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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE second volume of the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* has now been published.

Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt have together edited a *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel*, which they found last season at Oxyrhynchus (Frowde; 1s. net). It is a mere rag of vellum, a single tiny leaf, torn from the book of some scribe who had the weakness of wishing to crowd as many words as possible into the smallest possible space; but it is legible still, and well worth publishing.

The leaf begins in the middle of a sentence. And the sentence begins in the middle of a speech. It is a speech of our Lord to His disciples, about certain evil-doers who are not easily identified. When the speech is over, Jesus takes His disciples into 'the place of purification.' This was in the Temple. He is met by one of the chief priests, a Pharisee. 'Who gave thee leave to walk in this place of purification and to see these holy vessels, when thou hast not washed nor yet have thy disciples bathed their feet?' Jesus asks if he himself is clean. To which the Pharisee answers, 'I am clean; for I washed in the pool of David, and having descended by one staircase I ascended by another, and I put on white and clean garments, and then I came and looked upon these holy vessels.' Our Lord (who is always spoken of as 'the Saviour') then answers: 'Woe, ye blind, who see not. Thou hast washed in these running waters wherein dogs and swine have been cast night and day, and hast cleansed and wiped the outside skin which also the harlots and flute-girls anoint and wash and wipe and beautify for the lust of men; but within they are full of scorpions and all wickedness.' And as He proceeds to contrast His own way and that of His disciples 'who have been dipped in the waters of eternal life,' the fragment ends.

What is the worth of it? The editors do not once mention the matter, but the worth of it seems to lie in its bearing upon the criticism of the Fourth Gospel. From wholly uncontroversial considerations the editors conclude that the work of which it is a copy was written about the year 200, the copy itself being made somewhere in the fourth century. Now there is considerable skill in the management of the dialogue, and there is a general comprehension of the situation which the writer wishes to reproduce. As the editors express it, the author is 'more successful in catching something of the genuine ring than many of the authors of apocryphal gospels.' Yet when the references to places and customs are examined, they are found to be irreconcilable with well-known facts, and in themselves incredible. Where

was this 'place of purification,' and where was this 'pool of David'? They are mentioned nowhere else. And is it credible that a chief priest washed himself in a pool of the character that is here described? The editors cannot avoid the conclusion that 'much of the local colour is due to the imagination of the author, who was aiming chiefly at dramatic effect and was not really well acquainted with the Temple.' But the author of the Fourth Gospel, who is accused of drawing as completely on his imagination, never contradicts himself and never blunders in his topography.

There is a good deal in a name, if it is long enough. Balaclava and Omdurman and Oxyrhynchus—they are remembered, not for their outlandishness, but for the satisfaction with which they fill the mouth. The last satisfactory mouthful is Elephantinê. And cheerfully as we have taken to Oxyrhynchus, the familiarity of it is likely to be eclipsed by its later and more sonorous rival.

In the year 1903 Professor Euting published a papyrus which he had bought at Luxor. It was written in Aramaic, and seemed to be part of a complaint made by some persons who dwelt in a fortress called Yeb. The complaint was directed chiefly against the priests of the God Khnûb, because they had stopped up a well which supplied water for the people within the fortress. But the papyrus was only a fragment, and it was not clear to whom the complaint was made, nor who made it.

Professor Euting's translation fell into the hands of Professor Clermont-Ganneau. And when Professor Clermont-Ganneau had studied it, he came to the conclusion that the document had originated in the island of Elephantinê, and that the petitioners were Jews. The discovery was a great surprise. How did Professor Clermont-Ganneau make it?

With the place there was little difficulty. Professor Euting did not recognize Elephantinê in the Egyptian Yeb expressed in Aramaic characters, and Professor Clermont-Ganneau did. But as to the petitioners. The first thing that Professor Clermont-Ganneau saw was that the petitioners were not Egyptians. Their complaint was against certain priests of the Egyptian god Khnûb, who were supported by an official personage of the name of Widrang. Egyptians would not complain against Egyptian officials and Egyptian priests. Then he noticed that in speaking of Khnûb the petitioners did not call him 'God.' That was extraordinary, especially in a document of a public and quasi-official nature, in which the proper forms of speech should be carefully observed. Who would be so particular about a matter like that? Not Persians, not Greeks, not Nubians. There is only one race that would risk the rejection of their petition rather than speak of Khnûb as God. It is the Jews.

