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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

However many may be the faults of the Churches in the present day they cannot easily be charged with intellectual stagnation. Last month we had *The Advent of the Father*, from a minister of the Church of Scotland. This month we have *The Future Life* from a clergyman of the Church of England. The author of the book is the Rev. F. Claude Kempson, Vicar of Dean, Kimbolton (Pitman; 3s. 6d. net).

In all writing on the Future Life there is always abundant opportunity for the entrance of originality. But the surprise of this book is that on the Future Life the author is quite commonplace. He has his own way of looking at the subject, no doubt; for he has had a special training in Science, has taken a degree in medicine, and is at the present moment Demonstrator of Anatomy in the University of Cambridge. But it must be admitted that physical science has not yet done much for us in our difficulties about the Future Life. All that it has done for Mr. Kempson is to confirm him in his belief in Purgatory.

It is in his attitude to the Old Testament that Mr. Kempson discovers his originality. He has much to say about the Old Testament. He has not yet got rid of those puzzling questions about its origin and inspiration, and he has his own way of answering them. He finds folk-lore in the Old Testament. 'Take, for example, the Story of Joseph in the House of Potiphar. There is not one word in the story which is supernatural, or which, perhaps, even lifts it out of the commonplace in Oriental Society, but I have seen a folk-tale very like it which was current in Egypt. It is therefore quite *possible* that the Israelites adopted the tale and attached it to Joseph, just as the Cat Story was attached to Whittington.'

But if the Story of Joseph is an Egyptian folk-tale, Mr. Kempson hears somebody say to him that then the story of Joseph is not true. To which he answers, What do you mean by 'true'? Take another story. Take the story of Abraham's two sons, 'the one by a bondmaid, and the other by a free woman.' That story, says Mr. Kempson, might be a folk-tale, and it might be history. In either case it could be true. In the one case it would be true to history, in the other to religion and ethics. And then Mr. Kempson boldly declares that in regard to the Old Testament it is of no consequence whatever whether its stories are true to history or not, because the literature of the Old Testament is not an historical literature. Its narratives have to do not with events as events, but with events as teaching us 'what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.' And it is not only events that can teach us this, but also parables and allegories and folk-lore tales.

Mr. Kempson admits that some parts of the Bible are history. And, because they are history, he says, they should conform to the rules of historical writing, just as other parts are poetry and should conform to the rules of poetical composition. The events recorded in the historical parts of the Bible should be accurately recorded. But even if it is found that they are not accurately recorded, the Bible is not proved 'untrue.' For the main purpose of the Bible is not historical accuracy, but admonition and instruction. The Books of Chronicles may be less accurate historically than the Books of Samuel and Kings. Well, we simply say that Samuel and Kings present more reliable history than Chronicles, just as we say that the Psalms contain better poetry than the Proverbs. But the Books of Chronicles may serve the purpose of spiritual education (which is the purpose of the Bible) quite as well as the Books of Samuel or of Kings. They may therefore be spoken of as quite as 'true.'

And so Mr. Kempson speaks of the Bible still as the Word of God, and believes it. He still believes that every book of the Bible and every paragraph, 'nay, even every sentence and every word,' has come from God. He still speaks of the whole Bible as 'verbally inspired' and as 'every word true.' He does not mean that every word is historically true. He means that every word is true with the truth proper to the class of literature to which it belongs, so that it is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 'Wherefore,' he concludes, 'though the deluge did not happen exactly as recorded in Genesis, yet the Bible may be true.'

The Bishop of Birmingham has written a book on *The New Theology and the Old Religion* (Murray; 5s. net). It is a compliment to the 'New Theology.' Not that Dr. Gore is complimentary. Of Mr. Campbell and of Sir Oliver Lodge he speaks with respect. But he has written his book to show that the men of the New Theology have made one serious mistake, and made it persistently. Before substituting the new theology for the old religion, they have not taken the trouble to learn what the old religion is. They therefore misrepresent the old religion. Dr. Gore has no compliments for ignorance or misrepresentation. But he has not come to curse. He writes his book in order that the men of the New Theology may know what the old religion is.

