THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

In his *Life of the Master* (Hodder & Stoughton, 25s. net), Dr. Watson seems to say that the brethren of Jesus were sons of Joseph by an earlier wife than Mary. That they were sons of Mary he cannot receive. They impress him as older, not younger, men than Jesus. And he thinks that if they had been Mary's sons Jesus would have committed her to their keeping, and not to John's.

He thinks they were sons of an earlier and less spiritual wife than Mary. For then he can understand 'their unbelief in this younger brother with His unworldly ideas and divine aspirations.' Then also he can understand something of what Jesus must have suffered in the Nazareth home during His early years. The misunderstanding and the criticism of His elder half-brothers must have been hard to bear—an early cross laid on His shoulders, and a heavy one. But at least, thinks Dr. Watson, it prepared Him for the gauntlet of Pharisaic faultfinding and slander.

'When Christ says, Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also—it is an overstatement, made for the sake of emphasis.' So says Mr. W. J. Dawson, in his new life of Christ, to which he has given the title of *The Man Christ Jesus* (Grant Richards, 10s. 6d.)

He calls Christ's law of revenge an overstatement, made for the sake of emphasis. Surely he himself is guilty of a misstatement in doing so. An overstatement for the sake of emphasis—is that not simply an untruth? And if Christ was capable of an overstatement, was He also capable of an understatement? And are not these things the cause of half the bitterness in this world?

> 'For a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
> But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.'

'These enigmatic sayings inculcate a certain spirit and temper; they do not lay down a literal law of conduct.' That is on the same page, but that is different. That means, that in saying 'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,' our Lord lays down a general law and does not state a particular example. It was the way in which this greatest Lawgiver gave His laws. It was the way His greatest countrymen gave them, and His hearers were so familiar with the way that they did not misunderstand it.

We misunderstand it because we are Western

and not parabolic. When Jesus said the mustard was the least of all seeds, we go and weigh it with other seeds, so prosaic and Western are we. And when He said, 'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,' we wonder how it can be done, and call it an overstatement. It must be done and always done, else what do we more than others? It must be done and always done, else how can we be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect? But how it is to be done depends on circumstances. I turn the other also to-day; to-morrow I do not. To-day you turn the other also, and I do not. It depends on circumstances.

How fares it with the Gospel after recent criticism? The Gospels we have, and after all is said against them they will be there, the wonder of our youth, the strength of our manhood, the comfort of our declining years. But the Gospel is greater and more vital than the Gospels. It is also more difficult to hold. The Gospels might remain, and we might read 'I am the true vine and My Father is the husbandman' with the old tremor, even after the Fourth Gospel has been proved to be the work of the Presbyter. But the Gospel wherein we stand, by which also we are saved—it means that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures—it is not like the Gospels, it is unseen, unhandled, it is miraculous. How fares it with the Gospel after recent criticism?

When you ask the question, recent criticism looks up in wonder. It has not touched the Gospel, it is with the Gospels that it has had to do. It has shown, or tried to show, that the Gospels are unhistoric. But it vehemently protests that it has only shorn the Gospel of its husks and hindrances, and left it better than ever it was.

But the husks are the miracles. They include the resurrection from the dead. They include the living, present Christ. The Gospel that is left is not the Gospel as we have received it. It may be as attractive as they call it, but it is not the Gospel wherein we stand.

They know that. They may call it a better Gospel; they know it is not the same. They know that the essential thing in the old Gospel is the miraculous. And they know that they are changing the Gospel completely, for it is just the miraculous that they assail.

We sometimes blame them for assailing the credibility of the Gospels. They are quite entitled to do that. If they think that the Gospels are incredible, or if they think that anything they contain is incredible, they are quite entitled to say so and try to prove it. Surely we are not afraid of the truth. Surely we do not want to hinder the search for it. But when they assail the credibility of the Gospels, they do so as a means towards an end. The end is the elimination of the miraculous. And we have a right to protest if *before they have begun to examine the Gospels* they have decided that the miraculous has no business to be there.

Did you hear that they rejected the miraculous because they knew that miracles were impossible? None of them say that. Schmiedel says the contrary. I am not going, he says, 'to start from any such postulate or axiom as that miracles are impossible.' Dr. Percy Gardner does say that 'miracles would form exceptions to that great law of the Conservation of Energy which men of science regard as holding in all parts of the physical universe.' But Dr. Percy Gardner, on his own admission, knows little about physical science, and even he does not commit himself explicitly.

Did you hear that they rejected the miraculous because they found that the documents which contained it were composed so long after the event as to be untrustworthy? The date, says

Dr. Schmiedel again, has nothing to do with it. 'The chronological question'—here are his very words—'is in this instance a very subordinate one. Indeed, if our Gospels could be shown to have been written from 50 A.D. onwards, or even earlier, we should not be under any necessity to withdraw our conclusions as to their contents; we should, on the contrary, only have to say that the indubitable transformation in the original tradition had taken place much more rapidly than one might have been ready to suppose. The credibility of the Gospel history cannot be established by an earlier dating of the Gospels.'

