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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Dykes (J. O.), Plain Words on Great Themes, 15.
 Edgar (R. M.), Philosophy of the Cross, 19.
 Eyton (R.), Search for God, 163.
 Farrar (F. W.), Eternal Hope, 222.
 James (J. A.), Sermons, i. 81.
 Jenkins (D. R.), Eternal Life, 27.
 Keble (J.), Sermons for Holy Week, 173.
 Liddon (H. P.), Sermons from *Penny Pulpit*, i. 294.
 Manning (H. E.), Sermons, i. 274.
 Momerie (A. W.), Origin of Evil, 319.
 Morgan (G. H.), Modern Knights-Errant, 209.
 Newman (J. H.), Parochial Sermons, vi. 83.
 Skeffington (S. W.), Sinless Sufferer, 76.
 Spurgeon (C. H.), Sermons, vol. iii. No. 139, vol. xiii. No. 775, vol. xxix. No. 1717.
 Stall (S.), Five Minute Object Sermons, 196.
 Vaughan (C. J.), Temple Sermons, 23.
 „ „ University Sermons, 89.
 Wordsworth (C.), Truth of the Gospel, 51.

Christian World Pulpit, vii. 72 (Dorling), xiv. 97 (Ferguson), xxiv. 241 (Greenhough), xl. 298, xlii. 55.
Church of England Magazine, xxxii. 328.
Clergyman's Magazine, iv. 85.
Clerical Library, Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament, 88 (Liddon).
Clerical Library, Outline Sermons for Children, 204.
Expositor, 2nd Series, vii. 282; 3rd Series, viii.
Expository Times, vii. 452 (Milligan).
Homiletic Magazine, viii. 130.
Penny Pulpit, No. 294 (Liddon), No. 668 (Boyd Carpenter); New Series, No. 636 (Morse).
Preachers' Magazine, 1891, 479.
Preachers' Monthly, i. 461, ii. 369.
Preachers' Treasury, iii. 283.
Pulpit, lix.
Sermons for the Christian Seasons, Advent to Lent, ii. 569.
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Treasury (New York), ix., x.

Notes from Dr. Hort's 'The Christian Ecclesia.'

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IN addition to a masterly treatment of its main subject, this valuable book offers some most suggestive expository comments upon a large number of important passages in the New Testament, to which the author has occasion to refer in the course of his investigations. If anyone will take the index, and then refer back to the treatment of the different verses in the text of the book, he cannot fail to be struck with the wealth of new or improved light thrown upon the meaning of the many different words and sentences. As an example of what may be gleaned in this way, I propose to take five references, all chosen from the pastoral Epistles—

1. 1 Tim. i. 18 (pp. 181-184).—Dr. Hort here pleads for the rendering of the margin of the R.V.: 'The prophecies which led the way to thee, that in them (*i.e.* in their power) thou mayest war the good warfare,' as 'much the most natural rendering.' But he does not think the occasion referred to is that of 'the leaving behind at Ephesus.' For such an occasion the phrase would be a 'strong one.' He thinks the reference is rather to the call of Timothy during Paul's second missionary journey, a time when he believes the apostle was greatly in need of help. During that journey 'mysterious monitions, of the

kind called prophetic,' came to him, which 'taught him the course to take by which he should at last find a Divinely-provided successor to Barnabas.' When Paul reached Derbe and Lystra (*κατήντησεν*, as of a 'goal'), 'the testimony which the young Timothy received from the brethren might well seem to be a human echo of a Divine choice already notified by prophecy.'

2. 1 Tim. iii. 1.—Dr. Hort here translates: 'If any man seeketh after *ἐπίσκοπῆς* (a function of oversight) he desireth a good work. He, therefore, that hath oversight must need be free from reproach.' Together with this translation, we should remember Dr. Hort's translation of Acts xx. 28: 'In which the Holy Spirit set you to have oversight' (p. 99); and of Phil. i. 1.: 'With them that have oversight and them that do service.' From these and other passages in which the word occurs, and especially when they are read in connection with Titus i. 6-7 (which Dr. Hort explains, p. 191), 'a man who is to be made an elder should be one who is *ἀνέγκλητος*, for (*γάρ*) he that hath oversight must need be *ἀνέγκλητος* as a steward of God,' he argues that *ἐπίσκοπος* is not a title of office capable of being used convertibly with *πρεσβύτερος*, but is rather the description of a function. On page 195, Dr. Hort

shows that 'we know singularly little about the actual functions,' except from the word 'oversight' and the phrase 'have charge (*ἐπιμελήσεται*) of an Ecclesia of God.'