Now the centre of the old religion is the doctrine of the Atonement. It is so to Catholic and to Protestant. The men of the New Theology see that it is so, and they cannot find words that will express their astonishment. For there is no such thing as atonement in the New Theology. There is no need of it. There is no room for it. That, says the Bishop of Birmingham, is because the men of the New Theology do not know what the doctrine of the Atonement is.

Well, there are men who are not of the New Theology, to whom a credible, intelligible doctrine of the Atonement would come almost as a revelation and certainly as a relief. Is it possible to understand Bishop Gore's doctrine? Is it possible to accept it?

The Atonement is the work of God. That is the first thing. '*God* was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.' And that statement, which stands at the beginning, is a large part of the doctrine. For it dismisses every suggestion of an angry God requiring to be appeased.

But the next thing is that the Atonement was made on earth. It was made, not by God as God, but by God as Man. It was made by the Son of God. 'God was *in Christ* reconciling the world unto Himself.' Now, it is not necessary to enter here upon a discussion of the Person of Christ, or to touch the topic of the Kenosis. All that is necessary is to see that the Atonement consisted in obedience to the will of God. God is always in

harmony with His own will. But here it is God incarnate. It is God as man. It is man, otherwise there were no question of obedience. But it is God come down from heaven, for us incarnate and made man, otherwise the obedience could not be perfect. This, we say, is the second thing. The first thing is that the Atonement is the deed of God. The second is that it is the deed of God in the flesh —of God actually dwelling among us, actually one of us, and 'tempted in all points like as we are.'

The third thing is that, since the Atonement is the act of God in the flesh, it is not done by us, but for us and independently of us. It is an act, a life, of perfect obedience to God's will. That is not our act. That has never been our life. The obedience involved failure, suffering, ignominy, death. But these did not make the Atonement. The obedience made the Atonement. We can fail, suffer, be despised, and die. But we cannot do the will of God perfectly. Therefore we cannot make an Atonement. 'He trode the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him.'

The fourth thing is this. When Christ was obedient unto death—and the obedience of man can no further go — then God accepted Him, called Him 'My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' raised Him from the dead, and sent the Holy Spirit. The fourth thing is the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the work of the Holy Ghost is to gather those who believe on Christ into fellowship with God through Him. Here we might enter into a discussion of the nature of faith, but even that is not necessary. We know what faith is. We know what is the meaning of 'believe on Christ.' And so it is possible to pass to the fifth thing; merely noticing as we pass that the gift of the Holy Ghost, whose mission it is to bring us into fellowship with God, implies and assures us that the way of reconciliation is open.

So the fifth thing is that the obedience of Christ was not the obedience of an individual merely, but also the obedience of a representative man. We need not say the obedience of *man*, as if we meant the obedience of all men. It is manifestly *not* the obedience of all men, because, then, faith would have no place; and, besides that, the Atonement would be at least an *un*moral if not an *im*moral deed. It is the obedience of one who, being man, is able to represent man to God, and so to make it possible for all men, by spiritual union with this Man, a union accomplished by faith and the operation of the Holy Ghost, to be reconciled to God.

There is only one thing left. It is the sixth thing, is it not? It is no part of the doctrine of the Atonement. It is the question, why there is a doctrine of the Atonement. It is the difficulty, which might have been met at the beginning, but is more easily met at the end, why God does not receive men to fellowship simply upon repentance.

Dr. Gore's answer is that the moral law of God had to be publicly vindicated. Now, whatever we think of the rest, this is not altogether satisfactory. It is the answer of one who was known as 'Dale of Birmingham,' and it is of interest to see that the Bishop of Birmingham adopts it. But the evidence is not very strong for it. That God is concerned for the *fulfilment* of His law, we know; for He sent His Son into the world to fulfil it. But when the Son of God was in the world He confessed no calling to *vindicate* the law of God. 'Woman,' He said, 'where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?' And when she said, 'No man, Lord,' He added, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.'

It is dangerous to tell us that the Cross is due to the demand for vindicating the law of God. In order to vindicate the law of God men have resented the return of the prodigal, and so have made the Cross of Christ of none effect. And as an explanation, even if it were true, and even if it were inoffensive, it does not seem to explain much.

