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EDITORIAL

Our Book Review Department.—Not a few of our readers testify that our book reviews, under the able direction of our Book Editor, Dr. Ernest Trice Thompson, are becoming increasingly valuable. Our subscribers are greatly interested in good religious books; and the REVIEW is trying to direct their attention to the best books by giving in each issue discussions of current religious books. For example, in this number are to be found reviews of sixty-five books by twenty-four leaders in the Southern Presbyterian Church.

In a letter to the Editor-in-Chief, Rev. Charles G. Gunn, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Bluefield, W. Va., suggests that the faculties of our theological seminaries and Assembly's Training School unite, in co-operation with the Committee of Religious Education, in mailing out to our ministers and church workers each month a MONTHLY BULLETIN OF BOOKS, wherein are given reviews and discussions of the best current religious books.

In reply to Mr. Gunn's suggestion we desire to call attention to the fact that in the UNION SEMINARY REVIEW we already have such a book bulletin—issued not monthly, but quarterly, which, we think, is often enough. At present our Book Review Staff is composed of the faculties of our four theological seminaries and the Assembly's Training School, and in addition thirty-two of our leading ministers and educators. Let each one of our ministers, who desires to keep abreast of current religious thought, subscribe to the REVIEW, \$1.50 a year—and Mr. Gunn's problem will be solved. Mail

to be supplemented by *Smith* or *Wood* for the more recent light on Paul.

G. H. Gilbert. *The Student's Life of Paul*. \$1.50. 278 pages. Brief, clear, scholarly sketch; good text book.

B. W. Robinson. *The Life of Paul*. \$2. 268 pages. Conveniently arranged, well adapted for study classes.

James Stalker. *The Life of St. Paul*. 90 cents. 183 pages. Old but a classic; the most vivid, popular interpretation of the spirit and achievements of Paul.

A. T. Robertson. *Epochs in the Life of Paul*. \$1.25. 337 pages. Vivid, scholarly outline; conservative; orthodox; suitable as a text for Bible classes.

J. Paterson Smyth. *The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters*. \$1. 223 pages. A brief sketch, fascinatingly written.

Basil Mathews. *Paul the Dauntless*. \$2.50. 375 pages.

L. I. Henry. *Paul, Son of Kish*. \$1.90. A novelized life of Paul, giving most vividly the background of Paul's day; historically correct.

W. B. Hill. *The Apostolic Age*. \$2. 386 pages. Splendid sketch of the whole apostolic age.

R. D. Shaw. *The Pauline Epistles*. \$3. 508 pages. The best popular introduction to Paul's Letters.

J. F. Stirling. *Atlas Illustrating the Acts and the Epistles*. \$1. Best small atlas of Paul's travels. E. C. C.

THOMAS: A CHARACTER STUDY.

John 20:28.

BY REV. W. TALIAFERRO THOMPSON, D. D.,
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Have we been altogether fair to Thomas in our thinking? The nickname we have given him has been against him all along. As a little fellow, I had heard of "Doubting Thomas" so often and so exclusively that I was sure that he was called

that in the Bible; and was positive when I read for myself of "Thomas, which is called Didymus", that "Didymus" meant "doubting". The only sermon that dealt with his life I ever heard was on the verse, "But Thomas was not with them when Jesus came". It warned us against being absent from prayer meeting, or church, and implied heinous sin on Thomas' part. Does a careful study of his life justify this estimate of him? Let us see.

Of course, we have not much material to work with. Matthew, Mark and Luke mention him only in connection with their lists of the twelve disciples. John has only four rather brief references to him. Yet, as we examine these meagre sources, the picture of Thomas stands out in almost as clear outline as that of those about whom much more is said.

John introduces us to Thomas in the eleventh chapter. Jesus is beyond Jordan near where John the Baptist had done his great work, when the urgent message comes from His Bethany friends, Mary and Martha, "Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick". For two days He was seemingly indifferent to this pathetic appeal, then He said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judea again". Remembering the treatment He had received on His former visit, the disciples cried in alarm—"Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?"

Very patiently He tells them that a man is immortal until his work is done, and that each duty must be met as it arises regardless of the consequences, else the clear path is obscured and lost. Then He says plainly, "Lazarus is dead—our duty is there; let us go unto him at once". We expect the ever-ready Peter to make some brave reply. He is the spokesman of the group; but Peter has no love for Jerusalem and its dangers. When at Caesarea Philippi Jesus had spoken of what He must suffer in the city of David, Peter had hastily protested—"Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee". Doubtless his sentiments had been expressed in that first objection, "The Jews of late sought to stone Thee". Peter is silent. Has no one else a word of agreement or of encour-

agement in this trying hour? The disciples are dumb before this danger. But some one is speaking. It is not a happy voice we hear; hardly an eager voice. It is rather a flat, hopeless voice; but it is a positive voice, expressing an unwavering purpose and a daring devotion: "Let us go also, that we may die with Him". Thomas has spoken!