3. 1 Tim. iii. 14 f.—These two verses Dr. Hort renders: 'These things I write to thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in a household of God, which is an Ecclesia of a living God, a pillar and stay of the truth.' In support and illustration of this rendering, Dr. Hort adduces the following reasons:—(a) The 'house of God' here spoken of is doubtless God's household. (β) *Ἀναστρέφεται*: *ἀναστροφή*, includes all conduct and demeanour in converse with other men; here it is the converse of members of a household of which God is the Householder or Master. (γ) 'The force of the words that follow is only weakened and diluted by treating the absence of articles as immaterial'; here a living God 'implies a contrast with the true God made practically a dead deity by a lifeless and rigid form of religion.' (δ) 'There is no clear evidence that *ἐδραίωμα* ever means 'ground,' it is rather *firmamentum*, a 'stay' or 'bulwark.'

'St. Paul's idea is that each living society of Christian men is a pillar and stay of "the truth," as an object of belief and a guide of life for mankind, each such Christian society bearing its part in sustaining and supporting the one truth common to all.'

4. 1 Tim. v. 17-18.—Of these two verses we have not only a most suggestive rendering, but upon them Dr. Hort makes certain comments which may prove of deep value, from different points of view, to both ministers and laymen in every section of the Christian Church. The rendering is as follows:—'Let the elders that preside excellently be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour (*κοπιῶντες*, work laboriously) in speech and teaching; for the Scripture saith, "Thou shalt not muzzle an ox that treadeth out the corn," and "The labourer is worthy of his hire."' *Προεστῶτες*, Dr. Hort says, implies 'more than ruling'—a function common to all the elders,—and those who discharged this 'presiding' excellently (*καλῶς*) are worthy of 'an honour exceeding that due to their office.' And 'special honour,' St. Paul adds, is due to those elders, coming under this description, who labour in speech and teaching. Dr. Hort does not think

the language 'suggests two separate and well-defined classes—teaching elders and non-teaching elders, but that teaching was the most important form in which guidance and superintendence were exercised.'

5. 1 Tim. iv. 14.—'Neglect not the gracious gift (*χαρίσματος*) which is in thee, which was given thee, through prophecy with laying on of the hands of the body of Elders (*τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου*). And, 2 Tim. i. 6: 'For which cause I put thee in remembrance to wake into life (*ἀναζωοπυρεῖν*) the *χάρισμα* of God, which is in thee by the laying on of my hands; for God gave us (you Timothy and me Paul, us the heralds of His Gospel) not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and of love and of chastened mind.' Dr. Hort devotes a whole lecture (x.) to the New Testament use of the words *χάρις* and *χάρισμα*, and then, again, in the next lecture (xi.) he dwells at some length on Timothy's *χάρισμα*. In lecture x. Dr. Hort notices that 'the associations connected with the term "grace," as inherited by us from Latin theology, denoting a spiritual power or influence, whether received by individuals according to their need, or appropriated permanently to a sacred ordinance or a sacred office, whatever may be the truth of the idea in itself, are only misleading in the interpretation of the biblical language respecting *χάρις* and *χάρισμα*.' Then, from 1 Tim. iv. 14, he concludes that the '*χάρισμα* in Timothy' 'was a special gift of God, a special fitness bestowed by Him to enable Timothy to fulfil a distinctive function'—'preaching the Gospel to those who had not heard it.' Dr. Hort thinks that the context of 2 Tim. i. 6 'excludes the thought of a *χάρισμα* meant specially for Ephesian administration or teaching. . . . The antecedents of Timothy's *χάρισμα* lay in the atmosphere of unfeigned faith in which he had been bred up . . . and the waking of Timothy's *χάρισμα* into fresh life, now desired by St. Paul, was to show itself in a spirit which should animate Timothy's whole personal being.'

Possibly Dr. Hort's treatment of these words may seem less clear than some other parts of his work. But a careful study of lectures x. and xi., especially remembering these words, '[*χάρισμα*] . . . is used to designate either what we call "natural advantages," independent of any human process of acquisition, or advantages freshly received in the course of Providence; both alike

being regarded as so many various free gifts from the Lord of men, and as designed by Him to be distinctive qualifications for rendering distinctive services to men or to communities of men,' will show that the apparent contradictions lie only

on the surface, and that not only is the New Testament use of the words entirely consistent, but that it is opposed, as Dr. Hort contends, with the associations we have inherited from the Latin theology.