Père Lagrange, who tells the story in the *New York Review*, rejoices in this conclusion as a case of triumphant Higher Criticism. 'Often,' he says, 'such conjectures in the domain of criticism are looked upon as arbitrary and fanciful; and doubtless many, in reading the above, would have perceived nothing more than a bit of guesswork, such as has so often been disproved.' But he claims it as 'another proof of the trustworthiness of good critical methods.' For in three years Professor Clermont-Ganneau's brilliant induction was shown to be correct.

In September 1906 Professor Sayce and Mr. Cowley published a volume of *Aramaic Papyri discovered at Assûan*. It contained ten separate documents, all of which now saw the light for the first time, together with a fragment which Mr. Cowley had already published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, and five bits of inscriptions from fragments of pottery, apparently belonging to the same group of documents as the papyri. And, last of all, it

contained a reprint of Dr. Euting's 'Strasburg Papyrus,' as it is now called, on which Professor Clermont-Ganneau had worked his Higher Criticism. For Mr. Cowley saw that the 'Strasburg Papyrus,' though it was bought independently at Luxor, had come out of the same box and had been written by the same persons.

A short account of these papyri was given in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for July. A fuller account must be given now, that the narrative may be complete and that we may be up to date in every particular. For we shall hear of Elephantinê again. Men of the most chastened imagination, like Professor Margoliouth and Mr. Johns, are waiting for the discovery in Elephantinê of a contemporary copy of the prophecies of Jeremiah or a working fourth-century-B.C. edition of the Law.

Well, what do the new documents consist of? They are occupied entirely with business affairs. They are receipts for the transfer of property, for a marriage dowry, or the like. They are public documents, however, written out by a notary and signed by witnesses. They are thus equivalent to a modern contract, although it was not customary with them then as it is with us now for both parties to the contract to sign their names. They are business documents, and if that were all they would be of little interest; for thousands of business documents have already been found in Egypt. But these business documents have mostly been signed by Jews.

Of that there is no possibility of doubt. Many of the names are Jewish unmistakably. Hosea occurs six times; Menahem, five times; Meshullam, five times; Nathan, six times; Ethan, Haggai, Zadok at least once each. Again, there are names which end in Jah. Mr. Johns gives a list of them—Ananiah at least twice; Azariah, twice; Ba'adiah, Berechiah, Gedaliah, Gemariah, twice; Hodaviah, Hoshaiah, twice; Isaiah, Jezaniah, three times; Malchiah, twice at least; Me'oziah, twice; Mibhtahiah, Pelaliah, Pelatiah, Qoniah, Reuiah, Uriah, Jedoniah, six times; Zechariah, three times; and Zephaniah. And there are two in which the Divine name occurs at the beginning, Jeho-adar and Jah-hadari.

To those who have time to examine these names, what a world of interest they possess. They are such names as are known to us for the later times of Ezra and Nehemiah. None of the characteristically Maccabæan names occur, like Johanan or Simeon or Joshua. Again, the names of the patriarchs, Abraham, Israel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, are as entirely absent as if these Jews had no knowledge of such ancestry. Once more, not a name occurs with the compound El in it, like Elnathan or Israel. And, last of all, observe how many of those which do occur have been suspected as corrupt forms in the present text of the Old Testament. 'The old Massoretes,' says Mr. Johns, 'must chuckle in their graves.'

But is there no human interest in the documents? Yes, plenty; and for the most part it gathers round the name of a lady. Throughout the fragments we follow the fortunes of Mibhtahiah. She is a Jewess, the daughter of Mahseiah. She leaves her father's house to become the wife of Jezaniah, bearing her 'tocher' with her in the form of a good piece of land. She is a young woman of business ability. When her father finds himself short of money, she makes him a loan, which he pays back by transferring to her a house of which he is the owner. The limits of the new property are set down accurately by reference to the surrounding estates; on the north it extends as far as 'the altar of the God Yahu.'

