

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

IT will soon be recognized that the second volume of the new DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE (which has been sent for review) is of wider interest than the first. The painstaking student, slowly building up an accurate knowledge of the letter of Scripture, will work his way through the smaller articles. But the average reader will turn at once to the great subjects which fall so lavishly into this volume.

They are well distributed between the Old Testament and the New. Professor Ryle's 'Genesis,' Professor Driver's 'Habakkuk,' Professor Davidson's 'Hosea' and 'Jeremiah,' Professor Smith's 'Isaiah' and 'Joshua,' Professor Davison's 'Job,' Professor Cameron's 'Joel,' Professor König's 'Jonah' and 'Judges,' and Mr. Burney's 'Kings' are all articles of the best type of critical scholarship. And besides these books we must notice such subjects and persons falling within the Old Testament as Flood, Food, Genealogy, Glory, Hexateuch, Holiness, Idolatry, Jacob, Joseph. Of these we might single out the article IDOLATRY for special attention. It is not long, not nearly so long indeed as articles that have appeared in previous Dictionaries. But there is a distinction recognized between different kinds of idolatry found in the Old Testament, a grouping as contrasted with a mere repetition of the passages, which gives to such an article the value of science,

and makes it useful to the most ignorant as well as the most accomplished reader.

But on the whole the New Testament has the best of it in this volume. The great doctrinal articles are mostly concerned with New Testament teaching. 'Glory' and 'Holiness' belong to both Testaments, and are handled by two different men. But Mr. Bethune-Baker's 'Forgiveness' is chiefly New Testament, while Principal Stewart's 'Grace,' Mr. Ottley's 'Incarnation,' Principal Simon's 'Justification,' and Professor Orr's 'Kingdom of God' are entirely so. Then there are the three great articles on 'God,' 'Jesus Christ,' and the 'Holy Spirit.' And besides the very full articles on 'Galatia' by Professor Ramsay, we have the whole subject of St. John and his writings, written by Mr. T. B. Strong of Christ Church, Oxford, Principal Salmond of Aberdeen, and the late Principal Reynolds of Cheshunt.

'I wonder if you are feeling the importance of the distinction between *sin* and *offences*, a distinction constantly lost sight of, so that men often cherish the former in their efforts to get rid of the latter. If men would but believe in the truth that *the sin is* taken away, instead of whitewashing and painting up the old Adam and attempting to get others to do the same, the

coming of the Lord would be apprehended and the glorification of the Son of Man be known in the power of the Holy Ghost.'

A small book called *Letters from a Mystic of the Present Day* has reached its third edition this month (Elliot Stock), and those words are quoted from it. They are followed by others which are more explicit. 'No sins are reckoned against us by God; on His side they are all put away—in relation to Him they have no existence. Hence our Lord says (Mt 9<sup>2</sup>), Son, be of good cheer, thy sins *have been done away*.'

And the writer, who is the Rev. Rowland W. Corbet, M.A., Rector of Stoke-on-Terne, does not speak of Christians. He speaks of men—we were going to say of sinners. He speaks of those whom we used to call sinners. He says there are no sinners, except that in thinking themselves sinners they commit sin. He says there is no reckoning of sin against the prodigal in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. He says our Lord's Commission is to preach the gospel to every creature, and the gospel is that our sins are put away, are not reckoned against us by God. To quote him word for word: 'Our sin or error is in assuming that our sins or trespasses have a place in the mind of God.'

To get rid of sin, then, it is to get rid of the mistake of thinking that God regards us as sinners. 'When the heart recognizes this, it inbreathes the atmosphere which develops spiritual life into filial trust and brotherly love.' But if the heart never recognizes this, what then? 'There is therefore now no condemnation,' said the apostle, 'to them that are in Christ Jesus.' This writer says there is no condemnation to them that are out of Christ Jesus. Whether they recognize it or not, if God does not reckon sin, then He does not reckon sin, and that is the end of it.

'I could enlarge with scriptural evidences, if necessary,' says Mr. Corbet. It does seem neces-

sary. For the only scriptural reference he has given is of doubtful relevancy. 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins have been done away.' It is not a matter of the true reading or translation (both of which are somewhat doubtful here), it is a matter of manifest meaning. Clearly the sins of the man were forgiven, or 'done away' as Mr. Corbet unfairly translates, that very moment, and through the forgiving fiat of the Saviour. If he had not been Saviour, could He have done it? He asked whether was easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Rise and walk.' Either was easy to Him, neither was possible to any other.

