

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Bishop of Ely has republished his article on *The Gospels in the Light of Historical Criticism*, from the 'Cambridge Theological Essays' (Macmillan; 1s. net). And he has taken the opportunity of its republication to add to it a paper on the 'Obligations of the Clergy,' and another on the 'Resurrection of our Lord.'

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The reason why Dr. CHASE adds the paper on the Resurrection of our Lord is that in recent discussions of the Resurrection it has been pleaded that stress should not be laid on 'the physical resurrection' or on 'the third day.' This has been done for the relief of conscience. Physical science knows nothing of the resurrection of dead bodies; and if a body cannot be raised at all, it cannot be raised on the third day. In other words, the plea is made that it might be possible for the modern mind, acquainted with scientific fact, and working with unvarying law, to accept the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, if theologians would be content not to insist upon a time limit for the Resurrection, or upon the Resurrection of Christ's body.

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Now theologians were never more complaisant than they are to-day. If men of science are willing to make advances, men of theology are ready to meet them half-way. If Sir Oliver LODGE, in his office as President of the British Association,

courteously declares that physical science has erred in entering the religious realm, the President of the Church Congress bows his acknowledgment and promises never again to say anything that will interfere with the sweep of the laws of nature. But he has to reckon with the Resurrection. Hitherto he and all his have believed that the Resurrection of Jesus was an historical event and took place within the space of three days; they have believed that on that historical event the Church of Christ was founded at the first and has existed ever since. Can any degree of complacency enable them to say now that nothing more need be insisted upon than that the early disciples had certain visions of Christ, from which they argued that He must have risen from the dead?

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Bishop CHASE does not believe it. He is as courteous as the President of the British Association. He has many centuries of Christian courtesy looking down upon him, a great cloud of witnesses. But he knows that these witnesses expect that in his courtesy he should speak the truth. And it is perfectly clear to him that all the records we possess, all the evidence we have to go upon, place the event of the Resurrection first and the visions of the Risen Christ after.

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Are we to throw the records overboard? If we do, what right have we to speak of events in

history? What history of any kind is left? For these records are as reliable, as numerous, and as consistent as the records that are in existence testifying to any event whatever in the history of the past. And what they say unquestionably is that the body of Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day after burial.

One of the reasons given for the attempts that are being made to retranslate the New Testament is that there are so many expressions in the Revised Version which are bad English. But that is a mistake. There is very little bad English in the Revised Version. Its English is probably as idiomatic, and nearly always as grammatical, as that of the Authorized Version. What is meant is that there are many expressions which are not English at all. They are Greek. The Revisers' one mistake—it is a most pardonable one in these days of inaccuracy and unverified references—the one mistake the Revisers made was to translate their Greek text too exactly.

One of the un-English expressions of the Revised Version is found in Mk 14<sup>51</sup>: 'And a certain young man followed with him.' In the Authorized Version we have it: 'And there followed him a certain young man.' That is English. The other is not. Why did the Revisers change 'followed him' into 'followed with him'? Because the text they adopted gave them a compound verb, the verb 'to follow' prefixed by the preposition 'with' (*συννηκολούθει*). The Revisers translated literally.

But in this instance it is possible that the literalness of the Revisers is too literal. The translation is discussed by the Rev. Ralph W. HARDEN, B.A., as footnote to a volume of Sermons on the Resurrection of Jesus. The volume is entitled *The Evangelists and the Resurrection* (Skeffingtons; 3s. 6d. net). The sermons it contains are a series. They begin with the events that led to the crucifixion, death and burial, and then describe in

detail the whole story of the Resurrection from the dead. Every sermon is the outcome of careful work with the Greek text and the Concordance. And Mr. HARDEN'S note on the young man who 'followed with' Jesus when He was arrested is worth considering.