Why is a doctrine of the Atonement necessary? The answer is a simple one, and the Bishop of Birmingham makes it in another way himself. It is because 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' Now repentance is not holiness. Perfect obedience is holiness. It was therefore necessary before any man should see the Lord that that man should live a life of perfect obedience to God. And it was necessary, before other men should see God, that by faith they should become partakers of that Man's perfect obedience.

The books which are published for the purpose of telling us how to read the English Bible are very numerous. Why do we not read the Bible better? Because they fail to warn us of two difficulties which meet us on the very threshold of the study of the Bible. They fail to tell us that the English Bible is a translation, and that it is an ancient translation.

The books which direct us how to study the English Bible forget to tell us that it is an old translation. How old is it? It is older than the date of the Authorized Version, for that was really a revision. It is at least as old as the days of Tindale. Now the English language has altered a good deal since the days of Tindale. And the difficulty in studying the English Bible on account of the alteration in the English language arises from the fact that very few readers know where it has altered or how far. It is easy to throw out words like 'bruit,' or explain their meaning. But how many of the readers who are unacquainted with Hebrew and Greek know the meaning which the words 'admiration' or 'atonement' have in the English Bible? Yet an undetected difference of language means a real difference of thought. And so it comes to pass that the word 'atonement,' as we read it in the Bible, conveys an idea which the translators of the Bible had no intention of conveying.

That is the first difficulty. The English Bible is an ancient translation. The other difficulty is that it is a translation. When we have mastered the subtle changes which have taken place in the English language since 1526, we are face to face with another obstacle. Though it is more obvious, it is almost as hard to surmount. It is the difference in genius between one language and another.

Now it is a curious circumstance that while the only commentator who is thoroughly alive to the pitfalls that lie in the old English of the Bible is the Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford, the best popular book on the difference between the English idiom and the Hebrew has just been written by the Regius Professor of Hebrew in Cambridge—*In Our Tongues* (Arnold; 3s. 6d. net). Professor Driver has published commentaries or new translations of Genesis, Deuteronomy, Job, Psalms, Jeremiah, Daniel, and some of the Minor Prophets, and in all of these volumes he has given particular attention to the difference between the English language of our own day and Tindale's. And now Professor Kennett takes us to the Hebrew and Greek originals, and laying the English translation beside them, shows by examples that many of our mistakes about the Bible are due to the notion that it was written in a language like our own.

It was written in a language that is quite different in idiom from our own. Where is the English writer who would write, 'When the overflowing scourge shall pass by, then shall ye be trodden down by it' (Is 28^{18})? Here are three metaphors mixed together in one short sentence. To unsympathetic English ears, says Professor Kennett, the sentence recalls the smell of the rat which brooded on the horizon and was to be nipped in the bud. But in Hebrew the language is perfectly natural and would be wrongly described as a bull. It is a good example of that Eastern tongue which loves to express itself in metaphors, and has no difficulty with their boldness or their number.

It is the same idiomatic usage that utters

language which on a Western tongue would seem scarcely less than blasphemous. 'Awake! why sleepest thou, O Lord?' cries the poet of Ps 44. And there are other examples of this interrogative 'why' which Professor Kennett has found it an instructive exercise to gather together — 'Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?' (Ps 10^1); 'Why hast thou forgotten me?' (Ps 42^9); 'Why hast thou cast me off?' (Ps 42^2); 'Why drawest thou back thy hand?' (Ps 74^{11}); and ('most instructive quotation of all') 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Ps 22^1).

Why is the last quotation most instructive? Because our Lord made it on the cross, and Professor Kennett is convinced that, as He made it, we entirely misunderstand it. We take it, as if first the psalmist and then our Lord had meant it literally. Professor Kennett says we should not dream of taking those other questions literally. Why then should we take this? It is not to be taken literally, he says. 'There is no essential difference between the cry on the cross and the prayer in Gethsemane. The prayer in Gethsemane has somewhat of the metaphorical in it also with its reference to the 'cup,' but not so much as the cry on the cross. Translated into the language of the prayer in Gethsemane, says Professor Kennett, the cry on the cross means, 'Why is it that by thy will this cup cannot pass away from me except I drink it?'