But He uses the word 'son,' says Mr. Corbet. 'For,' he says, 'He is speaking to him as to a child of God, and tells him, without any solicitation on his part, an eternal fact, viz. that his sins have no existence as in the mind or eye of God.' No, they have not, *after they have been forgiven*. And it is in the light of that forgiveness that He calls him son.

For even those who hold by the universal Fatherhood of God rarely go so far as our modern mystic and proclaim the universal sonship of men. In the latest issue of 'The International Theological Library' that matter comes before us. *The Theology of the New Testament* cannot miss a full discussion of the expressions Father and Son. And Professor Stevens is as frank as he is lucid. He believes that the universal Fatherhood of God is taught at least in the synoptics, but he does not find a universal sonship even there.

Professor Stevens is very frank and fair. He says that the prevailing usage of Jesus is to speak of God as the Father of His own disciples. Even in the Sermon on the Mount this is so. 'The discourse is indeed a collection of sayings uttered at various times and places, but it is represented as spoken to the disciples, and there is no critical ground for doubt that at least the earlier portions were so spoken.' He says, besides, that there is no passage in our sources in which Jesus explicitly

speaks of God as the Father of all men. Still he thinks that in the synoptic teaching Jesus expresses the thought of God as one who acts towards all men as a father acts towards his children—if only they would allow Him. But he never finds it taught that all men are His sons. He as Father stands in the right relation and ready; they have first to attain to their relation as sons.

Our 'modern mystic's' view of sin is not new, and it does not press very hard upon us now. There is a sorer battle we have to fight, a battle with a more radical heresy. The 'modern mystic' assures us that sin has been done away by God from all eternity; the modern man of science says there never was any sin to do away.

This is the view of sin that Canon Gore finds it needful to take account of in his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. For the Bible postulates the existence of sin; it claims that sin everywhere, and from the first, has been a cause of degradation in the individual and the race. Science denies that. The progress of the race, says science, has been upward, not downward; it has been a gradual process of development and advance, and the individual cannot sin, not, as St. John would say, because he is born of God, but simply because he is born. He has no freedom to sin. He is a man, and therefore under the dominion of the laws of development. What seems his individual act is simply the evolutionary law which has him in its grasp, expressing itself through him.

Here, says Canon Gore, is the real point at issue between religion and science. The main question is not about human origins or a primeval fall. It is not, Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? or even, Did Adam fall? The question is, Do men fall now, and can they keep from falling? Is human freedom—freedom within limits to choose and act—a reality? Can man therefore misuse this freedom to do what he need not have done and ought not to have done?

Now it seems to Canon Gore that when the issue is fairly faced science must give way. For 'the universal moral consciousness and common sense of man bears witness to the fact that we can do and do do what we ought and need not.' And not only so, but it also recognizes the moral truth of St. Paul's idea that this lawlessness of the will has its perverting effects on the intelligence and the passions. On the one side, and it is the side of the Bible, we have the human consciousness; on the other, no positive evidence, only the habitual unwillingness of science to recognize its proper limits.

It is no longer understood that the Old Testament religion was dictated to the Old Testament saints and prophets. It is no longer a heresy to say that the Hebrew religion is part of a larger Semitic religion. And it is not even supposed that that takes any glory from the Hebrew religion. If the materials out of which the religion was formed were common to the nations around, the spirit was the possession of the Hebrew only. It is now universally recognized that many of our Lord's sayings were current in His earthly day. But He gave them spirit and life. And originality consists in that.

We are no longer startled, therefore, to read, as we read in the *Contemporary Review* recently, that 'the Yahweh cult of the primitive Hebrews is not to be looked upon as an isolated form of worship, but rather as a religious system which was in its earliest beginnings identical with the very far-spread adoration of the moon-god.' It is true we do not take easily to expressions like 'the Yahweh cult'; and we are jealous lest a form of words like *Lord of Hosts*, which may have served an idolatrous worship once, should be claimed as evidence of an idolatrous worship still. But even when we are reminded that the moon-god was best known in antiquity under the name of Sin, we are not disturbed to hear how close is the correspondence between the worship of Sin and the worship of

Jehovah in their outward expression, so long as the inner secret is the difference between earth and heaven.

Mr. George Margoliouth, of the British Museum, published an article in the *Contemporary Review* recently, in which he sought to show that many of the words of the moon-god worship have been retained in the worship of Jehovah. He has now written a pamphlet of twenty pages (Nutt, 1s.) to strengthen that proposition. He has chosen certain Old Testament expressions, and endeavoured to trace their origin.