Contributions and Comments.

1. Belial and other Mythological Terms.

PROFESSOR CHEYNE'S identification of בְּלִיַּל with the Babylonian goddess of the under-world, Belili (so always, never Belilu), will, in my judgment, have henceforth to be regarded as one of the best assured of Babylono-Hebrew parallels. But I do not believe that בְּלִיַּל is simply a Canaanite popular etymology; on the contrary, I regard the Babylonian Belili as a loan-word borrowed from the West. That close relations subsisted between Babylonia and the West for centuries from about 2000 B.C. I have recently shown in detail in my book, *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, and this circumstance leaves nothing strange in such borrowing by Babylonia of a word from Canaan.

The form בְּלִיַּל certainly points, as Professor Cheyne rightly remarks, to the Babylonian conception of the 'land without return,' i.e. the under-world. Paul de Lagarde had already interpreted the word to mean, 'which allows not (no more) to come up.' A comparison had also been instituted between בְּלִיַּל and the Arabic verb *wā'ala*, 'to seek safety on a height.' Strange to say, everyone has quite overlooked a word which is far more to the point, the noun *wā'lu* (for which we find also *waghlu*). There is an old Arabic expression, *mā la-ka 'an-hu wā'lu* = 'Thou hast no way out of it' (i.e. thou canst not escape it). In my opinion, then, the Canaanites simply translated the Babylonian *mat lā tārāt*, 'land without return' (i.e. Sheol) by בְּלִיַּל , '(land) without exit,' and the Babylonians borrowed this Canaanite word again from the West as *Belili*.

I have more than once shown¹ that with the

¹ First in the weekly publication, *Ausland*, 1892, p. 75, in my article, 'Die Astronomie der alten Chaldäer,' iii., in opposition to Jensen's *Kosmologie*, p. 13 f. At a later period *šitān* and *shilān* were used simply for north and south.

Babylonians *shilān* and *šitān* are the two culminating points—*shilān* the southern one under the earth, *šitān* the northern one over our heads. As the latter presupposes a word *šitu*, 'exit,' so does the former a word *shilu* or *shêlu*, 'deep,' identical with שְׁאוֹל (Sheol). An old by-form of *šitān* must have been *šiyān* (from the cognate root *ašā*, Heb. אָשָׂא , 'go out'), which I am inclined to regard as the prototype of the well-known Heb. צִיּוֹן (Zion). In Babylonia the couples—north and south, above and below, paradise and the under-world—always expressed parallel conceptions, but *Zion* must have had even in the earliest times a religious significance, that of a sanctuary on a mountain, the residence of אֵל עֵלְיוֹן (El Elyon), an earthly copy of the heavenly paradise. A similar rôle must have been played by צָפוֹן (north). Compare Baal-zephon² of Ex. xiv. 2, and such biblical passages as Isa. xiv. 13 and Ezek. i. 4.

In like manner it was originally a mythological sense that was conveyed by תְּבַלַּת , 'earth,' which is always used as a feminine without the article, and has thus the force of a proper name. In the religious texts (not the most ancient of these) of the Babylonians we meet sometimes with a goddess *Tibal*. In *W.A.I.* iv. 2nd ed. pl. 599^a, it is said that Latarak, Sharrakhu, Dun, Shamash, Tibal, Sakkut, and Kaivan can free (from the ban of sin). Further, the name occurs at the end of the list of stars (*W.A.I.* v. 46),³ and, finally, in the name of a measure (*gish-tibal*, variant *gish-ilu-Tibal*. K 4378, i. 24). Here also the question arises whether Tibal, who plays no rôle in Babylonian mythology, was not originally borrowed from Canaan instead of conversely.

² In an ancient Assyr. Inscription as *Ba'al-sapu[na]*, along with *Baal-samēmi* (עַבְל שַׁמְמִי). Cf. *Anc. Heb. Trad.* p. 196, 255 f.

³ It looks as if here the word were even to be read *Ti-bal-ti* (thus fem. like the Heb. תְּבַלַּת). It is preceded by the determinative for divinity.