But this example is taken from the New Testament, not the Old. Have we not just made the discovery that the language of the New Testament is not Hebraic Greek, but the ordinary Greek in which men wrote their letters and transacted their business? Professor Kennett answers that though the words used in the New Testament are everyday Greek words, the thought is Hebrew. So when St. Paul says (1 Cor 10^4) of the fathers of Israel that 'they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them,' he may be using the ordinary Greek word for 'rock,' but the thought he expresses is not Greek at all. He is alluding to a quaint Jewish legend—'probably not originally intended to be understood literally'—which describes the water brought by Moses out of the rock as accompanying the Israelites through their journey in the wilderness. Professor Kennett thinks that the idea arose from a fanciful interpretation of the Song of the Well in Nu $21^{19.\ 20}$. 'St. Paul uses the word *rock* in true Hebrew fashion to denote the water which flowed out of the rock; he calls it spiritual (as he calls the manna "spiritual meat"), by way of distinguishing it from water given naturally, and he adds (again making use of the Hebrew idiom), "and the rock was Christ," meaning, as we should rather express it, "the water miraculously given to the Israelites in the wilderness was a *type* of Christ, the Water of life."'

But it is not isolated passages, it appears, that we misunderstand by misunderstanding the Hebrew way of speaking. We misinterpret one whole book. It is the Book of Jonah. In its teaching the Book of Jonah, says Professor Kennett, is the most Christian of all the books of the Old Testament. But in its language it is the most Hebraic. 'No modern allegory writer would ever dream of letting his hero be swallowed by a fish and live for three days and three nights in the fish's belly undigested and unharmed; but the Hebrew author of Jonah, since he had in mind, not the actual man Jonah and a real fish, but the people of Israel, typified by Jonah, and the kingdoms of the world typified by the fish or sea monster, could venture on a story, which the ignorant and unsympathetic modern reader classes with Jack the Giant-killer.'

Egypt and Western Asia in the Light of Recent Discoveries is the title of a volume which has just been published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (10s.). The authors are Mr. L. W. King, M.A., F.S.A., and Mr. H. R. Hall, M.A., both of the British Museum. The idea (whether of the publishers or of the authors we are not told) is to take up the story of explora-

tion in these lands at the point where Professor Maspero left it in his *Histoire Ancienne*. The English translation of Maspero's work was issued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in three luxurious volumes. The present work is almost as luxurious. And the authors have written in a confidential, comfortable style, with just repetition enough to make it unnecessary ever to read the same page twice.

Mr. King and Mr. Hall are scholars, the one in Assyriology, the other in Egyptology; what they say may be relied on. And that is well, because they bring strange things occasionally to our ears. Especially Mr. Hall in his account of the recent discoveries in Egypt. Mr. King covers more than half the volume with Western Asia, but his discoveries are not so revolutionary of our knowledge, nor do they touch the imagination quite so acutely.

The difference may be due partly to the different ways which explorers have. In Asia they keep up their results till they have deciphered the tablets and digested their contents. Some of the explorers do that in Egypt. But one of the most ardent and successful of explorers in Egypt is Professor Flinders Petrie, and it is his way to have the whole of the season's work published, with photographs, six months after it is over. It may be, therefore, that Babylon has things prepared for the next generation which no heart has conceived, but Egypt is revealing her treasures to us every day.

The first thing to notice is the discovery of a relationship between the Egyptians and the Babylonians. It is an answer to the old vexed question: Were the ancient Egyptians Semites? The answer is that in ancient Egypt there were two races, one Semitic and one not. The non-Semitic race came into Egypt first. The Semitic race came afterwards as conquerors. And it is with the Semitic conquerors that the civilization of Egypt properly began, and the division of its history into 'dynasties.'

Mr. Hall offers four lines of proof. The first proof is that the Egyptian language is composed of two elements—the one Nilotic and allied to the Berber dialects of North Africa, the other Semitic. The second proof is found in the early objects of art which have been discovered. The Egyptian art of the earliest dynasties bears a striking resemblance to that of early Babylonia. But the remains of pre-dynastic manufacture which have been found are distinctly different. The third proof comes from religion. There are evidently, says Mr. Hall, two distinct and different main strata in the fabric of Egyptian religion. On the one hand, we find a mass of myth and religious belief of very primitive, almost savage, cast, combining a worship of the actual dead in their tombs —which were supposed to communicate and thus form a veritable 'under-world,' or, rather, 'under-Egypt'—with veneration of magic animals, such as jackals, cats, hawks, and crocodiles. On the other hand, we have a sun and sky worship of a more elevated nature, which does not seem to have amalgamated with the earlier fetishism and corpse-worship until a comparatively late period. This sun and sky worship has the appearance of a foreign importation into the Nile valley and bears most undoubtedly a Semitic impress. The last proof comes from the mode of burial. The pre-dynastic Egyptians buried their dead in a cramped position; the later conquering Egyptians buried at full length, as the early Babylonians did.