In matrimonial affairs Mibhtahiah is not so successful. She divorces her husband, or is divorced by him. And then she marries an Egyptian. That he is an Egyptian seems unmistakable, from his name As-hor, though Mr. Johns reminds us that it is very like the name

Ashur which is found in 1 Ch 2^{24} 4^{5}. About the time of her second marriage Mibhtahiah takes oath in the name of Sati, the Egyptian goddess of Elephantinê. Surely she is a little indifferent in things religious. Or could it be that conscience is at fault? As a too clever business woman, does she *prefer* Sati, arguing that an oath in the name of a false deity can have no binding force? Père Lagrange makes the suggestion. But it does not greatly relieve the situation. On the other hand, we learn that after his marriage As-hor is known by the good Jewish name of Nathan. Let us give Mibhtahiah the credit for that. And, more than that, the names which she gives her two sons are the names of her own grandfather and father, Jedoniah and Mahseiah, biblical names both. It is evident that Mibhtahiah is a genuine Jewess. She has not become an Egyptian, she has made her husband and her family Jews.

When As-hor married Mibhtahiah he paid for his bride a sum of money to her father. To herself he presented a variety of articles which are carefully set down in the settlement, and seem to have been chosen with judgment—'a bronze mirror; a bronze salver with two bowls, and a cup of bronze; a bed of papyrus with stone legs; a terra-cotta vase; two urns, and one new ivory cosmetic box.' He even assisted the bride with her trousseau—'a garment of new wool, embroidered in colours on both sides, size eight cubits by five; another piece of new cloth, seven cubits by five; another woollen garment with fringes, six cubits by four.'

In course of time Mibhtahiah dies, but we can follow the fortunes of her family after her death. Her sons appear in a lawsuit. They are challenged to restore a deposit which had been committed to the care of their father As-hor. And it is important to observe that the case is tried before Widrang, the governor of the Egyptian garrison in Elephantinê. We have heard of Widrang already. We shall hear of him again.

For the most remarkable of all these discoveries has yet to be recorded.

In 1907 Dr. E. Sachau, of Berlin, published three Aramaic papyri. They also had come from the island of Elephantinê. They consisted of three letters. One of the letters, or a copy of it, had been sent by the Jewish community in Elephantinê to Bagohi, the Persian governor of Judah in the time of Artaxerxes II. (404–359 B.C.), the Bagoas of Josephus. The second was a mutilated copy of that letter, perhaps its first rough draft. The third was Bagohi's reply.

The writers of the first letter complain that their temple in Elephantinê, which had existed for more than a hundred and twenty years (for they say that it had been built before the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 B.C.), had been ruthlessly destroyed by Widrang. They say that the priests of Khnûb, taking advantage of the absence of the Governor of Egypt, had bribed Widrang, who was local governor at Elephantinê; that Widrang had called his son, who had charge of the garrison in Syênê, on the opposite bank of the Nile, to bring across a body of troops; and that thereupon they had together destroyed the temple of the God Yahu, and had carried away its gold and silver vessels. The petitioners remind Bagohi that this happened some time ago, that they had sent a letter to himself at the time, as well as to Jehohanan, the High Priest in Jerusalem, but had received no answer. They now beg Bagohi to permit the rebuilding of the temple.

It may be easier for Bagohi to listen to their prayer now. For apparently something has happened in the interval to Widrang. What has happened to him the petitioners do not clearly say. What they say is that 'the chain (of office? queries Driver) has been removed from his feet.' It may be degradation; it may be something worse. They add that all the goods which he had acquired have perished. And not only is Widrang apparently out of the way, but 'all the

men who wished evil against the temple are slain'; and they add, a little vindictively but in Biblical language, that they 'have seen their desire upon them.' And then, perhaps to encourage Bagohi to execute that justice which is so ripe, they promise a reward, and it appears to be a very substantial one. In the third of the documents Bagohi replies that the temple may be rebuilt in its place as it was before.

Now there is no doubt whatever that all these documents belonged to the same colony of Jews in Elephantinê. Dr. Euting's papyrus was bought in Luxor, Professor Sayce's were chiefly acquired in Assuan; but it may be considered settled that they all came originally from the same spot as did Professor Sachau's, that is to say, from one or other of the mounds which mark the site of the ancient town in the island of Elephantinê. The confusion with Assuan (Greek Syênê), which is on the opposite bank of the river, may be due to the fact that Elephantinê is now called by the Arabs Gezîret Assuan, or the Island of Assuan.

