

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE are two interpretations of the Old Testament, says Professor Sayce, and we must make our choice between them. The one is Archæology, the other is the Higher Criticism. In his new book Professor Sayce has given an account of both. The account of the Higher Criticism is competent, and if we remember that an enemy hath done it, sufficient for our purpose; the account of Archæology is full and authoritative. Both claim to be interpretations of the Old Testament. In Professor Sayce's judgment they are absolutely irreconcilable, and we must make our choice between them.

Now, if we must make our choice between Archæology and the Higher Criticism as interpretations of the Old Testament, most of us would, up till now, have chosen Archæology. For we have been told that the Higher Criticism had made sixes and sevens of the Old Testament, and Archæology had been sent to its rescue. But now—now that Professor Sayce's new book has been published—we hesitate in our choice. For if Wellhausen is hard upon the Bible narrative as it stands, Professor Sayce seems harder still.

Professor Sayce's new book is called *The Early History of the Hebrews* (Rivingtons, crown 8vo, pp. xv, 492, 8s. 6d.). It is an attempt—the first attempt, the author tells us—to write the history

of Israel from a purely archæological point of view. From the critical point of view the history of Israel has often been written. But the word which Professor Sayce has for the critical method of writing the history of Israel is 'worthless.' For it leads its advocates to deny the facts whenever these run counter to its own prepossessions. Professor Sayce's method is archæological. It enables him to accept the facts as they stand and make the most of them.

For example, we suppose that the archæological method finds no interpolations in the Old Testament text. That the critical method does, we know, and Professor Sayce is careful to remind us. A passage, he says (p. 106), 'which runs counter to the theory of the critic is at once pronounced an interpolation, due to the clumsy hand of some later "Redactor."' Thus the "tabernacle of the congregation" is declared to have been an invention of the Priestly Code, and therefore a verse in the First Book of Samuel (2²²), which happens to refer to it, is arbitrarily expunged from the text.'

So we suppose that the archæological method finds no interpolations. But what have we seen already? On a previous page (98) Professor Sayce makes reference to the threshing-floor of Atad. It is said (in Gn 50¹⁰) that the sons of

Jacob, in their sad procession to Machpelah with their father's dead body, halted at the threshing-floor of Atad, and 'mourned with a great and very sore lamentation.' When Professor Sayce makes reference to that mourning, he flatly calls it an interpolation. The chariot-road from Egypt to Palestine, he says, never ran near the Jordan, and the threshing-floor of Atad would have been far out of the way. It is an interpolation; and it has arisen out of the name of Abel-mizraim, where the threshing-floor was situated. Abel-mizraim was translated 'the mourning of Egypt,' and then this little story was invented to account for it. But the translation is wrong. For Abel-mizraim means 'the meadow of Egypt,' and *abel*, or 'meadow,' is a not uncommon element in the geographical names of ancient Canaan. So here is a false etymology, a fictitious narrative, and a literary interpolation within the compass of a single verse.

But Professor Sayce finds interpolations anywhere—we had almost said whenever the passage runs counter to his archæological theory. There is a footnote to p. 169, which says that 'the camels mentioned along with the cattle in Ex 9⁸ have been inserted from an Israelitish point of view. The Egyptians had no camels; and though the Bedawîn doubtless used them from an early period, none were employed by the Egyptians themselves until the Roman or Arab age.' A footnote to p. 202 tells us that 'an interpolation (Ex 33¹⁻⁵) makes the worship of the golden calf account for the fact that, as declared in Ex 23²⁰, an angel should lead Israel into Canaan, and not Yahveh Himself. But it ignores the further fact that Yahveh was really present in the Holy of Holies as well as in the pillar of fire and cloud.' And a footnote to p. 221 tells us that Dt 10⁶⁻⁷ 'has been interpolated in the middle of the narrative of the legislation at Mount Sinai.'

In all these places 'interpolation' is Professor Sayce's own word, and he seems to use it without a quiver. And here and there we observe that where he does not use the word, he plainly implies

the thing. Indeed, we do not recall a Higher Critic who finds it more 'convenient' to suggest an interpolation, and does it with less concern.

The other great vice of criticism is the discovery of parallel narratives. For, says Professor Sayce, the huge edifice of modern pentateuchal criticism is based on a theory and an assumption. And this is practically the theory, though he calls it 'the literary analysis of the Hexateuch.'

