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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE is a remarkable article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for July. Its title is the one word 'Corban.' Its author is Mr. J. H. A. Hart, M.A., Fellow and Lecturer in Theology in St. John's College, Cambridge. It is remarkable in more ways than one. Remarkable is its author's acquaintance with Philo. The language is remarkable in which the article is written. But its interpretation of a familiar passage in the Gospels is most remarkable of all.

Philo is used throughout the article to illustrate the author's arguments. He is used with a felicity which proves that the difference between scholarship and genius is only a difference of degree. But Philo need not detain us. The language concerns us more. It recalls Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*. Thus, the Sadducees 'derived from the Hellenizers the art of plucking the roses and with them all the charm and joy of brave sublunary things.' Again, 'the minutiæ of the Tradition seem to us the meticulous requirements of a wanton pedantry.' And the like. Yet who will deny that the language is appropriate? To attempt to turn it into everyday English is undoubtedly to lose the flavour of it. But it is with the interpretation that we have most to do.

The passage occurs in St. Mark's Gospel. Mr. Hart translates it for himself, and very literally. This is his translation. 'And he was saying to them, Ye do well that ye leave the commandment of God, that ye may establish your tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, He that curseth father or mother let him surely die: but ye say, If a man say to the father or the mother, Corban be the profit thou mightest have had of me—no longer do ye let him leave to do anything to the father or the mother [making of none effect the word of God by the tradition which ye delivered; and many such-like things ye do] (Mk 7^{9-13}).'

Now, so far as we know, and Mr. Hart says nothing to the contrary, every reader of this passage, from the very beginning until now, has taken it to mean that our Lord reproved the Pharisees for diverting to sacred uses money which ought to have gone to the maintenance of a man's parents. And, as it is to be supposed that the money so diverted would, in part at least, reach the Pharisees themselves at last, it has been understood to be a reproof of covetousness. Mr. Hart rejects that interpretation out and out. He takes the meaning of the passage to be very nearly the opposite of that. He believes that Christ commends the Pharisees for insisting upon it, that when a man has vowed a vow to God he

should pay his vow, even though his parents should suffer.

From an ordinary man such an interpretation would be the mere eccentricity of ignorance. From Mr. Hart it may be eccentricity, but it is not ignorance. It is possible that this article will for ever alter the interpretation of the passage, and even our estimate of the Pharisees.

The first thing to notice is that our Lord seems to commend the Pharisees for what they do. 'Ye do well,' He says, 'that ye leave the commandment of God, that ye may establish your tradition.' The translation is, perhaps, not quite so literal here as elsewhere. More literally, it is 'Well do ye leave the commandment of God.' In the ordinary interpretation the 'well' is taken ironically, and the irony is slightly emphasized in the English Versions by the use of the phrase 'full well.' Mr. Hart is quite entitled to take it seriously. But if it may be taken seriously, how can our Lord seriously commend the Pharisees for leaving the commandment of God that they may establish their own tradition?

It was always within their right, says Mr. Hart, so to do. Jesus Himself, as a Rabbi, set aside the commandment of God, saying, 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time: but I say unto you.' And they could appeal to precedent. Had not the Psalmist set aside the whole system of sacrifices? Had not Jeremiah foreseen a new Covenant?

What, then, was the commandment of God which the Pharisees set aside on this occasion? It was the Fifth of the Ten Words. It was the first commandment with promise. In the next sentence it is put into the mouth of Moses: 'For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, He that curseth father or mother let him surely die.'

The Pharisees set aside this commandment by insisting on a man keeping the vow called Corban. Corban means a gift. It means a gift vowed to the sanctuary. If at any time a man had taken a vow that, should God prosper him, he would devote the profits of some undertaking (or a portion of them) to sacred uses, and if he afterwards found that circumstances required that he should give them to his parents instead, he came to the Scribe and laid the case before him. The Scribe would likely release him from his vow. He had that power, and Mr. Hart tells us that he almost always exercised his power in that direction. For Mr. Hart has a great opinion of the humanity of the Pharisees and their Scribes.