We hear much today of temperament. The older psychologists made us familiar with four types, sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic. While it is hard to place some individuals after a long acquaintance, this single sentence enables us to locate Thomas accurately. He is the phlegmatic type, with a strong mixture of the melancholic. Wundt characterizes this type as the "slow-strong", hard to convince and difficult to arouse, but terribly persistent when once moved.

Some little time elapses before Thomas speaks. He is weighing the matter carefully, measuring its possibilities from every angle, all with a bias toward gloom, it is true; but when he does speak—high courage, invincible determination, deathless loyalty! "Our Master is going to His death—we must go with Him. If He perish, we perish." It is Thomas who nerved the rest of the group to face the stones with Jesus. They go up to Bethany together, and Lazarus is raised. Quickly the worst fears of the disciples are realized. News of the astounding miracle spread like a prairie fire through the countryside and into Jerusalem. Bitter opposition develops; the Sanhedrin meets and decides on Jesus' death. He has to withdraw at once to Ephraim.

At the Passover season He returns to the city, and events rush rapidly to their fearful climax. His entrance is to the sound of triumphant "Hosannas", shouted by a crowd gone wild in its enthusiasm. But in less than a week the same multitude, under the skillful manipulation of the priests, turns upon Him, and is ready to cry, "Away with Him! Crucify Him! Release not this man, but Barabbas," a thief!

It is therefore a serious and apprehensive little company that sits down to the Passover meal. As soon as you begin to read the thirteenth chapter of John you can feel the fear and the sadness that pervade that upper room. With Judas gone,

Christ begins to speak: His sympathetic voice uttering mysterious truths, only adds to the heaviness of their spirits. "Let not your heart be troubled. I am going away, but only to prepare a place for you, and I am coming back to receive you unto Myself. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know."

These words are as noonday to us—they were as night to those distressed men. They were aware that some awful calamity was about to befall their Leader and themselves, and not a ray of comfort did His words cast across their forebodings.

A voice breaks in: "You say, 'Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know'? Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how can we know the way?" Does the writer of the Gospel have to tell us who is interrupting? Are we not sure that it is our friend Thomas; gloomy, thoughtful, unwilling to stop short of clear undertsanding? Most of us would have said, "We know neither the way, nor the place", but not so this man! He thinks; he reasons things out—he can't help it. "We do not know the goal," he says; "how can we therefore know the way to it?" He is of those who prove all things. He cannot respond to truth until he sees all around it. The scientific spirit has seized him.

We are beginning to know Thomas rather well—persistently pessimistic in his disposition, absolutely logical in his mental processes, passionately devoted in his loyalties, unyieldingly courageous in his purpose; square-jawed, iron-willed—quite a man!

In the twentieth chapter Thomas' name appears again. John tells us that on the first day of the week Jesus, in His resurrection Body, stood once more before His disciples in that upper room. "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."

Would you have expected Thomas to be there? Run over the events following Thomas' question at the Passover. In his fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth chapters John records the rich words of comfort that Jesus spoke, but I doubt if Thomas really heard them. His mind is becoming increasingly possessed by the thought that his Lord is going away,

and, as it works with that idea, it can harbor little else. Dumbly he follows Him into the garden. As the band arrests Him, and the trial proceeds, to his thoughtfully despondent mind, the manner of the Master's going becomes evident. With a heart of lead he joins the crowd moving toward the gate of the city, and waits with it on Calvary. He sees the nails driven into hands and feet, the shameful exposure of that sacred body before the railing crowd, the torturing agony of thirst, the darkness. He hears Him speak; he lingers until from that spear-riven side blood and water flow. He may have tarried until they took his Lord's body down; and from afar he may have watched them put it in the new tomb. Then, with bowed head in the gloom of one who walks the aisles of a sombre forest and will not lift his eyes to see glimpses of the sky through breaks in the leafy canopy, he turns away and goes—I know not where, but where he can be alone.