The date has little to do with it. It is true that Schmiedel and all who hold with him date the Gospels pretty late. It is true that in that way they get room for sources of the Gospels, and sources of sources of the Gospels, and are able to represent that there are things in the Gospels which may not have been there at the beginning, and even how these things got added to the original Gospels. But if they cannot get time, they do not mind. An '*indubitable transformation* in the original tradition' has taken place. They know that from looking at the Gospels as they stand. For the Gospels as they stand contain the record of miracles.

Now miracles may not be impossible, but to the modern critic they are incredible. After Professor Huxley he cannot say they are impossible; but after Professor Huxley he says they are incredible. And he says that no amount or quality of evidence will make them credible. To be incredible is therefore to be non-existent. But he is so loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ that he will not say He deceived the people. He says that they were not there at the beginning, probably not when the earliest attempts were made at writing Gospels; they were added later, they are an 'indubitable transformation in the original tradition.'

There are different ways of explaining how they came there. The latest and the most ingenious way is pursued by Professor Percy Gardner in his new book, *A Historic View of the New Testament* (A. & C. Black, 6s.).

Professor Gardner divides the miracles into two classes. There are the so-called miracles of healing, and there are the miracles proper. The miracles of healing were not miracles. They always demanded faith in the recipient. 'Now,' says Dr. Gardner, 'deeds of healing, in which a certain undefined power in the healer is met by faith in the person healed, are in no way miraculous.' The cures may have been many, or they may have been few; that depends on the evidence, and the evidence in such matters is exceedingly hard to sift. But they were not miracles. 'Jesus stands in history as one among a number of faith-healers.'

The cases of exorcism come under this head. They were cases of physical disease, says Dr. Gardner, especially of epilepsy and insanity. In ascribing them to diabolic agency, Jesus 'doubtless spoke in the manner of the age.' Whether he knew better or not, Dr. Gardner cannot say. He considers it probable that He did not, and he holds that we need think no less of Him on that account. But, be that as it may, the cases of exorcism were simply cases of healing. The same faith was needed in the recipient, the same influence was exercised by the stronger over the feebler nature. In casting out devils Jesus took His place among the faith-healers.

When we pass from the so-called miracles of healing we come to the miracles proper. They are deeds which 'are inconsistent with our experience of the working of law in the material world, such as the turning of water into wine, and the feeding of multitudes from a few baskets (*sic*) of food.'

Now, what Dr. Gardner has to say of the miracles proper is that they are not only not miracles, but they are nothing at all. They never

were wrought. No one at the time pretended that they were wrought. They are hero-worshipping inventions of a later age. 'Jesus as a healer of disease,' he says, 'is historic; and the tales told of His cures, though doubtless deformed by exaggeration and distorted by very imperfect physiological knowledge, rest on a basis of fact. But Jesus as turning water into wine, as feeding multitudes from a few baskets of food and the like, belongs not to history, but to a perfectly familiar field of pseudo-historic tale and legend.'

What ground has Dr. Gardner for saying this? He has no ground. He simply supposes, and says it must be so. As a critic of the Gospels he has his sources, and perhaps, like Schmiedel, his sources of sources. But, so far as it appears, the earliest sources are as full of the miraculous as the latest. The only proof he offers is a proof from analogy. Other men, he says, have had similar legends told of them; Jesus must also have had His.

He gives one example. He quotes it from Dozy's *Histoire de l'Islamisme*. 'At the outset of his mission,' says Dozy, 'Mohammed said that he also had dwelt in error, since he had taken part in the worship of idols; but God, he declared, had opened his heart. This figurative phrase was taken literally, and gave rise to the following tale, which was placed in Mohammed's own mouth:—"One day, when I was lying on my side near the Kaaba, some one approached and cut open my body from chest to abdomen, and took out my heart. There was brought to me a basin of gold filled with faith; in it my heart was washed and replaced in me."'

Professor Gardner places that story beside the narratives of the Gospels. And even that story, he admits, does not fit into the life of Mohammed as the miracle narratives fit into the life and character of Jesus. Quoting again from Dozy, he admits that 'the earlier biographies of Mohammed have infused the marvellous with so little skill that one can commonly with a little critical tact distinguish between truth and fiction. *Mohammed has never become a mythical or supernatural being.*

No one will lightly esteem the difficulty in believing in miracles. No one will needlessly multiply them. But the science of criticism is as faithfully followed by retaining what seems to be a miracle as by rejecting it. In his new book, *The Man Christ Jesus*, Mr. W. J. Dawson declares that that which St. John describes as 'the second miracle which Jesus did when He was come out of Judæa into Galilee' was not a miracle at all.

It is the healing of the nobleman's son. The son lay sick of a fever in Capernaum; Jesus was in Cana. The father came down to Him there, for he believed that his child was at the point of death, and, as Mr. Dawson puts it, 'as a last resource, he sought help of One who had already achieved the reputation of a thaumaturgus.' Jesus was disinclined to interfere. But when the nobleman exclaimed in an agony of love and vehemence, 'Sir, come down ere my child die,' Jesus melted towards him, and assured him that his child would not die. The nobleman accepted the assurance, returned to Capernaum, met his servants on the way, who had ridden out to tell him that his son was convalescent; and when he found that the amendment synchronized with the hour when Jesus said to him, 'Thy son liveth,' he naturally interpreted so remarkable a coincidence as a miracle.

