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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

NOTES and articles on the subject of the "Unpardonable Sin" have been received from the Right Rev. William Alexander, D.D., Bishop of Derry and Raphoe; the Rev. Edward Parker, D.D., President of the Baptist College, Manchester; the Rev. William Dale, New Barnet, and others. It has been found necessary, however, to defer the discussion to our next issue.

The first of the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol's Addresses on the Historical Criticism of the Old Testament and the Teaching of our Lord will be found in this number. Our readers will at once perceive their value. Distinguished for scholarship and literary finish, they are yet more distinguished for their freedom from all bitterness and even from the signs of party bias. Often have we desired to offer a full and competent discussion of the vital question with which they deal. We scarcely hoped to find anything so admirable as this.

The Rev. Buchanan Blake, B.D., whose recent book on Isaiah—*How to read Isaiah*—has been a success, is preparing a similar volume on the Minor Prophets.

Mr. Gladstone and Canon Cheyne have entered upon a discussion in the *Nineteenth Century* of the question of the Old Testament beliefs in immortality. It is probably not yet ended. It is enough, therefore, at present, if the following sentences are quoted from Professor Cheyne's article. They will sufficiently indicate the line upon which the matter is debated :—

"Now it is certain that a thorough study of the early records of the life of David, in the light of a critical analysis and in an historical spirit, introduces us to the most attractive character of ancient Israel, and even permits us to regard David as in his degree a herald of spiritual religion. But it also forbids us to believe that any of the psalms, as they now stand, were written by David. Indeed, even without appealing to criticism, the perusal of 1 Sam. xvi.–1 Kings ii. 11 makes the traditional view difficult in the extreme. For a living faith in immortality presupposes a development of the moral nature such as we do not find in the David of the narratives."

The Oxford University Press has authorised the Rev. R. H. Charles, M.A. (whose note in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for December will be remembered), to prepare a scientific edition of the Book of Enoch, embodying:—I. An introduction, with (*a*) a comprehensive history of all former criticism upon this book; (*b*) a complete account of its influence on the authors of Baruch, IV. Ezra, the Book of Jubilees, and especially of the New Testament; (*c*) a thorough criticism of the various components of the book, by which the different

schools of thought are disentangled and much light thrown on the source of many New Testament doctrines; and (*d*) its date and language. II. A new translation from the Ethiopic text of Dillmann, corrected and improved by the collation of MSS. which are older and better than those on which Dillmann's text is based. III. A full Commentary.

"We have dug up Homer, we shall yet dig up the Bible." When Professor Sayce wrote these words, more of the Bible had been dug up than he knew. And the surprising thing about it is that it is not the Bible's own land that has given it forth, but Egypt. How much Egypt has actually given forth we do not yet know, for the clay tablets of Tel el-Amarna have not been made to surrender their whole story yet. But enough has been deciphered to send what was a prophecy then swiftly along the way to its accomplishment.

Mr. J. H. Tritton contributes a popular account of the recent discoveries to the *Young Men's Review*.

Professor Sayce himself tells one portion of the story in the *Newbery House Magazine* for December. "On the eastern bank of the Nile, in Upper Egypt, midway between the two towns of Minieh and Assiout, are a line of mounds, now known under the name of Tel el-Amarna. They mark the site of a city which was for a brief space the capital of ancient Egypt. At the close of the Eighteenth Dynasty, about 1400 B.C., the country was governed by a king, known to history as Amenôphis IV., who was half-Asiatic in descent. Before he had been long on the throne, he publicly renounced the religion of his forefathers, and proclaimed his adherence to an Asiatic creed. This was the worship of the sun-god, Baal, under the form of the solar disc." But Amenôphis failed to carry his subjects with him in his change of religion. To secure freedom for himself and those who adhered to the new worship he left Thebes, the old capital, and built a new capital where the mounds of Tel el-Amarna now extend along the shore. On the death of Amenôphis, the new religion and the new capital were deserted together. Tel el-Amarna was never inhabited again.