Generally speaking, he says, the Scribe would tell the man that in the altered circumstances it was his duty to transfer the money to his parents. But he would not always tell him so. Something might depend upon the man, something upon the circumstances, and something upon the Scribe. There was indeed a conflict of opinion among the Pharisees on such a question. There were schools; one school being more rigid in keeping a man to his vow, another more lax in releasing him from it. Mr. Hart understands that Jesus Himself belonged to the stricter school, and that in this passage He approves those Pharisees who refused to release the man from his vow.

Was it hard upon the parents? It might be very hard. No one felt that more keenly than Jesus did. Had He not Himself made a vow to God? It was not the profits of some enterprise that He had dedicated; it was His own life. There came a day when, perhaps, the husband of Mary and head of the family in Nazareth died. Jesus should naturally have taken the chief place in the family and become its mainstay. But His vow was upon Him. And however hard He felt it, never was it His way to let the claims of family stand between Him and the service of God. To His followers He

should pay his vow, even though his parents should suffer.

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said, 'He that hateth not his father and his mother cannot be my disciple.' He had been given to Mary as a son, but no sooner had He been given than He was snatched away by His oath. He felt that keenly. But He had come to do the will of the Father and to finish His work. And Mary had to wait till the crucifixion, when another son was given to her in His place.

He felt it keenly. There is a curious break in the construction of this passage in St. Mark. Mr. Hart marks it by a dash. 'If a man say to the father or the mother, Corban be the profit thou mightest have had of me—no longer do ye let him leave to do anything to the father or the mother.' What is the meaning of the break? Mr. Hart believes that it is due to emotion. As He uttered the words in which He commended the Pharisees who refused to loose a man from his oath to God, even at the call of a parent's necessity, Jesus remembered the family in Nazareth. He remembered Mary and her need of a son and support. He could not break His vow. He could not go back to Nazareth and the bench of the carpenter. But the broken sentence testifies to the keenness with which He felt it.

One day at the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus healed a man, and told him to take up his bed and walk. It was the Sabbath. Accordingly, the Jews said to him that was cured, 'It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed' (Jn 5^{10}).

What was the Sabbath given for? It is evident that the Jews did not know. They thought it was given for physical rest. And there seems no doubt that the Fourth Commandment was given for physical rest. But the Sabbath is older than the Fourth Commandment. The Jews did not go far enough back. They said to the man, 'It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.' But when Jesus came to answer their objection, He carried them beyond the Ten Commandments. He carried them back to the Creation itself.

The Jews were quite willing to go back to the Creation. They understood that the narrative of the Creation supported them. Does it not say that 'on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made'? Our Lord answered, 'My Father worketh even until now' (Jn 5^{17}). He did not contradict the Creation narrative; He told the Jews that they misunderstood it.

For the rest of God at the Creation was not physical rest. With all its anthropomorphism the Old Testament does not say that God was tired of the six days' working and therefore rested on the seventh. There is a rest of the body, with which the Fourth Commandment has to do; but there is also a rest of the spirit, and that was the rest of the seventh day.

The rest of the spirit is the rest of satisfaction. 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.' Therefore He rested. All was in harmony. There was harmony of movement and harmony of will. And if the harmony of the things which God made had continued, His rest would have continued also.

The harmony of movement did continue. The sun and the moon kept their course unerringly. The heavens continued to declare the glory of God, and the firmament to show forth His handiwork. But the harmony of will was broken. And the rest of God was broken with it.

From the moment that sin entered, God began to work again. And He had been working ever since. What had His work consisted of? It was the same as the work which Jesus was doing upon earth. In a little book on *The Simple Things of the Christian Life*, which Messrs. James Clarke of Fleet Street published recently, Dr. Campbell

Morgan calls it rescue work. It is the word of an evangelist. Our Lord was an evangelist also. He would not have disdained to call it rescue work. It was healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils.