Mr. Dawson does not find the miracles of the Gospels incredible, but he thinks it 'a safe rule to seek a natural explanation of any act described as miraculous where such an explanation is possible', and he thinks it possible here. The child's illness was a fever. The symptoms would no doubt be described by the anxious father. Jesus had studied the local maladies of Galilee, and the nature of this fever would be quite familiar to Him. From these data it would be easy to deduce a prophecy

of the child's recovery. 'The modern physician, trained by long experience in habits of intuition and deduction, often ventures on such a positive verdict, and is rarely mistaken. Jesus in this case did nothing more than such a physician in the course of a wide practice often does.'

In the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for the present quarter Mr. Montefiore discusses a new pamphlet by Abbé Loisy. The pamphlet is entitled *Études Bibliques*. It contains six essays bearing upon the Inspiration of Scripture, and upon Biblical Criticism. Its object, as Abbé Loisy states in his preface, is 'the reconciliation of Catholic dogma and discipline with the scientific study of the Bible.'

Mr. Montefiore finds these essays by a Roman Catholic scholar and theologian refreshing. He is accustomed to Protestant acceptance of the Higher Criticism. True, it is the Old Testament rather than the New that Protestants criticize and assort, which he easily understands, though he does not think it is justified. In the Old Testament, and to a far more limited extent in the New, he sees traditional dates, authorships of books, improbable stories, and awkward miracles all freely abandoned. In the Bible, as in so many other things, he hears of a growth and a development. The evolution reaches its term in the person and teaching of Jesus. He is not sure that this sudden arrival at perfection and finality with a particular date and person is as 'scientific' as the previous growth. In any case, he sees Protestants freely handling the Bible so, and finding it at once 'more human and more Divine.' But it is new to him to find the same things going on within the Roman Catholic Church.

So Abbé Loisy is refreshing. And Mr. Montefiore is pleased to find that he is only one of a band of Roman Catholic scholars who are seeking to reconcile Catholicism with free inquiry and critical results. He hears with interest that it has cost them something. M. Loisy himself speaks of persecutions for his pains. But he has not been driven out of the Church. And he has no intention of leaving it. Criticism led Mr. Addis to abandon Roman Catholicism; M. Loisy says that it has made him only the stronger and more determined Catholic.

Mr. Montefiore has much sympathy with Abbé Loisy and his criticism. He only wonders that he does not carry it farther. There are two matters which M. Loisy has to reckon with. The Roman Catholic Church has declared the Bible to be inspired. It has also declared that it contains and teaches no errors. Now it is an infallible Church, and Abbé Loisy has to shape his criticism to agree with both these statements.

As for the first, it is fortunate that the Church has nowhere explicitly stated what inspiration is. Therefore Abbé Loisy can divide the Bible into two parts, a human and a divine, and he can find ample scope for his critical processes in the human parts, while he leaves the divine (and presumably 'inspired') parts untouched. Mr. Montefiore has no quarrel with him over this. He is not sure, however, that it is easy to separate the human from the divine elements in the Bible; he is not sure that it is fair. It will not do, he says, to pick out all the gems (that is, whatever seems to *you* to be good and true) and to say, 'This is the divine part of the Bible, all the rest is human.' For 'the rest' may be put into the mouth of God and may be attested by miracles. Even M. Loisy himself admits that it will not do to 'vivisect' the Bible. Mr. Montefiore thinks perhaps it would be better to say that *in kind* the Bible is inspired as other good and true books are inspired, but that *in degree* it excels them all. But if Abbé Loisy does not quarrel with the Pope over his ideas of inspiration, he will not quarrel with Mr. Montefiore.

The case of the errors is more serious. Still, the Church, while declaring that there are no errors in the Bible, has not explained what an

error is. So Abbé Loisy arranges the things which look like errors into departments, and says they are not errors. An error, he says, is not an error when the sacred writer did not definitely intend to teach it; which disposes of all 'scientific' errors, since the writers of the Bible never intended to teach science. Again, an error is not an error when it is merely adopted for the purpose of conveying a truth, or when the sacred writer did not intend it to be regarded as a fact or truth. Further, an error is not an error when it is only an adaptation of truth to the moral and religious capacity of the time when it was written or told. And, lastly, an error is not an error when it is in accordance with the literary habits of the age.

Abbé Loisy finds all these kinds of error in the Bible. So also does Mr. Montefiore. Mr. Montefiore is not sure if these four categories cover them all. Thus M. Loisy says of the history of Israel, that after Samuel and Saul all is comparatively clear; before Samuel, as far back as Moses, there are points of reliable light; between Moses and Abraham we see dimly certain indistinct figures in the shadow; before Abraham all is dark night. Mr. Montefiore understands him to mean that the large majority of the statements made about Abraham and Moses are inaccurate, and he does not see how that comes under any of M. Loisy's convenient rules. So he frames a fifth rule. An error is not an error, he says, when it was written in good faith and has no relation to the real object or subject of revelation.