Now this island of Elephantinê, as the Greeks called it, or Yeb (Abu), as it was called in ancient Egyptian (both words meaning the place of the elephant), attracted the attention of the men of science who accompanied Napoleon on his Egyptian campaign. They came upon it from the south, not by sailing up the Nile from Cairo as modern tourists do; and they greatly relished its beauty and shade: 'The verdure and freshness of its fields,' says Jomard, who wrote this chapter of the *Description de l'Egypte*, 'form such an agreeable contrast with the arid tracts of soil by which it is surrounded that it is surnamed the Flowery Isle and the Garden of the Tropics. The traveller whose curiosity is dulled, and who is exhausted by wearisome journeys, experiences a lively feeling of joy on coming to this island which looms up suddenly before his gaze like an enchanted spot in the midst of the blackish peaks and shining sands which occupy and fill the horizon.' But the Jews who dwelt in Elephantinê were not, we may be sure, attracted solely by its scenery. Who were they, and what were they doing there?

Let us first make sure of the dates. And about them there is no uncertainty. The documents are dated. They are dated by the year of the reigning Persian king. And not only so, but they contain the month and the day, both according to the Egyptian and also according to the Babylonian method of reckoning. They extend over sixty years, from 471 to 411 B.C.. As a writer in the *Church Quarterly* puts it: 'When Mahseiah gives permission to Qoniyyah to build in a gateway belonging to the former, Xerxes is reigning as King of Persia. Egypt is subject to him; but the vast empire is no longer in the state Darius Hystaspes left it. It is the ninth year after that fateful campaign when

> A king sate on the lofty brow
> That looks o'er sea-girt Salamis,
> And ships in thousands lay below.

Not long after Mahseiah's grandsons settle the transaction recorded in another document, Egypt is lost to Persia, and has regained her independence. Between these dates lie the last six years of Xerxes, the whole reign of Artaxerxes the Longhand, and thirteen years of the reign of Darius Nothus.'

Well, we know that after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans, a number of Jews took refuge in Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them. And we know that Jeremiah denounced them there for their idolatry. But this was about the year 586 B.C. Can the Jews of the time of Xerxes be their descendants? They may be. They claim that their temple had lasted at any rate since the year 525 B.C. It is true they speak Aramaic, not Hebrew. But if Jeremiah and his fellow-exiles entered Egypt speaking Hebrew, it does not follow that their descendants would continue to speak Hebrew. They might learn to speak Egyptian, the language of their neighbours. It is more probable that they would learn to use

Aramaic, the official language of their Persian masters and the colloquial tongue throughout even the late Assyrian empire.

Other suggestions have been made. Professor Schürer recalls a statement which occurs in the famous letter of 'Aristeas' which describes the origin of the Septuagint. The letter so bristles with blunders that the statement has passed unheeded. Now it assumes importance. For in that letter it is stated that many Jews came with the Persians, or were brought by them, into Egypt. What were they brought there for? To till the land? That is unlikely. The native Egyptians knew the soil, and they have always taken to agriculture more readily than the Jews. Perhaps to form garrisons here and there. Well, Elephantinê was a fortress, and a most important one. And in these papyri there are expressions which have an unmistakably military ring about them.

But the most surprising suggestion has yet to be mentioned. It is that these Elephantinê Jews, who have been so unexpectedly discovered, are a portion of the lost Ten Tribes.

The author of this suggestion is Professor Bacher, of Budapest. And Professor Bacher is a sober Jewish scholar of the highest reputation. For once we may look at an argument for the recovery of the lost Ten Tribes without a hint of insanity.