But Professor Sayce finds parallel narratives also. He says (on p. 64): 'In reading the narrative of Isaac's dealings with Abimelech by the side of that of Abraham's dealings with the same king, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that we have before us two versions of the same event.' And when he proceeds to decide which of the two versions is the more original, he proceeds by methods which are perilously like the critical. It is in the first, he says, that Abimelech is correctly called 'king of Gerar.' In the second he is called 'king of the Philistines.' But in the age of the patriarchs, the south-eastern corner of Palestine had not yet been occupied by the Philistine immigrants. As we have learned from the Egyptian monuments, the Philistines were pirates from the islands and coasts of the Greek Seas, who did not seize upon the frontier cities of Southern Canaan until the time of the Pharaoh Meneptah, the son of Ramses II. In short, it was not till the period of the Exodus that a 'king of the Philistines' could be found there. Whereupon, Professor Sayce uses the dreadful word 'accommodation,' and declares that in the story of Isaac's dispute with Abimelech, the word 'Philistines' is 'an accommodation to the geography of a later day.'

Turn two pages. Professor Sayce is bold enough to discover a parallel narrative even in the history of Esau. We are told in Genesis that Esau sold his Birthright for a mess of pottage. We are also told that it was stolen from him by the craft of his brother Jacob. We used to call the second the Blessing. But Professor Sayce calls them both

the Birthright, and pronounces them two traditions of one and the same event. 'Naturally, the first tradition was more favoured in Israel, the second in Edom; and the union of the two in the Book of Genesis is a proof of the diligence with which the writer of it has gathered together all that was known of the past of his people, as well as the impartiality with which he has used his materials.'

Nay, but Professor Sayce, when the spirit is on him, is a Higher Critic out and out. He discusses the origin of the Twelve Tribes. He cannot admit, of course, that the sons of Jacob came into existence because the tribes were there already. It is the other way about. Jacob had twelve sons, and twelve tribes had somewhere or other to be found for them. It required a little forcing, says Professor Sayce, for it is questionable whether at any one time there ever were exactly twelve Israelitish tribes. In fact—for Professor Sayce grows bolder as he goes—the scheme is an artificial one. History credited Jacob with twelve sons, and it was consequently necessary to bring the number of Israelitish tribes into harmony with the fact. But the scheme was an artificial one. The division was theoretical only. There were no twelve territories corresponding to the parts; while the parts themselves could be reckoned as thirteen, eleven, or ten, just as easily as twelve.

Still, the tribes were named after the sons, and not, as criticism madly asserts, the sons after the tribes. When suddenly Professor Sayce pulls up with a 'Nevertheless.' And to our astonishment we read that 'nevertheless there may be an element of truth in the critical assumption.' One tribe actually took its name from the locality in which it settled. The *Travels of the Mohar*, written in Egypt in the reign of Ramses II., before the Israelitish conquest of Canaan, speak of 'the mountain o User' as being in the very locality in which the tribe of Asher was afterwards settled. So the tribe of Asher got its name from its locality, and the son of Jacob got his name from the tribe. And the paragraph is not at an

end until Professor Sayce has told us that there is another tribe which *must* have reflected its name back upon that of its progenitor.

This is the tribe of Benjamin. In the Book of Genesis (35¹⁸) Benjamin is represented as having received two different names at his birth. The statement, Professor Sayce remarks, excites our suspicion, for such a double naming is inconsistent with Hebrew practice; and, he adds, our suspicion is confirmed when we find that both names have a geographical meaning. Benjamin, he says, means 'the son of the south,' 'the southerner,' while Benoni is 'the son of On,' 'the Onite.' This On, called also Beth-on, was an ancient name for Bethel, the great sanctuary and centre of the tribe of Benjamin; so it is easy to see how the tribe might receive its name from its most famous shrine. It is equally easy to see how it might be called Benjamin or the Southerner. That would be Ephraim's name for the little brother tribe that lay on its south border, and through the power of Ephraim, especially as the literary tribe, that name would prevail over the other. Even as early as the Song of Deborah (Jg 5¹⁴), it is said of Ephraim, 'Behind thee is Benjamin among thy peoples.' And then the conclusion is that Benjamin, the son of Jacob, received his name from the tribe, and not the tribe from him.

But the most sweeping act of Higher Criticism of which Professor Sayce has been guilty is his treatment of the story of Joseph.