Mr. Montefiore, on the whole, agrees with Abbé Loisy. But he cannot understand why he who goes so far does not go farther. Or rather, he cannot understand why the popes do not go farther,—for no doubt Abbé Loisy would follow if they led. Why, he asks, do they not allow that there are errors in the Bible, not merely errors that do not count, but real errors—theological errors, historic errors, religious errors, moral errors? If they did, they would only make the infallible Church the more necessary. For if there were a few downright errors, with of course a great residuum of truth for the Church to rest upon, who would be able, like the infallible Pope, to say what and where they were? And Jew as he is—but he does not deny a touch of irony here—he admits that an infallible Church, interpreting, in just accordance with the religious needs and capacities of every age, a Bible true in the main, but not true in every statement and detail, is rather an attractive picture.

It is rather an attractive picture, 'if one could accept the dogma.' But he does not accept it. He is a critic, and he does not believe that criticism will end in Roman Catholicism, but 'either in Christian Unitarianism or in "Reformed Judaism."' He is a Jew, and for him at least it has already ended in 'Reformed Judaism.'

Prophetic Ecstasy.

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I.

Few more difficult problems present themselves to the student of the Old Testament than that of the ecstasy of the early prophets. The phenomena described have obviously a close relation in religious history to other phenomena, which have not added to the dignity and truth of men's intercourse with divine things. They suggest analogies in the life of to-day which are apt to make us think but poorly of those manifestations of religious possession which Balaam and Saul exhibited.

The narratives themselves ascribe the phenomena to the direct action of the Spirit of God, but

this does not help us much in our endeavour to discover the positive element in ecstasy. For the tendency which asks the 'Why' of everything is entirely modern. In those old days the work of the Spirit was so implicitly believed in, and was so evident a reality, that men did not stop to speculate about it. Nothing in human life was thought of as outwith the range of the Spirit's working. But whatever seemed to be beyond the limits of man's own ability was ascribed in special measure to the energy of the Spirit; and thus we find a somewhat incongruous association of qualities, all deriving themselves directly from it. The feats of Samson (Jg 14^6), the frenzy of the נְבִיאִים (1 S 10^{10}), the revelations of the prophet (Ezk 3^{24}), the wisdom of the ruler (Nu 11^{16}, 1 S 16^{13}), the heroic valour of the Judges (Jg 6^{34}), the inspiration of the poet (2 S 23^2), the genius of the artist (Ex 31^3 36^1), as well as the false oracles of deluded prophets (1 K 22^{22}), and the homicidal mania of Saul, are all ascribed to the direct agency of the Almighty.[1]

But, in the case of the ecstatic, the possession was supposed to exist in quite a special sense. The Hebrews held, as the Arabs still do, that the relation between soul and body was but slight. The soul of the individual might depart and be supplanted by the Spirit of God, which thus used the body of the possessed simply as a mouthpiece. In the case of the lunatic this dispossession was permanent, while in the case of the ecstatic it was temporary. Hence, through all Semite peoples, we find this conception that mental aberrations are a sign of peculiar sanctity. The Arabic word *majnun* (mad) is from the same root as *jann*, 'to cover over,' 'to veil,' from which also the word *jinn* or (as it is commonly transliterated) *ginn*, 'a spirit,' is derived. When a man is possessed by a *ginn*, his natural mind is veiled, his own personality is lost in that of the invading spirit.[2] 'An idiot or fool is vulgarly regarded by the Arabs as a being whose mind is in heaven while his grosser part mingles among ordinary mortals; consequently he is considered an especial favourite of heaven. Whatever enormities a reputed saint may commit (and there are many who are constantly infringing precepts of their religion), such acts do not affect his fame for sanctity; for they are considered as the result of the abstraction of his mind from worldly things—his soul or reasoning faculties being wholly absorbed in devotion—so that his passions are left without control. Lunatics who are dangerous to society are kept in confinement, but those who are harmless are generally regarded as saints.'[3] Thus David, when compelled to flee to Gath, found that the best course to secure his safety was to pretend to be mad. 'David was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath, and he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and drummed upon the doors of the gate (LXX, καὶ ἐτυμπάνιζεν), and let his spittle fall upon his beard; then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?' *i.e.* he was exempt from punishment, and must be treated with kindness (1 S $21^{10\text{-}15}$). Here we have typical features of madness—the effort to be free from restraint, וַיִּתְהֹלֵל בְּיָדָם, the senseless drumming upon the doors, and the defiling of his beard by letting the saliva fall upon it; an act which in itself showed all loss of self-respect.[4]

