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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace has an article in *The Contemporary Review* on 'The Present Position of Darwinism.' The editor has given it the first place. He has done well. For we do not believe that in all the literature of the month there is an article which will move its readers more deeply.

Dr. Russel Wallace was the discoverer of Darwinism along with Darwin. Darwinism has reached its semi-jubilee. Darwin is dead. Dr. Russel Wallace is alive, not to rejoice in its success, but to write a solitary and most pathetic protest against the widespread belief in its failure.

'The general public,' he begins, 'are being told to-day that Darwinism is played out; that, as a means of explaining the origin of species and the general development of the organic world, it is entirely superseded by newer and more scientific views. Of course the public, ever ready to accept new things in science, believes these statements, which are put forward with so much confidence and, apparently, on such good authority; while the theologians are especially glad to seize upon this new weapon against what they have long considered to be their most formidable enemy.'

Dr. Russel Wallace is scarcely just. He is scarcely just to the theologians. For, after the first fright, the theologians took to the Darwinian theory quite readily. There are popular preachers who earned their popularity by preaching Darwinism. Some of them, like Beecher, have passed away, so early was their enthusiasm captured. And for the rest, it is safe enough to say that if they have never been enthusiastic Darwinians it is because they have taken Darwin for granted. Dr. Russel Wallace is not well acquainted with 'the theologians.'

It is true that the very first person to whom Dr. Russel Wallace refers is a theologian. And the theologian disbelieves in Darwinism. But the chance that sent him to Professor Otto of Göttingen was not a happy one. For he is in no way possessed with the *odium theologicum*. If he is a theologian, he is a theologian who has given some time to the study of nature, and he writes entirely in the interests of contemporary science. Dr. Wallace does not quote directly from Professor Otto's book, but from a review of it in the *Inquirer*. That review, however, is fair and accurate. It *is* Professor Otto's opinion that 'Darwinism is an unsuccessful hypothesis,' but it is not his opinion as a theologian.

What is Dr. Russel Wallace's defence? He gives a summary of the hypotheses that are offered as substitutes for Darwinism. These are Neo-

Lamarckism, Mutationism, and Mendelianism. He seeks to show that none of these theories covers all the facts, and he succeeds in showing it. But he does not claim that Darwinism covers all the facts. He is content with referring to the 'vast range of subjects' which the Darwinian theory explains, and 'the inadequacy of any other explanation of the whole series of phenomena yet made public.'

Professor Ambrose W. Vernon, of the University of Yale, has contributed an article to the *Biblical World* for July on 'Samson.' It is not easy, in these days of milder manners, to make the history of Samson minister to edifying.

One of the difficulties is to find a suitable text. Professor Vernon chooses Jg 15^{14}, 'And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him.' But these words introduce the remarkable exploit of the jawbone. The exploit is celebrated in song:

With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of an ass have I smitten a thousand men.

We may call that a folk-song, of course, and settle the matter mythologically. But how is the modern preacher to make religious or ethical use of the episode?

Professor Vernon sees nothing to hinder. He is thankful for the ass's jawbone. As a teacher of Ethics and Religion he rejoices over those 'heaps upon heaps.' Reading the story of Samson 'intelligently and sympathetically,' he feels the same influence come over his spirit as years of travel bring. As he sees Samson on the hilltop with the jawbone of the ass piling up the bodies of his enemies, he sees the vision which Peter saw on the hilltop at Joppa, and he hears the voice which says, 'What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.'

For Samson was a man of power, and like all men of power, he recognized that this power was a gift. Was he coarse, sensual, brutish? Professor Vernon does not deny it. Was his rage fierce, his heart savage? Did he kill Philistines simply to pay a bet? Was he indifferent to the anguish of the foxes tied tail to tail with a firebrand? Dr. Vernon admits it all. The epithets are his own. But he bids us observe that Samson paid the bet; that he never proved false to his own people, or even to his God as he understood Him. He begs us not to forget that in the use of the power which had been given him he was ready to break his own back also when he brought down the house upon the Philistines.

Samson ran no risk of over-righteousness. He was ignorant of the Commandments. An ethical monster, Professor Vernon calls him. But he was religious. Most monsters are religious, says Professor Vernon. The God they worship may Himself be monstrous, but they worship Him. 'There Samson stands, towering over the ages, on the dim edge of history, with his jawbone in his hand, his enemies at his feet, and in his heart a feeling that is strangely like humility. A huge man, but not desiring to wipe out the sky above him; a huge man, but carrying his God so thoroughly into all his life that his very hair is sacred as God's dwelling-place.'