'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.' Well, we know that Christ was at work, at work every day, and we know what His work was. But we must not think that God began His rescue work when Christ was born in Bethlehem. 'My Father worketh even until now.' It could not be otherwise. The moment that the harmony of the universe was broken, the rest of God was broken also, and He cannot enter into His rest again until the harmony is restored. All through the ages God has been doing rescue work. He has been healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils.

So the Jews missed the meaning of their Sabbath. It was given for the rest of the body. For six days' work are enough for toil, and they did well to see that the body had the seventh for rest. But the body is not to come before the soul. It is lawful on any day 'to do good.' For 'good' is the rescue work of God, and from that there can be no rest till all are rescued.

There is an article in the new number of *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* on the 'Psychology of Prophecy.' The author is Rabbi Jacob H. Kaplan, Ph.D., of Denver, Colorado. Rabbi Kaplan belongs to the modern liberal movement in Judaism. He will not therefore hesitate to handle the Old Testament as he thinks fit. The article is full of a Higher Criticism that is drastic enough. But its significance does not lie there. It lies in the application to the phenomena of prophecy of the new study of psychology. It is not unlikely that it introduces a new era in the religious interpretation of the Old Testament.

What is a prophet? That is Rabbi Kaplan's first question. And he answers: 'The prophet was the national spokesman of Jahweh. He uttered an abundance of words, through great mental and emotional excitement, often deep and profound truths, the import of which, because of ignorance of psychological laws, was often not known or intelligible to the prophet himself. These mysterious mind-phenomena of all descriptions, from simple dreams to and through all the stages of psychological illusions, from clairvoyance and clair-audience, to convulsion, delirium, epilepsy, madness and insanity, in short all the mental phenomena deviating in the slightest degree from the everyday normal were considered, by agent and witness alike, as direct inspirations and revelations either mediately through spirits, good or evil, or immediately from God.'

So the prophet was the mouthpiece of God. That is the first thing. That made him a prophet. 'Not in any figurative sense,' says Dr. Kaplan, 'but literally, and not only to the ancients but to us to-day, the prophet is the mouthpiece of God.'

But the Hebrew prophet was also the child of his nation. Rabbi Kaplan calls him the loving child of his nation. He was a patriot. Not in the vulgar sense in which we use patriot to-day, but in a sense so sublime that few of us to-day are capable of understanding it. 'Whenever in the great crises of his people the prophet saw inevitable ruin and confusion, he soared aloft on prophetic pinions, comforting his own bleeding heart and the hearts of his people by the hope and message of peace, that some day the ideal king, the Messiah, will bring order out of chaos and harmony out of confusion, that he will be a royal and loyal counsellor, a faithful servant of his God and of his people.'

The prophet was also possessed of prescience. For he was a student of nature and of his times. And sometimes he flowered forth into a statesman —not waiting to be asked or appointed to office, but offering his services with a ready 'Here am I,

send me.' And 'in all these activities,' says Rabbi Kaplan, 'the prophet acted not through miracle or supernatural power, but in and along with natural laws, displaying all the beauty and power of the human heart under the favourable conditions of oppression, danger, confusion, poverty, imprisonment, love, hatred, ambition, and above all religious and patriotic enthusiasm.'

It is evident that prophecy presents a fine opportunity to the student of psychology. Not that Rabbi Kaplan would claim that the Hebrew prophet is wholly separate from his brethren, or from the priest, the diviner, and the necromancer of other nations. But he is separate enough to admit of separate study. And when all the elements that are common to other men are eliminated, he finds the following peculiarly prophetic elements that require explanation in a psychology of prophecy—the Prophetic Call, Premonition, Revelation, Dream, Vision, Audition, Ecstasy, and Inspiration.