There are several other passages in the Old Testament which imply that in prophetic ecstasy the personality of the individual was regarded as being merged in the being of the Spirit that possessed him—passages which can be paralleled from what we otherwise know of Semitic life. We are told in Jg 6^{34} that the Spirit of the Lord 'clothed' Gideon (וְרוּחַ יי לָבְשָׁה אֶת־גִּדְעוֹן), where our version gives the colourless 'came upon.' The expression occurs in the J narrative, the oldest stratum of the history. And the conception underlying it is that the Spirit was a mere temporary afflatus, that it was sent upon Gideon for special work, that it had no more effect upon the natural man Gideon than the cut of clothes has on the build of the man's body. The Spirit was regarded as something extraordinary, and Gunkel has shown that even in New Testament times the conception was the same.[5] We must therefore be careful in such an inquiry as this not to impose our modern conception of the working of the Spirit, as something which completely and permanently changes the natural heart, upon those old times. It is extremely interesting in connexion with the use of לָבַשׁ, 'to clothe,' as applied to the work of the Spirit, to find the same word employed in the same way among the Arabs of

[1] Moore, *Judges*, p. 87, etc.
[2] Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, i. 221.
[3] Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, chap. x.
[4] Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, art. 'Medicine.'
[5] Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen des Heiligen Geistes*.

to-day. Burton tells how he saw in Mecca a negro in the state called *Malbus* — religious frenzy. 'He was a fine and powerful man, as the numbers required to hold him testified. He threw his arms wildly about him, uttering shrill cries; and when held he swayed his body, and waved his head from side to side, like a chained and furious elephant, straining out the deepest groans. The Africans seem peculiarly subject to this nervous state, which, seen by the ignorant and the imaginative, would at once suggest demoniacal possession. Either their organization is more impressionable, or, more probably, the hardships, privations, and fatigues endured whilst wearily traversing inhospitable wilds, and perilous seas, have exalted their imaginations to a pitch bordering on frenzy. Often they are seen prostrate upon the pavement, or clinging to the curtains, or rubbing their heads upon the stones, weeping bitterly, and pouring forth the wildest ejaculations.'[1]

The word צלח, which is used in several places for the operation of the Spirit (Jg 14^{19}, 1 S 10^{6} 16^{13} 18^{10}), seems to imply the same temporary possession. Its root meaning is perhaps 'to cleave,' or 'to burst through,' and it is used for the crossing of a river (2 S 19^{18} (Heb.)), or the bursting in upon any one (Jg $14^{6.19}$ 15^{4} etc.). It is applied to Saul by Samuel: 'The Spirit of the Lord shall burst (*or* rush) upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man' (1 S 10^{6}).

But, in considering the question of ecstasy in the Old Testament, we must remember that the phenomena which exhibit themselves there do not stand alone. They have occurred frequently in history, and almost always in the history of religious movements. The Semites, indeed, would appear to have a special susceptibility to those states, but they are common too in the history of European peoples. It would not be difficult to adduce a fairly exact parallel to the case of Balaam from the *Acta Sanctorum*, while instances of such ecstatic contagion as we read of in the story of Saul are legion.

The explanations of ecstasy have varied with the state of knowledge of the peoples giving them. Socrates, who fell into trances lasting for a whole day, ascribed them to the possession of the δαίμων. 'He believed himself to receive, from an inner divine voice, premonitions in regard to the success and unsuccess of men's undertakings, warnings of this and of that.'[2] The Hebrews, referring everything, both evil and good, directly to God, held that these phenomena were due to the working of that Spirit of Jehovah which covered the whole range of life. The Arab thinks himself to be possessed by a *ginn*, and according to the character of the revelation does he consider the *ginn* to be good or bad.[3] In the Middle Ages, and down to comparatively modern times, possession was supposed to be due either to an evil spirit, as in the case of witches, or to the Spirit of God as witnessed in the Tarantism of Southern Italy, the Dancing Mania in Aix-la-Chapelle in 1374, the strange hallucinations of the *Convulsionnaires* at the Tomb of St. Médard, the wild excitements of the Huguenots in France, and the cataleptic conditions often induced in women at modern revivals.

During the last fifty years real progress has been made in the investigation of those phenomena—progress which has advanced *pari passu* with the increasing knowledge of the structure and functions of the different parts of the brain. Ferrier, Hitzig, and MacEwan have mapped out the brain, and have shown that catalepsy, somnambulism, hysteria, and ecstasy are all due to the fact that certain parts of the brain are thrown out of gear, while other parts are acting normally.

The human brain is the highest development of an immensely long process of evolution. In some respects man is not as highly developed as many of the lower animals; his sense of smell is not so acute as that of the dog, nor can he see as distinctly. But as a thinking machine he is unique; and his brain shows clearly both what he has in common with the lower animals and what is peculiar to himself. Between the aspect of the bottom of the brain of a man and of a dog there is no great difference. It is in the bottom of the brain that the sensory apparatus is situated. But the human brain, looked at from the top, shows its development. It consists of two hemispheres, deeply convoluted in order that they may have a greater surface of grey matter, the part in which ideas are evolved. Those hemispheres are not peculiar to man, for they appear as far back in the scale of evolution as the fish. In birds they are considerably larger than in the fish. In the mammalia they have begun to cover the optic lobes; and as we ascend in the scale of life they gradually in-

[1] R. F. Burton, *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 413.

[2] Schwegler, *Hist. of Phil.* p. 41.

[3] Sprenger, *op. cit.* i. p. 221.

crease backward, until, in some of the higher apes and in man they entirely cover the cerebellum.