In the newly recovered documents, says Professor Bacher (you will find his article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for April), one of the most frequently occurring names is Hosea. Now in the Bible the name Hosea is almost exclusively applied to Ephraimites. The oldest bearer of the name is Hosea the son of Nun, afterwards known as Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim. In the tribe of David there was a Hosea (1 Ch 27^{20}) who was Prince of the tribe of Ephraim. The Prophet Hosea was probably an Ephraimite; and the last king of this realm was Hosea the son of Elah. Elsewhere the name Hosea occurs but once (Neh 10^{24}). 'As, then,' says Dr. Bacher, 'this name appears in the colony of Elephantinê as one of the commonest personal names, it seems reasonable to suggest that the colony, at least in part, consisted of descendants of people belonging to the Ten Tribes.'

Professor Bacher's argument could take a little further support. He seems to feel that. He observes that the name Menahem also occurs pretty frequently in the papyri. And the only occurrence of Menahem in the Bible is as the name of one of the last kings of the Northern Kingdom, who came from Tirzah, and therefore was an Ephraimite. Then, to strengthen it still further, he combines it with the hint which Professor Schürer has recovered from the epistle of 'Aristeas.' He believes that there came with the Persian army under Cambyses into Egypt not only Judeans from Babylonia, but also descendants of the Ten Tribes from their second home in Assyria and Media; that they received grants of land in Egypt, and when they found themselves together, as at Elephantinê, they coalesced, but, for a time at least, retained both the name Judeans or Jews and also the name Aramæans, which the Ten Tribes had likely come to be known by in the lands of the Exile. And whether this is the meaning of it or not, it is certain that the members of the colony in Elephantinê are spoken of in the papyri sometimes as Jews and sometimes as Aramæans.

Professor J. G. Frazer has decided to publish the third edition of his *Golden Bough* in five parts. The titles which are to be given to the parts are: 'The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings'; 'The Perils of the Soul and the Doctrine of Taboo'; 'The Dying God'; 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris'; and 'Balder the Beautiful.' One of them is issued already and has reached a second edition. It is *Adonis, Attis, Osiris* (Macmillan; 10s. net).

The volume is further described as 'Studies in the History of Oriental Religion.' For the most

part these studies are outside the Bible. And that is well. For when Dr. Frazer does touch the Bible his touch is apt to be disconcerting. It is not that he dislikes the Bible, as if he were an aggressive rationalist. There never was a student of religion who was more guiltless of evil intention. Nor is it that he does not recognize the beauty of the literature and the worth of the religion which the Bible contains. Has he not made a selection of fine passages from the Bible, and added notes on their religious significance? It is that he has come to a close study of the Bible after having steeped himself in the religion and magic of the uncultivated nations of the earth. He therefore discovers in the Bible analogies to savage belief, and survivals of primitive practice, where the ordinary student of the Bible sees nothing that is out of accord with the worship of that God who is a Spirit and is worshipped in spirit and truth.

Here and there throughout his new book Dr. Frazer touches the Bible, but the principal place is in the first of his appendixes. He calls the appendix 'Moloch the King.' It is well known that in the Old Testament there are several references to the passing of children through the fire to Moloch. There are three things to look at in these references.

The first is the ceremony itself. What was it? Dr. Frazer does not discuss that fully, but he makes it clear that he does not accept the gruesome stories of the Jewish midrashim that children were roasted to death in the arms of a red-hot idol. On the other hand, he does not believe that they were merely passed over the fire, according to a ceremony which still exists here and there. He has no doubt that the children were first put to death, and then burnt in the fire as holocausts.

The next thing is the question to whom these terrible sacrifices were offered. The name is given in the Hebrew text as Molech. It is not Moloch, as the Authorized Version spells it in two places (Am 5^{26}, Ac 7^{43}), after the Greek. Now Molech is usually taken as a corruption for *melech*,—a corruption purposely made, in order to suggest the vowels of *bosheth* or abomination. And *melech* is the ordinary Hebrew word for 'king.' It may be, therefore, that these sacrifices were made to any god who might happen to be the king of any particular nation. And Dr. Frazer believes that they were offered by the Israelites to Jahweh. He believes that they were part of that popular religion, caught from the Canaanites perhaps, which was widely practised in Israel down to the Captivity, but of which we hear little in the literature unless by way of condemnation.