Among the ruins of this short-lived capital city there has been found a portion of the archives of Amenôphis IV. and his father. "They are written on clay tablets, in the cuneiform letters of Babylonia, and for the most part in the Babylonian language, and contain letters and despatches from the kings of Babylonia, Assyria, and Mesopotamia, and the Egyptian governors and vassal-princes of Syria and Palestine." Among the rest there are several letters from the Prince of Jerusalem, whose name was Ebed-tob. He was a vassal of Egypt. He paid tribute to the Egyptian treasury, maintained an Egyptian garrison within his walls, and received from time to time a sort of commissioner-resident, who represented the Egyptian king. Yet Ebed-tob insists upon it that he is not a subject of the king of Egypt. "I am not a governor, a subject of the king, my lord; I say I am an ally of the king." It is evidently a matter of importance with him. Respectfully, very respectfully, and yet with firmness and persistence, he urges that his authority does not proceed from Egypt. He governs by a higher title than Egypt can bestow. He is king of Jerusalem, by divine appointment. "The oracle of the Mighty King established me in the house of my father; the prophecy of the Mighty King has caused me to enter the house of my father." The "Mighty King" is the God of Jerusalem, "the God Uras," he says, "whose name there is Salim." Ebed-tob does not care to boast that he is a king. His great boast is that he is priest of the Mighty King, priest of Salim, from whom his city has its name—Uru-Salim, Jerusalem.

"For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God"—how faithfully have the titles been handed down to us! We read these despatches of the priest-king in Jerusalem, and the name of Ebed-tob passes out of sight; its place is

taken by a greater. "First, being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is king of peace." Yes, Salim, or Salem, signifies peace, for it is related to the Assyrian Sulmanu or Solomon, the God of Peace. And he is rightly called "King of Salem," and not "King of Jerusalem." He was not King of Jerusalem, for he was not a king in the ordinary sense of the word. He was king only in so far as he was priest of the God of Peace. He was "Prince of Peace," and not the king of a Canaanitish town.

"We have dug up Homer, we shall yet dig up the Bible." Is it possible that we shall dig up *more* than the Bible? It has just been shown that we are likely to dig up more than Homer. To some extent it has been done already, as Professor Dyer shows in his most interesting volume, *Studies of the Gods in Greece at certain Sanctuaries recently excavated* (Macmillan, 8s. 6d. net), of which an excellent account is given in the *Classical Review* for December. Professor Dyer has found that "the fierce Homeric deities, of whom Mr. Gladstone complains that they are all behind Eumæus in goodness, were not those who really ruled the hearts of the mass of the Greek "folk." The fierce Homeric gods were the gods of the aristocracy. The common people *sought*, at least, to get from their religion something not far removed from that comfort and consolation which we expect from ours. "The quality of the Greek deities was that of *mercy*."

The Joshua Miracle, as it has come to be called, has always had a fascination for expositors. It was with an article upon "Joshua commanding the sun and the moon to stand still" that Dr. Cox opened the first number of the *Expositor* in 1875. More recently, in the same magazine, Mr. T. G. Selby brought the volcanic phenomena of Krakatoa to bear upon the subject, under the title of "Second Twilights and Old Testament Miracles" (3rd series, vol. ix. p. 317). The scientific expert—especially the expert in astronomical science—may be supposed to have a special interest in it, and one must listen with deference when Professor Pritchard, in his recently issued volume, *Nature and Revelation* (p. 229), disposes of the statement that "the simple natural law of astronomic refraction would entirely explain the event." Mention has already been made of some articles that have appeared in the *Homiletic Review*; and Mr. W. T. Lynn has given the essential point of what is, perhaps, the most elaborate work ever written upon it—Smythe Palmer's *A Misunderstood Miracle*—in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, vol. ii. p. 273. And yet this subject is unexhausted. It exercises its old fascination as powerfully as ever, and new explanations are still to come.