He holds that 'followed with him' is not only a too literal but a wrong translation. If the Evangelist had wished to say that the young man followed with Jesus, he would have repeated the preposition 'with' before the name of Jesus, and he would have indicated whom Jesus and he were together following. This is done by the same Evangelist in Mk 5<sup>87</sup>: 'And he suffered no man to follow with him (*μετ' αὐτοῦ συνακολουθῆσαι*), save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.' There we have the preposition repeated, and there we are told whom Jesus and the three were together following. 'And Jesus arose (Mt 9<sup>19</sup>), and followed him (*i.e.* Jairus), and so did his disciples.'

What St. Mark means to say here is that the young man along with others followed Jesus. He was one of the many, says Mr. HARDEN, who, out of curiosity, hate, or anxiety, were to be found in the crowd round Judas as he followed after Jesus to take Him.

'The voice of one crying in the wilderness' (Mk 1<sup>3</sup>). Dr. Edwin A. ABBOTT has now published the second section of his great work on *The Fourfold Gospel* (Cambridge: At the University Press; 12s. 6d. net). The volume is a commentary on the early narratives in the Gospels. Dr. ABBOTT apologizes for the length of the commentary in comparison with the brevity of the chapters commented on. No apology was called for. There is not an unnecessary word in the book. And the amount of new interpretation is great beyond belief. Among the rest, Dr. ABBOTT interprets anew the words in Mk 1<sup>3</sup>, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness.'

The words are quoted from Isaiah. Israel was returning from captivity in Babylon and journeying through the wilderness to Jerusalem; and God commanded the prophets and rulers of Israel to comfort His people and prepare the way of the Lord in that wilderness: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people . . . and cry ye unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; [and] that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins:—The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord. . . .'

Whose is the voice of one that crieth? It is not the voice of the prophet. For the prophet asks, 'What shall I cry?' To which the Voice answers, 'All flesh is grass.' Hence, if the prophecy were strictly applied in the Gospels, the Voice would be, not the voice of the Baptist himself, but the voice of the Holy Spirit possessing the Baptist.

But the prophecy is not strictly applied in the Gospels. When the Baptist said to the Jews who visited him, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,' so far was he from claiming that the Holy Ghost spoke through him that he used the word 'voice' in the sense of utmost humility.

For there is a distinction in Hebrew, as there is a distinction in Greek, between 'word' and 'voice.' And the 'word' is the more honourable. When Moses heard the 'word' from Sinai, it is said that Israel heard it not, 'but belike they heard the *voice*!' Ignatius says that if his friends permit him to be a martyr, he is 'a word of God,' but if they will not, 'I shall be a [mere] voice again.' This is the sense in which the Baptist spoke. He not only said that he himself was a mere voice; he also implied that He whose shoe-latchet he was unworthy to loose was the very word of God.

Is it possible to preach the doctrine of the Atonement? It is not easy. It is not easy to preach any doctrine. And the doctrine of the Atonement

has difficulties which are all its own and very great. The essential thing in preaching it is to make clear that it is in touch with reality and not remote from life.

There is an incident in the history of David which offers itself as illustration. David's son Absalom had been guilty of a great sin; he had killed his brother Amnon, and had fled to Geshur. Great as the sin was, it did not quench David's love for him. He remained in Geshur at the court of king Talmai three years, 'and David mourned for his son every day' (2 S 13<sup>37</sup>). Mr. Mark Guy PEARSE tells us that one day he heard one of his children say to another, 'You must be good, or father won't love you.' He took the child to himself and said, 'Do you know what you are saying, my boy? That is not true, not a bit true.' The boy, astonished, asked, 'But you won't love us if we are not good, will you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I will love you if you are not good. I love you when you are not good with a love that hurts me, and I love you when you are good with a love that makes me glad; but I cannot help loving you, because I am your father, you know.' That is how it was with David. He was Absalom's father, and he loved him after his great sin, as he loved him before, though now with a love that hurt him. 'And the soul of king David,' says the faithful historian, 'longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.'

Joab saw that David yearned for Absalom's return. He considered how he could bring it about. He found a wise woman in Tekoa and sent her to David with a certain story, putting in her mouth the words she had to say. It is a curious episode in human life. As we read the dramatic repetitions of the woman's tale we do not know which to wonder at most, the crude outward morality of it or the deep religious truth at the heart of it. But we see easily that the argument which was meant to appeal to David is contained in the fourteenth verse of the fourteenth chapter:

'For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on 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.'