The story of Joseph, says Professor Sayce (and we might be reading a chapter in Driver), forms a complete whole, distinguished by certain features that mark it off from the rest of the Book of Genesis. It contains peculiar words, of which he gives such examples as *yedr*, 'river,' the Egyptian *aur*; *akhu*, 'herbage on the river bank' (Gn 41²), the Egyptian word exactly; and *rebid*, 'collar,' the Egyptian *repit*. There are even words and phrases which seem to have been translated into Hebrew from some other language, and not trans-

lated correctly, because that other language was not fully understood. Thus it is said that the cup-bearer of Pharaoh 'pressed the grapes' into his master's goblet, when it ought to be, 'he poured the wine'; and the word which is given as 'officer,' properly means a 'eunuch.' Besides these literary peculiarities, the story shows a very minute acquaintance with Egyptian life in the age of the Hyksos. Whereupon Professor Sayce comes to the conclusion that the whole story is Egyptian, that it has been translated and adapted from an Egyptian papyrus by some Hebrew scribe, and then accepted into the literature of the Old Testament. In fact, he counts 'The Tale of the Two Brothers,' a well-known Egyptian story, to be simply another form of it.

Now this is not the only thing Professor Sayce's book contains. It is the most prominent thing. Professor Sayce has deliberately made it most prominent. But even if all this were away,—and some of us would see it away with right goodwill,—the book would still be there. And the book, it may be said in one word, is brimful of happy exegetical suggestion, is charged with mental stimulus on every page.

In that part of the city of Cairo which is known as Old Cairo, and which once was known by the name of Babylon, there is an ancient Jewish synagogue. Before it became a Jewish synagogue it was probably a Christian church. But even as a synagogue it dates from the seventh century A.D. It has always been regarded with almost superstitious reverence by the Jewish inhabitants of Cairo, who point it out to the traveller as a place worthy of his pilgrimage.

The traveller, if he is a European scholar, has found it worthy. Not, however, for the reasons that make the synagogue worshipful in the eyes of the Jews of Cairo, but because amid the rubbish of its *Genizot* he hopes to discover some precious fragment of ancient Hebrew manuscript. It is a hundred and fifty years since Simon van Gelderen

recorded his impression that that treasure-house contained possibilities of great literary wealth. In 1864 Jacob Saphir visited the synagogue and spent two days ferreting among the ancient books and leaves, and getting covered with dust and ashes. In recent years, year after year, Professor Sayce has quietly gone there and become possessed of priceless gems of Hebrew literature, with which the Bodleian Library at Oxford has been enriched. In January 1896 Mr. E. N. Adler visited Cairo, saw the synagogue in Old Cairo, was conducted by Rabbi Rafail to the extreme end of the ladies' gallery, was permitted to climb to the topmost rung of the ladder, to enter the secret chamber of the Genizah through a hole in the wall, and to take away with him a sackful of paper and parchment writings—of one of which, an eleventh century introduction to the Hebrew Bible, he gave an account in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for last July.

But the most successful visit to the synagogue in Old Cairo was that which was made last year by Dr. Taylor, Master of St. John's College, and Mr. Schechter, Reader in Talmudic and Rabbinic, in the University of Cambridge. Mr. Schechter gave a general account of the Benjamin's sack he had carried up with him out of Egypt in the *Times* of 3rd August 1897. Since that time these and other Cambridge scholars have been busy sorting and deciphering. A full account of the progress of the work may be expected shortly in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES from the pen of Dr. Taylor. Meantime, some notice may be taken of two fragments which have been deciphered and published in the *Jewish Quarterly* for January 1898.

One of these fragments is a further portion of the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus. It is another leaf, in fact, of the same codex which furnished the ten already published; and we are credibly informed, though Mr. Schechter says nothing of it here, that the whole Book of Ecclesiasticus is likely to be found and given to us. Mr. Schechter himself contributes this fragment, and adds some useful notes to it.

The other fragment is contributed by Mr. Burkitt. It is a portion of Aquila's translation of the Hebrew Bible. It is a very small portion. It is so small that we may even record it here. But it is highly welcome, and Mr. Burkitt succeeds in making it more so by a lucid account of Aquila.

Aquila was a Jew or Jewish proselyte, who lived about the middle of the second century A.D., and translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek. Mr. Burkitt thinks it is probably the worst translation that was ever made. A translation, he says, may be interesting in three ways. It may be of high literary value in itself. Such is the Authorized Version of the English Bible, and Fitzgerald's version of Omar Khayyam. Or it may help us to understand the meaning of the original, as Monro's translation of *Lucretius* does. Or, finally, it may be of use in mending the original text, as is the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. These seem to Mr. Burkitt to be the three merits of a translation. But Aquila's version has none of them.