The very latest new explanation comes from a source which at once commands attention. In a very brief prefatory note to his edition of *Joshua*, in the "Smaller Cambridge Bible" series (Cambridge, 1s.), the Rev. J. Sutherland Black says: "To my friend Professor W. Robertson Smith I am indebted for much advice and assistance, generously given at every stage, in the preparation of this little work, and for many valuable contributions to both introduction and notes, including what I believe to be a new explanation of Josh. x. 12, 13."

It is therefore with some expectation that one turns to page 43, where the new explanation is found. And the promise is certainly redeemed; but not in the way that one had expected. The miracle—the physical miracle—is not explained. Indeed it is very plainly stated that there was no physical miracle to explain. "The prayer was granted,—not, of course, by stoppage of the earth's diurnal rotation, but in the strength which the Israelites obtained to accomplish their task within the natural limits of the light." It is not stated whether *this* explanation is due to Mr. Sutherland Black or to Professor Robertson Smith. We ought, probably, to attribute it to the former; for it is clear that the "new explanation" promised does not refer to this. It does not touch upon the

supernatural. It deals with the natural features of the song which the writer quotes from the Book of Jasher:—

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, moon, in the valley of Aijalon.
And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,
Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies."

The explanation is as follows:—"To understand this quotation we must figure to ourselves the speaker at two successive periods of the summer day—first, on the plateau to the north of the hill of Gibeon, with Gibeon lying under the sun to the south-east or south, at the moment when the resistance of the enemy has at last broken down; and again, hours later, when the sun has set, and the moon is sinking westward over the valley of Aijalon, threatening by its disappearance to put an end to the victorious pursuit. The appeal to the moon is, of course, for light, *i.e.* after sunset. The moon appears over Aijalon—that is, somewhat south of west as seen by one approaching from Beth-horon. There was therefore evening moonlight. Joshua prayed first that the sunlight, and then that the moonlight following it, might suffice for the complete defeat of the enemy."

We have received an instructive letter from Mr. C. A. Vince, M.A., late headmaster of Mill Hill School, in reference to Professor Roberts' article on the Revised Version in our last issue. The question as to the success or failure of the Revised Version demands careful attention. It is customary to take it for granted that it has failed. But that cannot be settled without a wide induction of facts. What is the experience of preachers, teachers, private students? Is it not used in public worship, in private, or in family worship? Mr. Vince says: "At Mill Hill, from the first week in which the R.V. (N.T. and O.T. respectively) was published, they have been used in the school for every purpose,—*i.e.* for reading at prayers, for Scripture lessons, and for Sunday services,—the A.V. being entirely disused. We had many preachers; but I do not remember any of them objecting to, or expressing surprise at, the use of the R.V., though there was not even a copy of the A.V. in the reading-desk. Again, I have preached in Nonconformist chapels in various parts of the country, and have always read the lessons from the R.V. No one has ever expressed surprise or made objection. I have nearly always found a copy of the R.V. in the pulpit, for the preacher to use if he thinks fit."

Then would come the question, why it has failed, or why it has not been more successful. Mr. Vince gives several reasons, outside the demerits of the Revised Version itself, for its unpopularity—"whether as universal as Dr. Roberts supposes or not;" and says roundly that "its neglect is to be deplored, not only for the reasons put by Dr. Roberts, but because it is, to some extent, a victory of obscurantism."

"The 'finical' changes which Dr. Roberts regrets (though to the careful student no method of study could be better than that he should set himself to answer in every case the question, 'Why was this change made?' being assured that there *was* a reason which, whether *sufficient* or not, was probably *sound*)—these changes are, in my opinion, to be regretted, not so much as having excited the prejudice against the Version, as because they have furnished an *excuse* for a prejudice which was certain to exist whatever the faults or the merits of the Version might be."