Amnon is dead, said the woman. It is useless lamenting more on his account. We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But there are more kinds of death than one. Besides physical death, there is social death. Amnon is dead physically, and Absalom is dead socially. While you blame Absalom for Amnon's death, you yourself, David, are guilty of the death of Absalom as long as you keep him in banishment at Geshur.

Then the woman's argument rises to the height of its sublimity. There is still another kind of death, she says. Besides physical death, and besides social death, there is spiritual death. As one of the New Testament writers has it, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' She may be very much alive physically; it is pretty certain that she is thoroughly alive socially; but if she is living in pleasure she is dead spiritually, and it is the greatest death of the three, she is *dead while she liveth*. So the wise woman's argument is that David is behaving towards Absalom in a way that God behaves to no one. 'Neither doth God take away life' (as the Revisers have to our great relief rendered the Hebrew). God is the cause of no one's death. On the contrary, He devises means whereby those who have brought about their own spiritual death may be restored to Him. But you, David, are guilty of the death of Absalom, since you are doing nothing to bring about his return. You are behaving towards him in a way that God has never behaved towards you.

The argument was successful. David sent for Absalom. But he did not yet receive him at the court. There was some sense in David's mind that Absalom's restoration was not possible yet. So he made him stay two full years in his own

house. Absalom grew restless. At length he sent for Joab. But Joab would not come. He sent again. But again Joab would not come. Then Absalom said to his servants, 'See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire.' So Joab came at last and brought about a complete restoration.

Now the first thing that this strange story tells us is that if we are living in banishment from God we may not blame God for it. 'Neither doth God take away life.' If we are spiritually dead, our death is our own doing. And to this conscience at once assents. 'Not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country.' He did not wait to be sent. 'So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur.' He did not wait to be driven into banishment.

The next thing is that when we go into banishment the heart of God goes with us. The soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom. The soul of the Father goes forth with us as we take our journey into the far country. God mourns over us every day. There is a touching verse in Christina Rossetti's poem on the Prodigal:

Does that lamp still burn in my Father's house  
Which he kindled the night I went away?  
I turned once beneath the cedar boughs,  
And marked it gleam with a golden ray;  
*Did he think to light me home some day?*

Our thoughts are more of the prodigal than of the prodigal's father. When we turn to think of the father we see that Christina Rossetti is right. The father mourns for the prodigal every day.

In preaching the doctrine of the Atonement let us make that fact emphatic. They who see no occasion for an atonement make much of it. We who believe in the necessity for an atonement ought to make more of it than they. They say that God's love for the sinner is great. Do we deny the love? Do we need to belittle the greatness of it? On the contrary, it is in the

greatness of the love of God for sinners that we find the justification of that amazing act of God which we seek to identify when we speak of the doctrine of the Atonement. God 'spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.'

But if the father yearns over his prodigal son and desires his return, why does he not recall him? Why does God not simply forgive the sinner? There are two reasons.

The first reason is that the sinner must be fit to be forgiven. The prodigal must be ready to be brought back. This does not mean that he must be righteous enough. It means that he must be truly penitent. The prodigal came home in rags, but he came home in sincere sorrow for his sin. Absalom was not ready to be brought back from Geshur. Ask Joab, who had a hand in bringing him. He will point to his barley field, which in petulant pride Absalom sent his servants and set on fire. Ask David. He had consented to Absalom's return. Then came the stealing of the hearts of the people, the raising of the standard of rebellion, the battle in the Wood of Ephraim. Ask David. He will turn his back, for the news of the death of Absalom has come, and will ascend to the chamber over the gate to weep there; and as he goes you will hear him say, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!' Absalom was brought back before he was ready.