The first is the title *Jehovah of Hosts*. Mr. Margoliouth has no doubt that the 'Sabaoth' or 'Hosts' in that title are the stars. That is indeed the nearly unanimous judgment of Old Testament scholars now,—not only of Cheyne, but also of Kuenen, Tiele, Baudissin, and even of Delitzsch. But why is Jehovah called Jehovah of the Stars? Mr. Margoliouth has found the explanation in a Babylonian hymn. There Nannar (as the moon-god was called at Ur of the Chaldees in preference to Sin) is addressed as 'lord of the hosts of heaven,' as the deity 'who was seen to gather around him the glorious hosts of stars on the weird vault of night' (*Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. iv.). The sun-god was not so glorious. He had to cross the heavens unattended, as it appeared, by stars. So, to the moon-god was given this glorious title. And from the moon-god it was transferred to Jehovah. As the God of Israel, He is the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the Lord of the Hosts of Heaven, and of all the powers that animated them.

The second is the phrase *to exalt the horn*. What that phrase means is evident. It means to raise to dignity and power. But what is its origin? Mr. Margoliouth finds its origin in the 'mitre ornamented with horns,' which is the emblem of the god Sin. The deity, says Maspero, who ruled the world from his abode in the lunar orb, was cosmically seen to shoot forth in brightly shining

horns during the first quarter of each month; and when the disc was completed, Sin was said to have put on his mitre (*agu*), an expression which then includes the halos which form around the moon. So when Hannah says, 'Mine horn is exalted in Jehovah' (1 S 2<sup>1</sup>), she uses the forms of an out-worn faith to express her sense of the honour she has received from the God of Israel; and in Jer 48<sup>25</sup> the defeat of the Moabites is crushingly expressed by saying that their horn is cut off.

But more curious than that (perhaps more doubtful also) is Mr. Margoliouth's explanation of the phrase which in our versions is translated the skin of Moses' face *shone*. Literally, the Hebrew is, the skin of Moses' face was found *to send forth horns*. Moses had been for many days in close communication with Jehovah on Mount Sinai. What more natural than that his face should take on the reflexion of the God with whom he had been in converse? That reflexion still preserves enough of the old imagery to have it described as *shining horns*. And the imagery would the more readily come to hand that Mount Sinai was originally the dwelling-place of the god Sin.

Last November the Directors of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, met to inaugurate the Rev. William Adams Brown, M.A., as Roosevelt Professor of Systematic Theology. The charge was delivered by Dr. C. H. Parkhurst. Professor Adams Brown then delivered an inaugural address on 'Christ the Vitalizing Principle of Christian Theology.' The man had been carefully chosen for the Chair—a Chair once occupied by Dr. Henry B. Smith and by Dr. W. G. T. Shedd—and he had as carefully chosen his subject. The proceedings on the occasion have since then been published by the Martin Publishing House of New York, and we can read the address in full.

We are all familiar with the theological achievement of our time which expresses itself in the rallying cry, 'Back to Christ!' There was danger;

though perhaps the danger was not so great as some represented it, that we should lose touch with the beating heart of our faith in speculations and wranglings over matters that belonged only to the head. So the forces of true religion were rallied under that cry, and the rally was successful. We are back to Christ. Christ is once more the centre of our religious thought, and even of our theological speculation. We are conscious that we have not only received Christ again into the heart, but that we have received a Christo-centric theology.

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The gain is unmistakable and very great. It has seized the systematic theologian and shaken him in his Chair. At first it seemed likely to shake him out of his Chair, that the biblical theologian might sit in it. But that danger passed. Biblical theology has come to stay, but systematic theology is needed also. Only, the systematic theologian must no longer be content to hand down from generation to generation the doctrinal system which has been inherited from the past; he must no longer be content to explain and defend the creeds and dogmas of the historic Church; or to mark off with the sharp precision of a rigorous logic the narrow path, by following which alone men may hope to escape the pitfalls of heterodoxy on the right hand and on the left. He must see to it that the creed he teaches is a living conviction in his own soul. He must so teach it that in the hearts and consciences of men it will waken a response which will be the best evidence of its truth and its unflinching argument against opposition. He must cease to regard it as a law-regulating belief, as the Scribes were used to do; he must make it a Confession of Faith, and teach with authority as the Master did.