Its text is practically identical with that to be found in our modern Hebrew Bibles, so it does not help us there. The author's knowledge of Hebrew was at least no better than our own, so it does not help us there. And it is written in Greek, the most uncouth, says Mr. Burkitt, that ever was issued from the Cambridge University Press. He proves the last statement by the fragment which he publishes, and which we now may quote in full. The passage is 2 K. 23²⁵. This is Aquila's version, and this is Mr. Burkitt's literal translation thereof intended to bring out the effect of it—

καὶ ὁμοῖος αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐγενήθη,
εἰς πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ βασιλεὺς
ὅς ἐπέστρεψεν πρὸς τὸν ἐν
πάσῃ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν
πάσῃ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ
σφροδρότητι αὐτοῦ κατὰ πάντα
νόμον Μωσῆ, καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν
οὐκ ἀνέστη ὁμοῖος αὐτῷ.

And like him did not come
to pass, to his face a king
who returned unto Jehovah
in all his heart and in all his
soul and in all his muchness
according to every law of
Moses, and after him arose
not like him.

Mr. Burkitt says he has had 'the good fortune' to discover that fragment. He has discovered it among the hoard of Hebrew MSS which Dr. Taylor and Mr. Schechter have brought home from the Genizah of the Cairo synagogue. Wherein does the good fortune consist? If this is Aquila, what is he worth, suppose we had discovered him all?

Well, it is interesting of course to find a book that has long been lost. Aquila has long been lost. It is more interesting when we know the book had once a circulation and an imposing reputation. Aquila's extraordinary version of the Old Testament was used by Greek-speaking Jews down to the rise of Islam and the Arab Empire. It is still more interesting and even important if it has influenced the text of other versions we possess. Now it is well known that not only were detached readings from Aquila adopted by Christian scholars, but that the great Christian scholar, Origen, used it as one of the versions in his celebrated Hexapla, that he transcribed it in full next to the Hebrew, and that he often employed it in bringing the LXX into accordance with the current Hebrew text; and, finally, it is known that Jerome used it in the preparation of the Latin Vulgate. In short, Aquila's version is at the present moment of priceless value if it should be found, for it is one of the keenest desires of present-day scholarship to get behind both the Latin Vulgate and the current Septuagint text.

And Mr. Burkitt shows that Aquila's version is of interest for a broader reason than those. It was the earliest effort of Hebrew critical scholarship. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the Hebrew scholar gave himself to the exact study of the Bible. For the Bible was all that was left to him. And if his study was not exact it was wanting in reverence for the Bible. If it did not retain each word and count each letter, it was not to be reckoned study. But the Greek-speaking Jew was out of it. He had only the Septuagint version to go by. And the Septuagint version was far too

loose to serve his purpose. It was even believed to be untruthful here and there, and to favour the Christian unduly. So Aquila made a new translation. He did not care for elegance. He cared for just one thing, that he might bring the Greek-speaking Jew as near to the Hebrew original as it was possible for him to be brought. He therefore translated the Hebrew 'waw' (ו) in all its varied meanings by the single Greek word *καὶ*. He rendered the Hebrew *gam*, 'also' (וְגַם), by the Greek *καὶ γὰρ*. When 'waw' and *gam* came together (וְגַם) he rendered the combination by *καὶ καὶ γὰρ*. And he acted on that absurd but sensible principle throughout the whole of his version. It is a colossal crib, says Mr. Burkitt, but it served its purpose entirely.

It is not always possible for a preacher to find a title for his sermon, because it is not always evident what his sermon is about. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the announcement of the subject from the pulpit is still as unusual as the omission of the text. But sermons without titles are rarely seen in print. And when we discover expressive titles we look for attractive sermons.

Professor Martin of Edinburgh, who occupies the chair that once was filled by Dr. Chalmers, has published a volume of sermons (*Winning the Soul, and other Sermons*. Macniven & Wallace, crown 8vo, pp. 334, 5s.). The title of the first sermon, which gives the title to the book, is as ordinary as its text is obvious. But the title of the second arrests one. It is 'Divine Sanction of Human Sin,' and the text is, 'That thou doest, do quickly' (Jn 13²⁷). The third is commonplace again. But the fourth is 'Religion and Morality,' and the text, 'By faith the harlot Rahab perished not' (He 11³¹). When we pass to the eleventh we find 'The Element of Necessity in the Life of Christ,' with three texts taken together, 'I must preach the Kingdom' (Lk 4⁴³), 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me' (Jn 9⁴), 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men' (Lk 24⁷). And, not to pause again,

we have for the last the striking title, 'Christ the Leader of His People's Praise,' a Communion meditation on the words, 'In the midst of the Church will I sing praise to Thee' (He 2¹²).