But there is another reason. God cannot 'simply forgive,' because there is a sense of right in the earth which must be regarded. There is a sense of right. The universe hangs on it. No more in the moral than in the material is this universe a chaos. It is orderly. It rests on righteousness. And that righteous order of the universe must not be outraged. It is not simply that there are commandments which have to be obeyed. The commandments are later than the order of the universe. They are the expression of it, in more or less faithful form. It is not

simply that there is a conscience in man. Conscience is the pulse of that life of righteousness which keeps the universe from decay. That life of righteousness must be respected by man, or he loses so much of his manhood; it must be respected by God, or He is no true God.

David knew this, and he hesitated to bring Absalom home. Joab knew it also, but more indistinctly. As a force it was not so potent in Joab's life as in the life of David. It is perhaps the surest test of character that can be applied to men. The man who makes little of the law of righteousness, the man who, like Joab, places pity in front of it, or even perhaps political policy—for no doubt Joab was annoyed to see David neglect the duties of the kingship—that man is not great, however loyal he may be or compassionate. David yielded against his deeper insight and sent for Absalom. The disasters that followed were due less perhaps to Absalom's unfitness to return than to David's consent to a violation of the law of righteousness.

What, then, is God to do if He cannot simply forgive the sinner? The wise woman of Tekoa says that He devises means, so that he that is banished be not an outcast from Him. What means does He devise?

What means could David have devised? The only means that one can think of is that he should have gone out to Geshur and shared Absalom's banishment. Would that have outraged our sense of right? Certainly, if David had been nothing to Absalom. But being Absalom's father, it would, instead of outraging our sense of right, have been the very means of satisfying it. Absalom might not have been made fit to be brought home. That would depend upon Absalom. But if David had left the comfort and companionship of his own court in Jerusalem and gone out to Geshur to share the poverty and loneliness of the little court of king Talmai, his act would at least have been sufficient to meet every requirement of that

law of righteousness upon which the moral universe depends. Well, we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.

Was this act of our Lord Jesus Christ an improper act? The modern conscience seems to say yes. But only when it is looked upon as the act of an outsider. But our Lord was never weary of telling us when He came that He came as the Son of our Father, and that all He did the Father did in Him. He made clear that He was no outsider, but bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He made clear that He came not only as the Father's Son, but as the Son of Man. He came not as substitute simply, but as representative, and that not by arbitrary choice, as one of a rebel regiment might be chosen to suffer for the sins of the whole regiment, but as actually Himself the regiment, so made one with us that humanity is

comprehended in Him. He is more than our substitute. He is more than our representative. He is identified with us. Yes, that is the word; not substitution, not representation, but identification; so that 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

There is one thing more. This identification means death. It means spiritual death. There is no escape from that. Is there any desire to escape? As David would have shared Absalom's social death had he gone out to Geshur, so our Lord Jesus Christ shared our spiritual death by identifying Himself with us in our sin. For God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. And we must give the cry on the Cross its value: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

## Charles Augustus Briggs.

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PROFESSOR CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS was a man of positive convictions, and he was always perfectly frank in stating those convictions. Thorough in the investigation of the grounds for an opinion, when he once satisfied himself of the truth he embraced it with his whole heart. What he could not understand was the levity of those who defended their alleged faith with superficial reasons. The strength of the expressions which he used in characterizing such levity sometimes obscured the fact that he was a man of great sweetness of disposition and of great modesty in his estimate of himself. These qualities were most clearly revealed in the home, and friends who were privileged to enter that circle were charmed by the perfect harmony which reigned there. Complete affection, conjugal, parental, and filial, bound all the members together. To say more than this would be to violate the sanctities which are now

more than ever precious to the memory. But the sweetness of disposition and modesty of bearing were equally manifest in a larger circle made up of colleagues and personal friends. The volume published in his honour on his seventieth birthday commemorates the impression made upon these friends, many of whom were his pupils. It speaks of 'the stimulus of his untiring energy, his patient research, his fearlessness in proclaiming truth, his warm personal sympathy, and his quick response to every demand made upon his stores of knowledge and the treasures—often unsuspected—of his warm and valiant heart.'

These personal qualities were rooted in an unusually deep and earnest piety. His friends knew that he lived in the presence of God. Let us say at once that in the best sense of the word our friend was a High Churchman. He believed in the Church as a divine institution founded by