut the door against me.'

The same feeling influences to-day many who never heard of the Northumbrian king.

'I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'

I wish this morning[1] to make one or two suggestions as to the possible meaning of these much debated words, and then to point out how these our brethren, who are to-day to receive their commission, hold keys of the kingdom in proportion to their office; and lastly, to show how, in a sense, all

[1] This sermon was preached in Lichfield Cathedral on September 22, 1907.