The last thing is the meaning of the rite. It is here that Dr. Frazer is at home. It is here that his knowledge and his independence have free play. There are two interpretations, and he offers the one as an alternative to the other. The simplest explanation is that the sacrifice to Molech was 'a particular application of the ancient law which devoted to the Deity the first-born of every womb, whether of cattle or of human beings.' But the other explanation is more to Dr. Frazer's liking. It is that the children were sacrificed in order to prolong the life of the human king.

Now there are two ways in which they might do this. They might have a substitutionary value. Not, however, that they were offered as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the king that were past. Even the king of Israel was more concerned, Dr. Frazer thinks, with the future than with the past. He was more anxious to prolong his earthly life than to be reconciled to a righteous God. And he presents examples (which are odious enough) of kings, and queens also, who offered their children not for the sin of their soul, but for the continuance of their days. For they believed that their god would be satisfied for a time, as a hungry wolf might be, by devouring one of their children. Might he not even be satiated at last by devouring them one after another, and so let the king literally live for ever?

But again, the sacrifice of the children might have, not a vicarious but a magical value. That is to say, the earthly king believed that when a child was put to death, if the proper rites were employed, its young life might be made to pass into his aged body, and enable him to renew his strength. Under this belief the sacrifice of animals is common enough all the world over. But sometimes it is the sacrifice of human beings, and perhaps in earlier days it was always so. Among the rest Dr. Frazer thus explains those wholesale massacres which have given such an evil name to a recent king of Uganda.

There is no difficulty which the preacher of the gospel has to face that can for a moment be compared with the difficulty of bridging the gulf between himself and his congregation. The difference between them is not due to rank. In some parts of the country there never has been such a difference, and it is passing away from every part. It is due to mental training. It is due to the fact that the preacher is trained to think abstractly, while the average hearer cannot separate nature from natural things, or hear of a law of nature without thinking of the commandment of a lawgiver. Professor Sanday deals with this matter in his latest book, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*.

He deals with it under the title of 'Symbolism.' For the preacher, who has always been trained to think in abstractions, is now trained also in the methods of physical science. He must have facts. Therefore, when he reads that the Devil set Jesus on a pinnacle of the Temple, the modern preacher searches his books for a plan of the Temple, and is dissatisfied until he has discovered the pinnacle and measured the height of it. Professor Sanday does not think that the historian of the temptation knew the height of the pinnacle of the Temple or cared to know. It is part of a symbolism which he used for conveying his meaning and which came quite naturally to his hand.

The modern hearer is at one with the ancient historian. It may be that he does not think in metaphors as Orientals do. In his prosaic Western way he probably reads the symbols of the Bible literally first of all. And he will continue to read them literally until it is explained to him that they are symbols. But the moment that this is explained to him, he understands the symbol, and is glad. The height of the pinnacle of the Temple expressed in feet conveys to him nothing of the meaning of the Temptation. It rather comes in between him and his understanding of the Temptation. But explain to him that the pinnacle of the Temple, and even, if you will, the Devil that carried Him there, are symbols used to express that spiritual conflict which came to Christ as it comes to every man, then he will feel the grandeur of the Temptation as well as the nearness of it. For the mind that is untrained scientifically passes easily from outward facts to inward imaginings.

In proof of this, it is perhaps enough to remember that poetry is almost as old as prose, not only in the life of the world, but also in the life of every individual that enters it. But a more appropriate proof is found in the recollection of the joy with which our fathers listened to sermons on the Song of Solomon. There never was in Scotland a more popular preacher, at any rate at Communion seasons, than Robert Murray M'Cheyne; and when you are shown M'Cheyne's pulpit Bible you observe at once that it is thumbed black at the Song of Solomon, while the other pages are unsoiled. We have left all that behind us. But men of fifty will tell you that congregations do not listen to a preacher now as they did in their early youth, when the text was, 'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?' or, 'He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.'

Well, we must get back to the symbolism of the Bible. Professor Sanday protests against the application of the rigid rules of physical science to

the first three chapters of Genesis. He does not deny that there was a time when it was necessary to point out that the statements of these chapters regarding the origin of the world and man, taken literally, are not in accord with the discoveries of modern science. That was when the inspiration of the Bible was identified with verbal infallibility. 'But I cannot help hoping,' he says, 'that the time has come when such corrections will no longer be thought necessary; when, in other words, it will be assumed from the outset that the representations in Gn 1–3 are symbolical, and that they were never intended to be literal.'