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That is the new conception of systematic theology. It is a revolution. And the cry of 'Back to Christ!' has done it. For the moment that Christ was placed in the creed, the creed was found to be spirit and life. It was not taken on from without; the materials only were received by

tradition; the creed was woven from within, a personal conviction, the record of a personal experience. The new conception of systematic theology is that theology is personal experience or it is nothing. The biologist may teach the Darwinian theory, whether he is a Darwinian or not. The politician may write imperialist articles all the while he is a 'Little Englander.' But the systematic theologian dare no longer sit in his Chair unless he is able to touch the universal Christian experience by the vital spark of his own.

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But if that is the new conception of systematic theology, does it not run into two great dangers? Does it not run the risk of being very narrow in range and very subjective in character? It runs both risks. And proves its life by the risks it runs. But it is the business of the systematic theologian to see that it only runs these risks and does not fall into them.

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It runs the risk of being too narrow. But the systematic theologian is careful to see that his own personal experience is not the contents of his teaching, but only its vital energy. The contents of his teaching is experience certainly. For outside experience there is no truth with which we have to do. But it is the experience of the whole Church of God in all the ages. And by the Church of God, Professor Adams Brown does not mean the Christian Church of these nineteen centuries and that alone.

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It runs the risk also of being too subjective. But the systematic theologian avoids that risk by seeing that every experience is a revelation of reality, and is in contact with objective facts. The Christian experience is not independent of the historic Christian institutions. It is not independent of the Scriptures with their present revelation of Christ, of the Church with her creeds, her ministry, and her sacraments. When we speak of Christian experience we include these. They are the facts by which the experience is created and by which it is maintained. Without them it had

never come into being, without them it would soon cease to be. The theologian avoids the risk of subjectivity by never losing sight of historic fact.

But in truth the risk, whether of subjectivity or of narrowness, is far less now than it used to be. Take away from the historic doctrines that living experience of which they are the outgrowth, make them mere dogmas, lifeless forms, relics of an age long past and of an outgrown type of thought, and then the spirit of man will seek its expression elsewhere. Then each man will be an experience to himself

and a mystic to others. But make your systematic theologian an interpreter; let him unfold to the men of the present the meaning of the past; let him show them that the Christian doctrines, even in their most scholastic form, are the outgrowth of a living experience and witness to eternal verities; and then the human soul will take these materials and fuse them in the crucible of its own living experience, bringing forth things that are new undoubtedly, but that are in vital harmony with the universal experience and with universal spiritual facts.

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## Life after Death.

BY THE RIGHT REV. C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D., BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

'Shall the dust praise Thee?'—Ps. xxx. 9.

THESE sad and even bitter words from one of the sweet singers of Israel show to us, with almost terrible force, how deep were the shadows which rested on the saint of the old Covenant when the end of our mortality, and the fear that end carried with it, pressed heavily on the soul. And that fear, that outcome and heritage of sin, lingers now, even though Christ has brought life and incorruption to light, and has abolished death for ever. That it is so, all experience seems sadly to confirm. That there is a dread of death in the background of almost every heart, arising commonly from some doubts as to the reality of a continued existence, is a serious truth, which no sober observer of human nature would feel disposed to deny. That it exists in Christian hearts, even though the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews solemnly declares that the dear Lord passed through death that He might deliver all who were under the bondage of this fear—that it so exists, who of us who looks into the depths of his own soul could consistently doubt?

On such a subject, then, it may not be unprofitable to meditate, more especially as within the last few years several works, some of real importance, have been written on the subject of life after death and the questions connected with it. Most of them appear to deal with the subject independ-

ently of Holy Scripture, and to review the arguments—some of them reaching back to remote antiquity—for the continuance of a personal existence after its earthly termination. These arguments no reasonable man can regard with indifference. Some of them are of real use in confronting the inferences of materialism drawn from the ultimate return of the body to the elements of which it was originally formed: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' Others appeal, often very successfully, to inner convictions of a continuance of a personal existence which seem to be a very part of our sentient selves. Further, it may be added, that Science itself, which has so often been regarded as in antagonism to Faith, has contributed some considerations in favour of our survival after death which have been found to exercise an influence over minds to which no other form of argument has seemed, even transiently, to appeal. It is impossible, then, to regard with indifference these non-scriptural arguments for continuity of existence, but, at the same time, it seems perfectly clear that none of them, nor all of them combined, can do more than make survival after death a reasonable probability. It is Scripture, and Scripture only, that can convert that probability into certainty. It is only through the gospel brought home to the heart of the humble,