The starting-point in the psychology of prophecy is the Divine call. The prophets are all conscious of a Divine call. What does that mean? What does it mean psychologically? Now, it must not for a moment be supposed that Rabbi Kaplan denies the hand of God in the prophetic call. But in a psychological study of prophecy his business is not with God, but with man. And the first thing he notices is that God calls a man when the man is ready for the call. He discovers the psychology of the prophetic call in Ex 3^4: 'When the LORD saw that Moses *turned aside to see*, God called him.' It was not chance. It was not caprice on God's part. Moses was ready. Another man would have passed on. Moses turned aside to see. And it was because Moses turned aside to see that God called him.

Nor does a man turn aside to see accidentally. He has been preparing for it. There is a prophetic temperament also. The prophet, like the poet, is born not made. And, last of all, there must be the grand occasion. 'It is only,' says Rabbi Kaplan, 'through some such overpowering experiences as a premonition of Israel's downfall that so vast a conception as that of Jahweh's universality and justice is at all intelligible to any one who comprehends the vastness and grandeur of the religious conceptions of the prophets. It was a religious revelation of so unique a character that we can well comprehend how these men have been believed, and believed themselves, to stand in direct communion with God, speaking with Him mouth to mouth.'

We need not follow Dr. Kaplan through the chapters on Premonition, Revelation, Dream, Vision, Audition, Ecstasy. We have seen his method. It is the same throughout. Let us pass to the last chapter, on Inspiration. Does Rabbi Kaplan believe that the Hebrew prophet was truly inspired of God?

He knows what inspiration means, and he makes no attempt to explain it away. 'From the lowest savage,' he says, 'to the highest philosophers of ancient Greece the conception of inspiration was that God or some higher powers occasionally used some men as their instruments through whom they worked, or as the mouth-piece through whom they spoke, that is, the inspired person did things and uttered thoughts not his own, but God's.'

Does Rabbi Kaplan believe in the inspiration of the Hebrew prophets? He believes that Divine inspiration 'can never mean that the human ceases at any point to operate and becomes passive in the power of some non-ego, but rather that the human rises with all the splendour and pristine glory of its native forces to the highest pinnacle of its own power.' 'Inspiration,' he says again, 'is the highest eloquence of thought, speech, or action, a result of the temperament, power, inheritance, energy of genius, under the exhilaration and stimulation of some great enthusiasm and mental excitement, and eloquence so far above what the genius himself is ordinarily

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capable of, that it is easily believed to be not his own work, thought, or action, but the result of some higher power than self.'

Or again,—for we must do Rabbi Kaplan and the new psychology justice here—'Therefore,' he says, 'we shall define inspiration as that state of the human mind in which mental activity, accelerated it may be externally by means of drugs, wine, music, dance, and the like, or subjectively by strong emotion and passionate feeling and interest, is so rapid that in this state of mental energy the mind's reaction time is practically nil, and the subject finds at his command all the conscious and unconscious impressions of his mind, and occasionally, or often, the trailing clouds of glorious thoughts from countless generations of soul evolution, all of which rises suddenly in majesty to meet the occasion, and the result, whether in art, in sculpture, in music, or in religion, is so profound and beyond the subject's normal ability as to carry the conviction that some mysterious power, the spirit of God, has wrought the result through him.'

And the moment we conclude that in Rabbi Kaplan's opinion it is a wholly natural matter and the Spirit of God has nothing to do with it, we find we are mistaken. The Spirit of God has everything to do with it. In the ultimate analysis, says Rabbi Kaplan, it is literally true that the Spirit of God speaks and acts through the prophet. For 'there is no distinction of kind in mind. Human mind and Divine mind are one.'

Dr. Hastings Rashdall has sent an article to *The American Journal of Theology* on 'The Motive of Modern Missionary Work.' It appears in the number for July.

Now, Dr. Hastings Rashdall is what used to be called a Broad Churchman. Broad Churchmen have dropped the adjective, because of the difficulty of being considered both broad and deep. And they have dropped the substantive, because the word 'Churchman' has come to signify something which they have no desire to be. Dr. Hastings Rashdall is a 'Liberal Theologian' now.