Now, to come back to the symbolical language of the Bible does not mean that we shall be able to preach our grandfathers' sermons. For the scientific spirit has not been among us for nothing. On the one hand, it is probable that the Song of Solomon will never again be interpreted as if it were *intended* to be typical of Christ and the Church. So that even in the 'distribution of the elements' the Scottish preacher may never be able to recover the old accent as he repeats the words, 'Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.' But, on the other hand, he will understand, and be able to make his people understand, that the trees in the garden of Eden are no longer to be sought for in manuals of practical forestry, and that the Cherubim and the flame of a sword which guarded the gate of it are things which never were on land or sea. Yet he will preach his own sermons about the garden of Eden, and his people will listen again as intently as they did in the emotional days of Murray M'Cheyne and the Song of Solomon.

Suppose that his text were Gn 3^{24}. These are the words of it: 'So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.' He might preach his sermon in this way.

Of the trees which grew in the garden of Eden, two are particularly mentioned, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Tree of Life grew in the midst of the garden. For to eat of its fruit is to do the will of God, and the will of God may always be found by those who look for it; every straight path leads directly to it. And what is this will of God? It is peace and rest; it is the joy of fellowship and all that makes life worth living; it is health, and strength, and growth, and continuance. It is to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Where did the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil grow? Not in the midst of the garden. Out of sight and inconvenient if one desired to do the will of God; but suddenly near, in the way, and temptingly attractive, if one preferred to do one's own will. For the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the opportunity to say, 'Not Thy will, but mine be done.'

Now when the man ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil he was driven out of the garden. The knowledge is not denied. It is not denied that the fruit of the forbidden tree has enlarged the experience of life. But it is the knowledge that enables the wealthy manufacturer to defy the law and draw much profit from his sweating dens; it is the experience of life of those who wait with impatience for what is euphoniously called 'the age of consent.' Such knowledge and such experience are impossible where God is. Now God is in the garden. For

> A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
> Rose plot,
> Fringed pool,
> Fern'd grot—
> The veriest school
> Of peace; and yet the fool
> Contends that God is not—
> Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?

Yes, God is there. And therefore man who has eaten of the forbidden fruit cannot be there. So He drove out the man.

And He placed at the east of the garden of Eden

the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. In the year 1900 there was published a most unpretentious volume which had no other title than *Sermons* (Oliver & Boyd). It was written by the Rev. Rayner Winterbotham, who was then Canon of St. Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh. Among the sermons contained in it there is one which is described as 'A Sermon upon Nature and Conscience.' Its text is the text before us. It is a short sermon, occupied entirely with the meaning of these two symbols, the Cherubim and the flame of a sword. To Canon Winterbotham the one stands for nature and the other for conscience.

There is first of all, however, a word of introduction on the reason why God drove out the man. Canon Winterbotham sees that it was not so much by way of punishment for his sin as from the very necessity of the situation. But besides that, the man had to be driven out, because that was the very best thing for him since he fell. 'Mankind has risen slowly to its present state of power and progress, just because it was driven out. It has risen because it had to fight its way up against a multitude of difficulties and obstacles which gradually called out and educated its powers and faculties of body and of mind. Go the world over,' says Canon Winterbotham, 'and you will find that exactly those races which might seem to have been most effectually "driven out" and left furthest off from the earthly paradise, have been the races which have attained the highest civilization.'

Then he comes to the Cherubim. Now, in the symbolism of Scripture two offices are ascribed to the Cherubim. They maintain the majesty of God, and they represent the sum of natural things. First, they maintain the majesty of God. In Ezekiel the chariot of God is composed of Cherubim; and in the Apocalypse (under the name of the four living creatures) they are seen 'in the midst of the throne' and 'round about the throne.' They express not merely the presence of God, but His unapproachableness—His unapproachableness otherwise than in the way which He Himself has appointed. It is for this reason that they are admitted into the Temple and into the Tabernacle, in the very teeth of the second commandment—two veritable and undeniable graven images spreading their wings there over the Mercy Seat.