He doesn't want to see people, to talk; he wants to think, to sift out the truth of this sad catastrophe. What does it mean? His great Friend, so kind, so wise, so strong, upon Whom his hopes for Israel had hung, for Whom he would have gladly died—crucified between two thieves, dead, buried! All the love, the hope, the dream of the past three years is at an end. There he sits, his head between his hands, disturbed, dejected, his mind fixed on that Figure hanging on the Cross, with the raw wounds in hands and feet, the ghastly gash in His side. He has no explanation—his mind grinds on without conclusion. His thoughts run 'round and 'round without arriving. He thinks his way into deeper and deeper despondency.

The Sabbath passes; Sunday comes. A knock at the door, or a hail, rouses him from his reverie, and in a moment the other disciples are before him. How bright their eyes! How glad their faces! How eager their voices! "We have seen the Lord," they cry. You can imagine the shock of such triumphant joy meeting such convinced despair. He looks at them at first uncomprehendingly. Then he is impatient, almost angry, as he thinks that they have been duped by some one, or that they have seen a phantom created by their own overwrought imaginations. He blurts out in his morbid cer-

tainty, "He is no more. I have a vision of my Lord as last I saw Him—pierced hands and feet, torn side. Before I could believe that what you have seen is He, I must see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side."

This man is something of a psychologist. He would put this vision of the apostles to the test of the mother sense—touch. We see; then instinctively reach out to feel as the final test. After we have handled, we are sure. What a doubter he is. These men are his friends—there are ten of them. They are sincere—the atmosphere they create is one of enthusiasm, joy, confidence. It is evident that something has happened. It is in their faces! It rings in their voices! If he would not believe them, what would he believe? He would rather trust his ten fingers than his ten friends. He is afraid that they may have been carried away by their overwhelming desire. He is sure they have been duped by others, or in their great longing have deceived themselves, their eagerness to see conjuring up some unreal image. They have experienced an hallucination. He cannot trust them; he must see for himself; touch for himself! What convinced unbelief is here; what a doubter Thomas is!

A week later, the disciples are in the upper room again. Thomas is there—the same Thomas! When all has been made that can be of the influence of that hopeful group upon him, we have in him no easily deluded optimist, no expectant soul ready to see a spirit. He is the same hard-headed, level-minded, cool-hearted, despair-filled individual we have come to know. He is talking, scorn in his voice, "Where is the Master? You say He is risen, yet a week has passed and you haven't been able to show Him to me. I tell you, I will not believe unless I see in His hand the print of the nails and put my finger — — —

"What is that? There, by Peter! There was nothing there a moment ago—a spirit! An illusion! What?" Then a voice, so tender, so familiar: "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing." In an ecstasy of

joy and belief Thomas falls before Him, crying, "My Lord and my God!" His face is beatific, the clouds gone from it forever. It may be that he touched Him—I hardly think so. He did ask to see and feel, to prove Him by two of his senses. His Master has gone a step further and presented truth to another sense, hearing; doubtless hearing and seeing are enough!

Thomas believes! John stops there. There are many other things he might add; the material is not exhausted, his hand is not tired, but what is the use? If his readers see the significance of Thomas' faith, he has written enough. If they cannot feel it, nothing else that he could say would meet their need.

Are you facing the future with doubt about the unchanging Christ who has been your stay through other years? Is your heart beginning to lament, "The scientists have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him"? Well, here stands psychology on the side of the faith of our fathers.

Critics of the resurrection make much of weak women and fanatical men; of sanguine temperaments, and suggestible minds, subject to hallucinations. How plausible is their argument as they wrench the truth to make it? "Hysterical women first see Christ in the half-light of the dawn. How natural for them to see what their hearts crave to behold. Of course, impulsive, suggestible Peter would believe when they tell him; and affectionate, imaginative John, with his head in the clouds, is ready to fall a prey to their delusion. With the leaders thus convinced, it is an easy thing to persuade the others." How simple it all is, how conclusive, if you make no careful study of the narrative, and if you *overlook Thomas*, but there is Thomas! He is the rock on which their case breaks.

On the basis of their own use of character analysis, examine Thomas. Free your mind of all prejudice. Can you believe that a man of his type is so easily deceived, or that John of all men, a visionary himself, has invented and revealed in such a few lines a character who anticipates so strikingly a twentieth century attack? Which is the easiest to believe, that Thomas is a fiction; that he is real, and that being what we find him, he was deceived by gullible enthusiasts; or

that he really saw his crucified Master risen from the tomb, "Who is declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead"?

The great majority of us believe the story true; we believe Christ to be God. We pride ourselves on our belief. We contend for it, we engage in bitter debate about it, we make a great outcry against those who deny it, yet, do we really *believe*? Do we yield to Christ the same complete allegiance that some do who, denying His Deity, and making Him only the greatest figure on their horizon, bow their lives in surrender to His will? Does *He* call out as much emotion as does the *discussion* of His Deity?