Roughly speaking, then, there are in brain two parts—a constant and a variable. The constant is the sensory apparatus, which must exist in all vertebrates, and the construction of which does not much vary in any. The variable part is that which denotes intelligence, those hemispheres which appear first of all in the fish, and increase as the evolution proceeds, until they culminate in man. Creatures which have no cerebral hemispheres, or in which these are imperfectly developed, are ruled simply by the sensory apparatus. An impression received along the nerves must at once react directly outwards, for there are no ideational centres to which they can be transmitted. There is no power of cogitation. But the process with a creature which does possess cerebral hemispheres is different. The impression received through the sensory apparatus is passed onwards to the cells spread over the hemispheres, and is there transformed into an idea or perception or thought. The hemispheres are thus the seat of the intellectual life, as distinct from mere sense, or impression, life. They are not necessary to sensation; they stand above it. As we might suppose, they are themselves insensible to pain—a point which has been demonstrated by a somewhat gruesome experiment. 'An animal which makes violent movements while the skin is being cut and the roof of the skull removed, remains quite quiet while its hemispheres are being sliced away.'[1]

Now it is on this fact that there are different nervous centres in the brain, each with its distinctive function, that the phenomena of ecstasy depend. Physiologists recognize four such centres. 'Each centre is subordinate to the centre immediately above it, but is at the same time capable of determining and maintaining certain movements of its own without the intervention of its supreme centre.'[2] And the whole physiological theory of ecstasy is simply this: That, owing to reflex action or inhibition, the supreme nervous centre (the hemispheres or grey matter) gets thrown out of gear. Sensory impressions reach the lower nervous centres, and are either acted on blindly, as when a hypnotic patient imitates everything that is done before him, or obeys any command addressed to him, retaining no remembrance when awake; or when the subject does conscious-like things unconsciously, as when a man in deep thought walks along a crowded street colliding with nobody, and yet consciously seeing no one. The impression coming along the optic nerve reaches the sensory apparatus, or the part of the brain which serves as the centre for the fusion of impressions coming from the eyes. That this sensory apparatus is active, is evident from the fact that balance is preserved. But, while the sensations so transmitted are at once acted on, there is no transmission of the impression to the hemispheres, and there is therefore no memory of the fact.

For this reason, a person in an ecstatic state may do and say things which to a bystander appear perfectly rational, and he will yet preserve absolutely no memory of them. When we consider how wonderful this is, and what extraordinary things have been done in those states, we cannot be surprised that the subject should have been supposed to have been filled with the Spirit of God, or possessed by a devil, as the case might be. The individual's own soul seems to be absent, because he remembers nothing of his doings; and yet his actions are dictated by some apparently conscious and overwhelming power. For the ecstatic subjects do things in this condition which are supernatural in the sense of being impossible for them in the normal waking condition. In the winter of 1858 a girl living in an Alpine hamlet was sent a message to a neighbouring village. As she did not return at nightfall, search was made for her. One mountaineer said that he had heard, during the afternoon, a call coming from the other side of the valley, and, on looking with his field-glass, had seen the girl, with her wooden shoes, running with the greatest swiftness and sureness of foot along slopes which even the chamois hunter would not think of attempting. Similar accounts came from other valleys, and at last after three days on the mountains the girl reappeared. During that time she had eaten nothing, and had traversed immense stretches of the most dangerous mountain slopes. She thought that she was being led all the time by three men who were accompanied by a dog; and she had some recollection of the steep places, because the dog, she said, had sometimes to make a roundabout course.[3] This remarkable case of hallucination might easily be paralleled from other literatures. The girl was in

[1] Maudsley, *Physiology of Mind*, p. 98 note.

[2] Maudsley, p. 109.

[3] Sprenger, *op. cit.* i. 217–220.

a state of trance. The things which she saw were realities to her for the time being, and caused her to perform feats which in the normal condition would have been impossible. Had she been in possession of all her faculties, she would have fallen, because she would have 'lost her head' as we say. But the sensory apparatus alone was in action. The higher part of the brain, in which the conception of fear is generated, was out of gear. And so, because there was no nervousness, she could accomplish mountaineering feats which far more experienced climbers could not have attempted.

Many are familiar with the very remarkable case of trance which Coleridge has put on record, where a servant girl in high fever was found to be repeating sentences of Hebrew, mostly Rabbinic, and of Greek. It was discovered that at an early age she had been taken to live in the house of a Protestant pastor who was a great Hebrew scholar, and who was in the habit of walking up and down a passage of his house into which the kitchen opened, reading aloud from his books. In her normal condition the girl would have been unable to repeat a word of what she had thus heard in her childhood. It was outside the sphere of her consciousness. But, in the delirium of fever, the balance of the brain was upset, and those impressions made unconsciously upon the cerebrum were reproduced.[1]