It has been said that Dean Burgon's articles in the *Quarterly* have made a difference of half a century in the public acceptance of the Revised Version. If that is so, it is not, in Mr. Vince's judgment, very creditable to the intelligence of the Christian public. And in that connexion he tells a characteristic story of the belligerent dean which has not yet been got hold of by the newspapers, and may not even be found in the life which Mr. Murray is about to issue. "The late master of Christ's College, Cambridge (Dr. Swainson, well known as an authority on ancient liturgies), told me the following significant story. He was

a canon of Chichester, where Dr. Burgon was dean. He and Dr. Burgon were in a mourning coach together, going to the funeral of a canon, at the time when the publication of the Revisers' New Testament was imminent, and after the date at which advanced copies had been presented, in confidence, to a few scholars. Dr. Swainson asked the dean if he had seen the Version. He replied, 'No, indeed; they had the impudence to send me a copy, on condition I kept it a secret. Of course I didn't look at it, but sent it back at once. But just wait till they publish it; and you'll see how I'll give it 'em.'"

'Well, the Revised Version may be more faithful to the Greek, but my objection to the use of it is that it is so unfaithful to the English.' This is perhaps the most popular of all objections to the Version. It does not mean that the English of the R.V. is ungrammatical, though that also has been sometimes said, or that it is without a distinction and style of its own, though that is more frequently asserted: but that it lacks *rhythm*, and therefore is unsuited for public reading, "I confess," says Mr. Vince, "I am impatient of criticism on the R.V. on the ground of rhythm, for I do not believe that among St. Paul's other cares the care for rhythm had any place. I am glad to see that Dr. Roberts speaks only of the *familiar* rhythm of the A.V., not implying that the rhythm of the new version is *worse*. It is the familiarity that is everything: and I even venture to think that we are in the habit of regarding the prose of the Authorised New Testament as rhythmical, chiefly because we are so familiar with it that in reading it we dispose the accents easily, without the hesitation and pains with which we read unfamiliar prose. It is difficult to bring this question to a test, because, as a general rule, when you have said 'I like this rhythm,' and I have said 'I don't like it'—that's an end of it: *non est disputandum*: there are no rules and authorities to appeal to. I suppose the only accepted rule is that any rhythm that suggests verse is bad. This is the fault often pointed out in Dickens when he tries to be rhythmical. I saw somewhere the other day that a man gave as an example of injury to the rhythm, the restitution of 'love' for 'charity' in the great encomium of love. (The intrusion of the Latin word here is due to sheer pedantry on the part of King James' revisers). Now, if we are ever to expect agreement in a question of prose rhythm, I should say that (if rhythm is to be considered at all) no one would hesitate to condemn the dactyls of

'Chárity | súffereth | lóng and is | kínd.'

"I propose the following test: Let a favourite psalm be read to twelve members of the Church of England and twelve dissenters in the Prayer-Book Version and in the Authorised; let the audience vote on the question, which version is to be preferred rhythmically. I predict, with great confidence, that all the churchmen will vote for the Prayer-Book Version, and all the dissenters for the Authorised—each for the Version which is more *familiar* to him."

"What I think is wanted practically is that the R.V. should be prescribed as a text-book by examiners of schools. The Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate examines 10,000 boys and girls annually,—how much they might do for the more accurate knowledge of the Bible by merely announcing that they will examine in the Revised Version only. I do not think many people whose opinion is of value will question that (whatever the suitability of the R.V. for other purposes) it is much superior to the A.V. as a text-book in Scripture History. It saves a vast deal of annotation which occupies the time of a class, and taxes the memory of pupils. No one, in teaching young boys Greek, would supply them with a reprint of the *editio princeps* of the author, and then spend their time in class in correcting the text; but such a method would involve less unnecessary expenditure of the time and attention that a conscientious teacher must give to corrections of the A.V., if it is in his pupils' hands."