We are orthodox, but we are harmless. We are conservative, but we are cold. We are good, but we are not devoted. We have a Creed, but we have no convictions. I mean beliefs that flame and burn up sinful desires and generate power to drive life!

How could we be so mastered by things, so ambitious for ourselves, so vain, so jealous, so loveless, so cowardly, so indifferent to people and their needs if we believed Christ, God.

Perhaps ours has been too easy a faith. We learned it without effort at Mother's knee, we received it as a gift in Sunday School during the impressionable hours of childhood. We never fought for it; we have not, like Thomas, achieved it through sweat of mind and agony of soul. We have never thought our way into the meaning of its overwhelming truth. To us the Deity of Christ is a shibboleth, a slogan, a creed, empty of meaning and void of power.

A story is told of Dr. Dale, the mighty preacher of Birmingham, Dr. Jowett's predecessor, that one day in his study he fairly leaped to his feet and began to pace up and down, his hands behind him, repeating "Jesus is risen, Jesus is alive—He is here".

For more than a week once I was able to keep that idea burning in the forefront of my mind—"Jesus is alive—He is here—He is God". I knew it. Others may have seen no difference in me, but I saw a difference in them and in the world about me. Things that before seemed important were value-

less now; tasks that had appeared hard were not so difficult. What did anything amount to, unless approved by Him? How could one fail in anything, if upheld by Him?

If we could only keep permanently in the focus of our consciousness the fact that "Christ is risen", that He is living, He is God, He is here, all power is His, "His touch has still its ancient power, no word from Him can fruitless fall", He has not failed, He cannot fail, He came to redeem men, He is sufficient for all our needs, what conquering souls we should become, what an influence we should exert on others. We can lead men as far as our convictions, and not a step further.

It is not a light thing to call Christ, God. If we believe Him God, we must, as Thomas, surrender to Him as Lord. It is not a formula wrought out long ago we are assenting to; we are standing before a Person, living, loving, demanding, to Whom we must give ourselves in full devotion and complete loyalty.

Tradition tells us that Thomas went to Persia or India, where he suffered martyrdom for his Saviour. Is it hard to believe that that grim disciple, who was ready to go to Jerusalem to die with a Teacher, a Friend, went from Jerusalem to die for his *God* and Lord?

We believe Christ, God. Do we believe that He is living, walking by our side? Are we willing to go at His command to bear testimony to this fact to our friends by *word* and *life*? Are we ready to stand for the things He stands for, no matter what the cost, to go back to the stones with Him if necessary?

We pride ourselves on our belief; having not seen we believe, and consider Thomas with scorn. Rather as we look at Thomas, let us be ashamed that our faith is not more vital, more mastering, more fruitful!

Some one may read this who, like Thomas, has been in serious doubt. May I say to you that He is ready to be put to the test, to give proof of Himself, if you, like Thomas, are willing to put yourself in the way of belief; if you, like Thomas, are morally earnest; if you, like Thomas, are ready to abide by the consequences of such a faith, to follow where

it leads, to die for it if need be. If you are like Thomas in this, He will manifest Himself to you as He did to him. Are you willing, as He is willing? Is your continued doubt His fault or yours?

RECONSTRUCTING OUR FAITH.

BY REV. G. F. BELL, D. D.,

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About a year ago there came from the press a monumental work of nearly a thousand pages entitled *The Reconstruction of Belief*, being a compilation in one volume of three great books by Bishop Charles Gore, of England: "Belief in God," "Belief in Christ" and "The Holy Spirit and the Church." The book purports to be the matured result of a lifetime of free-thinking inquiry on the part of a naturally doubting mind determined to adhere to nothing less than historic and rational truth. With an independent and scholarly devotion to truth, Dr. Gore steers a middle course between a blind, unreasoning, reactionary orthodoxy on the one hand and current intellectual and rationalistic presumptions on the other, and mediates between the Romanism to which he objects and the Protestantism which he cannot follow with a zealous devotion to the church historic and Catholic. We may not be able to agree with all the conclusions of his fine mind and devout spirit; but his splendid work is a strong bulwark of defense for essential orthodoxy against the radical and destructive criticisms of our faith with which the atmosphere of today is surcharged, his reasoning is confirmatory and stimulating, and his book makes profitable and invigorating reading for any minister or ordinary educated thinker along religious lines. Believers everywhere are indebted to him for it.

Dr. Gore's first inquiry is as to the reasons for the present widespread religious uncertainty and skepticism. These he finds in a long maturing devotion to a strictly scientific study