He is one of the most liberal theologians in the world. It is good, therefore, to discover what he reckons the missionary motive to be. It is good to know that he believes there is such a thing as a missionary motive remaining.

For the liberal theologian has hitherto done very little for missions. Dr. Hastings Rashdall confesses it. The missionary societies, he laments, are managed and manned by theologians whom he calls narrow. 'The greatest of the missionary societies of the English Church,' he says, 'is largely in the hands of the narrowest section of the narrowest party in that Church.' He refers to the Church Missionary Society. And he accuses the Church Missionary Society of refusing 'an admirably qualified candidate of otherwise evangelical opinions, on account of a measure of sympathy with critical theology which few of our present Bishops would disclaim.' That is the one side. On the other side there are other very energetic missionary societies and missionary orders. But with their narrow ritualism Dr. Rashdall has no more sympathy than with the narrow evangelicalism of the Church Missionary Society. Dr. Rashdall writes his article with the serious purpose of rousing liberal theologians to found a missionary society of their own.

Well, what would its motive be? Dr. Rashdall tells us, first of all, what it would not be. It would not be the desire to rescue the heathen from hell. 'It cannot be denied,' says Dr. Rashdall, 'that missionary appeals have frequently assumed that some awful fate was in store for the heathen, no matter how fully they acted up to their lights, and no matter how great the measure of that light, if they died without having accepted the gospel message.' He does not think that for some time missionaries have been preaching 'the hell of

ferocious theologians like Tertullian or Calvin.' But he understands that they still 'refuse definitely to disclaim the possibility of everlasting punishment befalling relatively good men who die without having heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ.' He does not deny that such preaching is effective where men have been found who are frightened by it. But the liberal theologian does not believe in everlasting punishment. The fear of hell is 'a hangman's whip.' Liberal theologians refuse to carry it.

Nor would its motive be the missionary's 'marching orders.' For liberal theologians do not believe that Christ ever gave these marching orders. The words which are found in St. Matthew's Gospel, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' says Dr. Rashdall, 'are among the most disputed of all the sayings attributed to our Lord in the Synoptic Gospels.' More than that, he plainly says that he would not accept it, even if its authenticity were unassailable, if it did not commend itself to his own reason and conscience. He has read the lines:

> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die.

He has heard them repeated in sermons. He understands that more than anything else they express the motive of the ordinary missionary. But he does not believe in them. He cannot altogether conceal his contempt for such 'drill-sergeant theology.' If he cannot reason why, he will have nothing to do with missions. Marching orders are not for him.

What, then, would be the motive of a liberal missionary society? Its first motive would be the belief that Christianity is good for the civilization of the world. Dr. Rashdall has no doubt that Christianity is good for the civilization of the world. He does not say that it is the only force which makes for civilization; but it is one of the forces. He asks the anti-missionary Christian where we at the present time should be if Christianity had not come to us; and he answers 'neither Christian nor civilized.'

The second motive is the belief that Christianity is the best religion in the world. How much better it is than other religions,—how much better than Brahmanism or Buddhism, for example,—he does not say. For he has to be careful not to fall into the mistake of 'minimizing the elements either of theological or of ethical truth which are common to all or many of the higher religions.' But he does not need to say. It is enough that Christianity is better. Surely it is our business to teach the world truth rather than falsehood, and a higher truth rather than a lower one. And precept leads to practice. It is not for the sake of the abstract truth that the liberal theologian would carry Christianity to India. It is because Christians behave better than Mohammedans to women and to slaves.

These are to be the motives of the modern missionary. The first is Christianity as a civilizing agency; the second is Christianity as the best of the religions. On these motives is the Liberal Theological Missionary Society to be founded, and its missionaries are to go forth. Are the missionaries ready? Perhaps it might be well if Dr. Hastings Rashdall were himself to get ready to go.