Was the psalmist under a mistake, then, when he sang of the wonders which had been done in 'the Land of Ham'? It is not at all likely. Why should he be mistaken? He was not an Egyptian explorer guessing his way by means of potsherds. He was a singer for the people, and used the popular language. If Egypt was called 'the Land of Ham' long after it had been overrun by Semites, that only means that in Egypt as elsewhere the conquered were at last the conquerors, and compelled the dominant race to accept their customs and their names.

There were wonders done in the Land of Ham,

and they were worthy of a poet's remembrance. Is it irreverent to say that they could scarcely have been more wonderful than the discoveries which the explorers' spade has been making in our own day? What a discovery is that of a double tomb! Aha, an early king of Egypt—the first king of the first dynasty perhaps, for the name Menes seems likely to disappear now—Aha built a tomb for himself at Nakâda, and in process of time he was buried in it. But he also built a tomb at Abydos. Did he expect to be laid in two tombs? No. He expected that after he was laid in his tomb at Nakâda he would begin his travels underground and be in occasional need of a resting-place, and he built a tomb at Abydos to be ready.

And not only would he need a resting-place, but he understood that wherever he went he would enjoy the very things which he had enjoyed upon earth. And so when he died there was laid up for him food and clothing and attendants and the little luxuries of a king's life, not only in the real tomb at Nakâda, but also in the sham tomb at Abydos.

What a sight that sham tomb at Abydos must have been. There were stacks of great vases of wine. There were bins of corn, joints of oxen, pottery dishes, and copper pans, and other things which might be useful for the ghostly cuisine of the tomb. There were carved ivory boxes, little slabs for grinding eye-paint, and golden buttons. And there were dead bodies lying all around—dead, but ready for service at the approach of the dead king's ghost, ready to serve him in that other world whom they had faithfully served in this. They were dead, and there is little reason to doubt they were purposely put to death, in order that their spirits might be on the spot when the dead king came to Abydos.

We are only groping yet among the ideas which the ancient Israelites had of the Hereafter. These discoveries in Egypt help us to understand. For the Egyptians, we see, were Semites also; and whatever they took over from the conquered inhabitants of the land, we may be sure that they held fast by their own religious practices. They help us to see that the Sadducees were apostates from the ancient faith of Israel. For it is becoming evident that in all the branches of the Semite race the belief prevailed that man did not, could not, really die. The outer man might rot, but there was an inner man which still lived on.

And where, asks Mr. Hall, should this inner man still live on but in the tomb to which the outer man was consigned? Then, as each ghost had his house with the body, so, no doubt, all ghosts could communicate with each other from tomb to tomb. And so there grew up the belief in a tomb-world, a subterranean Egypt of tombs, in which the dead Egyptians still lived with one another, and with their god.

The Israelites, it is held, once buried the living with the dead as the Egyptians did. If so, they must have given up this practice early. It took the Egyptians many centuries more to give it up. As late as the Eleventh Dynasty there died a king of the name of Nebhapet-Ra Mentuhetep, and when he was buried a number of the ladies of his harem were buried with him. They were all buried at one time and in one place, and there is little doubt that they were killed and laid there to be with the king in the other world. But these high-born ladies had their luxuries also. They were sent to attend their royal lord in the Hereafter, but who is to attend to them? With each of them, when they were laid in their coffins, there was laid a little waxen image of a slave in a little model coffin. And when the Egyptians rose to a higher sense of the value of human life, these waxen figures became substitutes for actual slaves even in the case of a king. They were known by a technical name. 'Answerers' the Egyptians called them. For their office, when the spirit of the dead man came to claim their service, was to answer 'Here am I.'