Ecstasy, then, physiologically speaking, is a state in which the subject is possessed not by the higher nature but by the lower. Its phenomena, in the West at all events, are very varied, and range from rigid catalepsy to mere eccentricity. But, in the Old Testament, its manifestations present a remarkable uniformity, and occur with great frequency, although we might have expected that the bracing air of the desert would not have favoured abnormal conditions of this nature. In the desert, says Burton, 'The mind is influenced through the body. Though your mouth glows and your skin is parched, yet you feel no languor, the effect of humid heat; your lungs are lightened, your sight brightens, your memory recovers its tone, and your spirits become exuberant; your fancy and imagination are powerfully aroused, and the wildness and sublimity of the scenes around you stir up all the energies of your soul—whether for exertion, danger, or strife. . . . Your senses are quickened; they require no stimulants but air and exercise; in the desert, spirituous liquors excite only disgust.'[2]

It is, however, the very exaltation of the desert air which aids in producing the ecstasy. The senses, the faculties, are heightened, and yet there is nothing in the landscape to fill their activity. The bare staring rocks give their echo; a glimpse is caught of the marauder stealing along beside the caravan route amidst the sand-hills, and waiting for darkness or the straggler to make his dash. Hence the imagination of the Arab dwells on these things; voices are always whispering to him; shadowy figures are always accompanying him. Not only has he general words for visions and dreams, but in his vocabulary he has separate words for the particular ways in which the *ginn* manifests himself. The voice that is heard only by the initiated ear is called *Hâtif*. The Arabs of Africa call those ambushed phantoms *Ragi* (from *ragul*, 'a man').[3]

The whole earth, both for the Semites in general and for the Israelites in particular, was full of those genii. Robertson Smith, in the *Religion of the Semites*, has shown that the peculiar sanctity attached to trees and springs and stones was due to the belief that the spirit actually dwelt in those things. The stone was itself the בֵּית־אֵל: it was carefully anointed with oil, and stroked to win the favour of the god that dwelt within it, just as the garments or beard of a powerful man were touched in supplication; and from this custom we have the phrase חִלָּה אֶת־פְּנֵי־יהוה (1 S 13[12]).[4] Trees, with their recurring evidences of life, with the movements of their leaves and the elasticity of their branches, were regarded not only as being the abodes of the *ginn* but as being themselves alive. On them were hung, on feast days, fine clothes and women's ornaments. Sick men slept under them, to receive counsel in dreams for the restoration of health.[5] Springs also were among the oldest objects of reverence among the Semites; and any one who has heard in that land, after days of wellnigh arid travelling, the lapping of a spring, will know why the Hebrews should have called it 'living water,' and why they should have believed that 'the water itself is the living organism of a demonic life, not a mere dead

[1] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. 1847, vol. i. p. 117.

[2] Burton, *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 104.

[3] Sprenger, *op. cit.* i. 216.

[4] W. R. Smith, *Rel. of Semites*[2], p. 205.

[5] *Ib.* p. 186.

organ.'[1] Each spot, in short, was thought of by the ancient Semite as having its own Baal, or husband; and a nation that moved out of its own country, or a tribe that fought beyond its own bounds, thought that in so doing it had forfeited the support of its god. The Syrians ascribed their defeat by Ahab to the fact that they had been warring against a people whose gods were gods of the hills. 'Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they' (1 K 20^{23}).[2]

The Arabs have now modified this belief, though it still persists in essence. The *ginns* now have their principal abode in Káf, the chain of green chrysolite mountains which is supposed to surround the earth and to impart the blue colour to the sky.[3] But they are great rovers. They inhabit both air and earth. The charms that Arabs and even Copts constantly carry with them and fix to their horses' heads against the evil eye are proof of the one, and the expression that is always used before water is spilled on the ground or before a bucket is lowered into a well, '*Destoor*,' or 'Permission,' is evidence of the other.[4]

Now it is quite clear that in all this belief in spiritual presences there lay much opportunity for the Spirit of the true God. There was here a belief in divine power that was a very different thing from the patronage that the Greek extended to his god. The god of the Greek was simply a glorified human being, not better, morally speaking, than the rest of mankind, but only more powerful, and with all human impulses, lust, anger, revenge, remorse, in an exaggerated degree. But the Semite, though he rose only under the revelation given by God to Israel to the idea of the one true God, still never fashioned his Divinity after his own likeness. The Semite *ginn* was incomprehensible, unseen, manifesting himself only through natural objects, or in dimly-seen shapes or secret whisperings. So far from ever coming to make his God after his own image, the Semite felt that to see God meant death.[5] But if he did not see his God he had intercourse with Him. And it may very possibly be that the capacity which the Hebrews had for converse with God was due in no small measure to the familiar though immaterial communion supposed to exist between the individual and his *ginn*. There was here, at all events, a potentiality of better things; and this the Lord used, for His own ends, in revelation.