Of these titles the second is the boldest. 'That thou doest, do quickly,' said the Master to the traitor disciple, and Professor Martin calls the words 'Divine Sanction of Human Sin.' That it was human sin there is no doubt. The man has not been born who could persuade the world that Judas, simply seeking to force the hand of Jesus, was only the more ardent patriot. He was climbing fast, says Professor Martin, 'he was climbing fast to the topmost niche in the temple of infamy, and the finger of history, that deals impartial justice to every criminal, will for ever be pointed at him as who should say: this man excelled them all.' It was certainly human sin.

But how were Jesus' words its Divine sanction? It may be said, perhaps, that Christ was weary of the long night's agony and would cut it short. Professor Martin makes the suggestion. 'We can imagine,' he says, 'how, for the man that is under sentence of death, time drags heavily with leaden foot; how the minutes lengthen into hours, and the days into weeks; and how the fortitude of the bravest will be shaken as the dread moment creeps on at the veriest snail's pace. And for Christ, torn in spirit at the prospect that lay before Him, His heart-strings well-nigh bursting, would it have been unnatural—would it have been anything more than human—had He pled that the catastrophe might be no longer delayed, as the victim might ask his executioner not to dally with his weapon, but to let the blow fall?'

Professor Martin makes the suggestion. He makes it only to cast it away. For he will not attribute to Jesus even so much self-regard as this. Too meek, too patient, too believing, Jesus had too profound a sense of the Hand that was guiding Him along His course to seek to ante-date by one poor instant the hour of His release. And

if Jesus had sanctioned the sin of Judas so, could Professor Martin have called it *Divine* sanction?

Professor Martin believes that Judas Iscariot was a man and not a monster. And yet he believes that the time had come for Judas, when even God could do nothing for him but simply sanction his sin. Judas had had his battle; it was over, and it was lost. As a man he had taken his resolution—his resolution had taken him. He was in the grip of the hideous purpose he had been secretly revolving. *After the sop Satan had entered into him.* Now even Jesus the Son of God can say no more than ‘That thou doest, do quickly.’

Of our studies in the Person and in the Work of Christ it is absolutely accurate to say that we are ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth. Let either subject be mentioned in some public way, and immediately the circle of Christian believers is touched all round. Yet there is no conclusion. For a moment the conclusion seemed to come to some from the despair of conclusion. There is no theory of the Atonement possible, they said. Let us accept the fact and let the theory go. We cannot agree upon the theory, let us agree to let the theory alone. But it was only for a moment; and it only came to some. The greater part said No. We may never agree on a theory of the Atonement, but we cannot agree there is none.

It is the same with the Person of Christ. Whenever a fresh and independent mind writes on the subject, the interest and the diversity appear. The latest illustration is the latest book. Being much interested, and even exercised, by Mr. Adamson's *Studies of the Mind in Christ*, we have watched the progress of its reception. Its life and power have everywhere been acknowledged; they could not well be denied. In Mr. Adamson, says one enthusiastic reviewer,—whose enthusiasm we have no little sympathy with,—we have one of the boldest, most courageous, most reverent, and at the same time, one of the most learned and lucid

writers on theology who are in active work at the present time. ‘It seems to us,’ says another, ‘to be one of the greatest contributions to theology which our time has seen. It is learned, without any parade of learning; that is, Mr. Adamson has read all the relevant literature on the question in English, German, Greek, and in other languages as well. He writes easily, gracefully, lucidly, without strain or effort, and his meaning cannot be mistaken. He thinks clearly and to the purpose.’ Yes, the power and the life are recognized on every hand; but there the agreement ends.

Take two examples on either hand. In the *Christian World* of 10th February there is a short but impressive notice. It acknowledges the ability. ‘In the course of the discussions there are not a few flashes of rare exegetical insight.’ But his arguments lose much of their force ‘by his uncritical acceptance of the evangelical narratives,’ and, on the whole, the writer fears that it will be regarded as nothing more than a ‘cleverly-constructed apologetic device.’

In the February issue of the *Free Church Monthly* there is an equally careful and equally striking review. It is signed by the editor himself. ‘The book is an able and suggestive one, and it is impossible not to admire the thoroughness with which the author deals with his subject.’ But it is no apologetic device. ‘That Mr. Adamson is incapable of thinking of Jesus Christ with anything but the profoundest reverence, we know absolutely; but we have marked quite a number of passages which we are certain no unsophisticated person will read without at least a momentary throb of pain.’ Whereupon Dr. Walker flees for refuge to a place where few Scotch theologians have ever been found. It is ‘a task which, we believe, no mortal man will ever succeed in satisfactorily accomplishing.’ ‘How the union was effected which makes the “I” of the Gospels sound sometimes like that of a man, sometimes like that of a God, is beyond our comprehension, and we despair of anyone being able to explain it.’