Secondly, they represent the sum of natural things. They belong to no single type of creature life. In their appearance several types are blended together so as to suggest them all. So the Cherubim were placed at the gate of the garden of Eden that they might guard the approach to that place where God dwelleth, and that they might at the same time suggest to man that all nature unites in maintaining God's unapproachableness. Debarred from intercourse with God, there is the possibility that man will take to worshipping the creature. But no ancient Israelite with a clear conscience can make the serpent or the bull objects of his worship, or even the sun and the moon. For the Cherubim, the representatives of all these, stand at the gate of Paradise declaring that they are but the creatures of God's hands, and, more than that, His servants, whose very business it is to maintain His honour. Nor need any modern millionaire dream that he can by amassing money find out God. For the very things which he handles so successfully shape themselves into menacing Cherubim and stand between him and the Paradise where God is found.

The last symbol is the flame of a sword. Not a flaming sword, you observe. That, says Canon Winterbotham, is a poor, prosaic watering down of the original. It is as if some magic sword bathed in heaven and wielded by some invisible angelic virtue were leaving its scorch and radiance upon the yielding air, as it played hither and thither with the velocity of lightning. And what is this flame of a sword? What is this thing, more subtle and more inscrutable than even the Cherubim, yet meeting one at every turn and

hopelessly barring the way—barring the way not by any solid obstacle, but by the sense of dread, dread of the unknown and awful? It is the conscience of sin.

There is not anything, says Canon Winterbotham, more subtle and unsubstantial than the conscience of sin. You try to set it down in black and white; you try to fix it in the language of theology; it ever evades you. You have your definition, your terminology, your religious phraseology, but your sense of sin has vanished. Prove to a man that we are all by nature the children of wrath; that the Scripture has concluded us all under sin; that all have sinned and come short; that there is none righteous, no, not one; that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; that our very righteousnesses are as filthy rags. He assents or dissents. But he feels nothing. For the flame of the sword is playing in some other direction at that moment.

There are innumerable persons who say that they have no sense of sin. And they have not. For the flame of a sword plays only at the east of the garden of Eden. They are ranging in the wilderness. They are pressing west and north and south. At the most they see only the far-off glare and glitter of it as one may see the reflected brilliance from an electric lighthouse leaping upon the clouds from below the horizon. But let them set their face eastwards and homewards. Let them at last with weary heart and tired thoughts seek for peace and satisfaction. Then they will really encounter the sternness of the brandished flame.

And what are they to do then? Let us turn to another volume of sermons, a volume that has just been published. Its title is *The Unescapeable Christ* (Wellby; 3s. 6d. net), its author the Rev. Edward W. Lewis, B.D., of Grafton Square Congregational Church, Clapham. In that volume there is a sermon on 'The sword that guarded the Tree of Life.' It takes our subject up just at the place to which we have carried it now. How are we to reach the Tree of Life? The things of nature and the sting of conscience, the gigantic Cherubim and the flash of a sword, are in the way. Yet we must reach it. Mr. Lewis is as clear as Canon Winterbotham that we must reach it. 'We must fight to win it,' he says; 'we must arrive by force.'

And then Mr. Lewis, who belongs to the New Theology movement, gives us stimulating pictures of the children of Israel marching out of Egypt, and following a devious, perplexed, and weary way through the wilderness, that they may reach Canaan and the Tree of Life; of Jesus, tempted in the wilderness, harassed by Pharisees, intrigued against by Herodians, unsupported by the multitude, misunderstood by His own, passing within the deep shadow of Gethsemane, and then ascending the way of the cross that He may win His way to the Tree of Life. Mr. Lewis, we say, teaches the new theology. Nevertheless he seems to say that the Israelites suffered in the wilderness not for their own sakes only, but for our sakes also. He distinctly says that Christ went forth bearing His cross 'not for Himself alone, but for us.' And if he means all that he says, then he says rightly. For the way to the Tree of Life *is* to be won by fighting. 'To him that overcometh,' are the words of the Apocalypse,—'to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.' Christ suffered that we should suffer with Him—

> And in the garden secretly,
> And on the cross on high,
> Should teach His brethren, and inspire
> To suffer and to die.

But let us know assuredly, that the way to the Tree of Life will never be won in single combat.