For no missionary ever yet went to the heathen with such a Gospel. Dr. Rashdall says that if the missionaries had not come to us, we should probably still be neither Christian nor civilized. Does he think that they came with Christianity as a civilizing agency in their right hand, and in their left Christianity as the best religion in the world? Why does he ignore the missionary motive which has sent every missionary to the heathen from the beginning until now? Why does he ignore the motive which sent Jesus of Nazareth?

Dr. Rashdall is a critic of the Gospels. As a critic of the Gospels he gets rid of the missionary's 'marching orders.' But he knows that by no

criticism that was ever applied to the Gospels can he get rid of the motive with which Jesus left His home in Nazareth to go to the heathen. He went 'to seek and to save the lost.' On every page of the Gospels that is written. We cannot have the Gospels without it. Why does Dr. Hastings Rashdall ignore that motive?

He may suggest that He dealt with that motive when He spoke of the fear of hell. Does he mean that when Jesus came out to seek and to save the lost He carried with Him nothing but the hell of a ferocious theologian? To be lost may be more than the most ferocious theologian ever imagined. But it is not the terror of hell that has ever been the missionary's motive. It is not a future fear of any kind. It is a present fact. It is the difference between being lost and being found. It is because the missionary has discovered the happiness of being found to be so great, that he has realized how great is the misery of being lost. And that contrast has always sent him to the heathen. The 'Modern Missionary Motive' is not Christianity as a civilizing agency, but Christ as a saving power.

A Zoroastrian Idyll.

By Professor the Rev. James Hope Moulton, M.A., D.Lit., Manchester.

O Thou Wise Lord, who when Thy world was young
Didst pierce the grim night of the eastern sky
With gladsome rays of truth and purity,
Forgive the error of this venturous song
That strives to hymn Thy bounty. May my tongue
Tell of Thy Seer, and how against the Lie
Pure thoughts, pure words, pure actions' victory
Rang from his herald trumpet loud and long:—
So from the blaze wherein Thy glories dwell
Once more athwart the sunless gloom a star
Shall flash its guiding message, and from far
The Sage of Iran answer to the spell,
And speed with trophies of a faith long dim
To find his Lord and bow the knee to Him.

Ad Astra.[1]

Glory to Thee, O Mazda! Lo, I turn
From dazzling visions of Thy home of light,
And find me weary in the strife again,
To battle with the watchful fiends that line
Man's path to heaven. Yet in the sacred Fire[2]
I pray Thee let my waking thoughts recall
Sights that can soothe and strengthen.
I beheld,
And lo, from out the eternal House of Song,[3]
One came and answered my unspoken prayer:—
'How came I hither? Thou must tell the tale
Of what I was, a mortal, for the years
Of bliss have swept the memory away.
It may be the fell demons of disease
Vanquished my body, while the Nasu[4] nigh
Waited the hour to swoop upon her prey.
What recked I? I was free.
Three days[5] I watched
Hard by the spot whence weeping friends had borne

[1] The lines which follow are a free paraphrase of the Zoroastrian scriptures describing the destiny of the righteous soul after death. Most of the traits included here are taken from the fragment known as Yasht 22, in which the prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) asks the Deity (Ahura Mazda, later Ormazd, 'Wise Lord') of the destiny of good and evil souls after death. The fate of the evil man is described in terms mechanically balancing the features of the picture presented here—a hideous hag replacing the fair maiden, and so forth. Darmesteter's translation in *Sacred Books of the East* (The Zend Avesta, Part ii.) may be consulted.

[2] In Parsism Fire, the 'body of Ahura Mazda' is the most sacred of elements, and the medium of communion with God.

[3] *Garô demâna*, the supreme Paradise where dwells God with His angels.

[4] *Nasu* (=Greek *νέκυς*), the *daêva* or demon of death and corruption. (In this introductory paragraph there is nothing answering to Yasht 22 or other texts.)

[5] This belief that the soul hovered for three days near the body after death was found among the Jews: see Dr. Marcus Dods on John xi. 39 (*Expos. Greek Test.*). Whether this was independent or borrowed from Parsism is uncertain: see on the whole subject 'Zoroastrianism' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.