But a cause of ecstasy even more potent than the uniformity and ghostliness of the scene is the hardness of the life that the Arab is compelled to live. 'The true Bedawi is an abstemious man, capable of living for six months on ten ounces of food *per diem*: the milk of a single camel, and a handful of dates, dry, or fried in clarified butter, suffice for his wants. He despises the obese and all who require regular and plentiful meals, sleeps on a mat, and knows neither luxury nor comfort, freezing during one quarter and frying during three quarters of the year.'[6]

Under such a treatment the body becomes reduced, while the nervous system is heightened. There is no rest, no absence from discomfort. The nomadic life, too, is of necessity solitary. The half-starved Arab is a prey to his own imagination, alone in the wilderness with the wild beasts of his own creation. As Doughty remarked of one of his desert friends: 'He was a little broken-headed, and so is every third man in the desert life.'[7]

This undeniable place that familiar sights and modes of thought have in the phenomena of ecstasy has a most important bearing upon the question whether there is ever any new revelation made to persons in the ecstatic state. Is the eye of the future opened to them, or are they simply reproducing in dramatic and intense form things which have been previously heard or witnessed? Certainly, in hysteria the ravings contain no new element. When hysteria takes the form of the simulation of a disease, it is always some disease prevalent in the locality. A hysterical person will never, when in the hysterical state, exhibit symptoms of a disease which he has never seen or heard of. Mohammed, who unquestionably suffered from hysteria, imagined that he was a victim of intermittent fever, which was the prevalent disease in Medinah.[8]

And when the hysteria takes the form of seeing

[1] W. R. Smith, *Rel. of Semites*[2], p. 136.
[2] Von Baudissin, *Studien zur Sem. Religionsgesch.* ii. 236.
[3] Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, chap. x.; *Arabian Nights*, i. 20.
[4] Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, chap. x.
[5] Ex 24^{11}, Jg 13^{22}.
[6] Burton, *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 376.
[7] Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, ii. 288.
[8] Sprenger, *op. cit.* i. 208.

visions, the same fact applies. The basis of the vision is to be found in the circumstances in which the ecstatic has been placed. As Renan observed long ago, the saints of the Middle Ages were even in their visions the representatives of their century and nation.[1] The Dancing Mania of the Middle Ages, for instance, was true contagious ecstasy. When dancing, the subjects neither saw nor heard; they were insensible to external religious impressions. And yet their visions were the ordinary stock-in-trade of the religious beliefs of the time. Some stated that they had to leap so high to escape the overwhelming streams of blood. Others saw the heavens opened and the Saviour enthroned with the Virgin Mary. But there was never any fresh revelation of truth—never so much as a fresh statement of truth already known. In all that ecstasy there was nothing to help the soul's life.[2] Santa Teresa saw devils and smelt brimstone with a vividness due to a particular eschatological conception.[3] It is to be noticed, too, that all the tongues in Regent Square Church never revealed anything that was in advance of what people already knew.

This fact, that the spiritual impressions in ecstasy are always on the line of something that has already been seen or known, comes to be of the utmost importance in connexion with the question whether in the visions of the prophets there was any element that was absolutely new. And the evidence goes to show that those visions were striking presentations of truths already present to the prophet's mind, or pictorial statements of an already existing political situation. They were conditioned by the known, even in the case of so great a prophet as Amos. This fact we find brought out very distinctly in the history of Balaam. When Balaam was brought to the top of Pisgah to curse the hosts of Israel, instead of cursing he blessed. He was impressed by the multitudes of tents spread out before him. 'How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? . . . Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?'[4] Balak at once sees that Balaam's oracle is conditioned by the splendid spectacle of the forces of Israel, and says, 'Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence . . . thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence.' But even from this next station Balaam saw the tribes, and as he looked 'the Spirit of God came upon him,' and he foretold yet more distinctly the magnificent future of Israel.

There was, then, a relation between what was seen by the ecstatic and the content of his utterance; but there was also a relation between the character of the prophet and the genuineness and validity of his prophecy. What the prophet's message was, depended upon what he himself was. The prophet was not merely repeating words that God had put into his mouth. The Divine element might be there according as the prophecy was true or false; the human element was sure to be there. But in the false prophet the determining factor was the desire to speak smooth things and pleasant things, as well as to secure his own comfort. In the true prophet the moral element predominated, and he spoke what he felt to be right, regardless of comfort or consequences. It is not necessary to suppose that the false prophet was intentionally false. But his character was not sufficiently strong to bear the strain the prophetic calling put upon it. Ezekiel goes so far as to say that the Lord Himself has deceived that prophet;[5] the meaning being that if a prophet allows himself to be enticed and enters into the purposes of the people, saying 'Amen' to their plans, the Lord leaves that man alone in his foolishness that both the prophet and the people he had deluded may perish together.[6] This fact, that the character of the man affected by the ecstasy determined the nature and moral value of the vision he saw, was also noticed by the Arabs of the time of Mohammed. As they expressed it, a weak man had a bad *ginn*, while a strong healthy man had a good *ginn*.[7]

(*To be concluded.*)

[1] Renan, *Études d'Hist. Relig.* 1858, p. 307.
[2] Carpenter, *Mental Physiology*, p. 313.
[3] Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, ii. 161.
[4] Nu $23^{8.\ 10}$.
[5] Ezk 14^{9}.
[6] A. B. Davidson, *Ezekiel*, Introduction, p. xxxv; Schultz, *O.T. Theol.* i. 262; Smend, *Alttest. Relig.*[1], 244.
[7] Sprenger, *op. cit.* i. 222.