'The Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him.' Professor Vernon does not doubt it. And he spells the word 'Spirit' with a capital, against the Revisers. He believes that the age of Samson saw the divinity of power, as every age does, but fashioned it according to its own limitations. The power was physical. That was its first and most serious limitation. But if Samson's power had to act within the circumference of bone and sinew, observe that it acted honourably. The lion had to attack before it was slain. Friends were faithless before the cornfields were burned. The hypocritical wiles of a woman were responsible for the death of the Philistine lords.

Professor Vernon will not say Samson had no

morality. He says he had not our morality. And he even suggests that if the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and does not come mightily upon us, it is because we 'jump our rails' more frequently than he did.

So, 'I rejoice in the presence of Samson in our Bible,' says Professor Vernon. 'He forbids us to forget the pit whence we have been dug. His presence redeems us from thinking that religion is a product of culture. He gives us an unanswerable argument in the presence of an anxious mother who thinks her son ruined for ever because he has smoked a cigarette or played a game of pool.'

Are there any saints among the Jews? St. Paul wrote certain letters to Jewish communities and addressed them as 'Saints.' But they had embraced Christianity. Apart from those who have become Christians, are there any saints among the Jews?

Dr. Schechter has published a second series of *Studies in Judaism* (A. & C. Black; 7s. 6d. net), and he devotes a whole chapter to the question. The question was raised in a conversation which he had, two years ago, with 'a lady of the Jewish persuasion.' The lady said that, so far as she knew, Judaism was the only one among the great religions that had never produced a saint.

If that is true, what is the explanation of it? The explanation which the lady gave was that Judaism is good enough for the daily wear and tear of life, but men and women of finer texture of soul must look to other religions. But is it true? Dr. Schechter denies it.

For there is a word in Hebrew which means 'saint,' or at least 'saintliness.' It is *chesed*. It did not mean 'saintliness' at first, it is true, but it came to mean that. At first it meant 'gracefulness.' And gracefulness when seen was so much appreciated that the word was used also for 'graciousness,' and carried both these meanings at once, just as the English word 'grace' does. Of the virtuous woman it is said, 'She opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of graciousness' (Pr 31^{26}). And when an ancient Rabbi wanted to be polite to a newly married couple, he would compliment the bride with the words 'beautiful and graceful.'

And there is another word for 'saint.' Or rather, it is again a word for 'saintliness,' and not for 'saint.' It is *kedushah*. But Dr. Schechter is not so well pleased with *kedushah*. It does not entirely cover the English word 'holiness.' So in endeavouring to show that it is not true to say that there are no saints in Judaism, he resolves to give up *kedushah* and confine himself to *chesed* or *chasiduth*.

His way is not easy. At the outset he encounters the difficulty that no two Jewish writers agree on the characteristics of a saint: 'Each writer emphasizes the special feature in the saint with which he was most in sympathy by reason of his own bent of mind or particular religious passion.' Thus the Jewish saint, if there is one, 'belongs to the subjective species.' And subjectivism in sainthood is most elusive. Dr. Schechter resolves to combine the various features characteristic of the saint into a general sketch.

Now he is not going to speak of societies of saints. He warns us of that at the outset. For the Jews never had any. There are references in Jewish literature to such organizations, but they are few and unreliable. They will not 'stand the test of any scientific criticism.' Besides, it is not the mere member of a society that Dr. Schechter is anxious to find. One does not become a saint, he says, by subscribing to a certain set of rules, though he admits that a man may be a saint 'despite his being a member of a society or community composed of professional saints.' Saintliness is within. As an ancient Midrash has it, 'As often as Israel perceived the Holy One (blessed be He), they became saints.'

What *is* a saint, then? And what is saintliness? Saintliness, says Dr. Schechter, 'is the effect of a personal religious experience when man enters into close communion with the Divine.'

'When man enters into close communion.' A single glimpse, a passing glance, will not do. The glance must be prolonged into communion. And how it may be prolonged the Rabbis give a hint when they say that 'Israel, when they became saints, sang a song.' They sang a song, and they gave themselves, as another Rabbi recommends, to benediction and to prayer. These two, says Dr. Schechter, cover all the manifestations of the soul in which communion is to be found. These two are the mystical manifestations of a saint.

Now if prayer and song make a man a saint, the lady must have been wrong; there are many saints in Judaism. Dr. Schechter is quite certain that the lady was wrong. And he seems to be thinking of the lady when he utters the memorable sentence: 'It is one of the great tragedies of modern Judaism that it knows itself so little.'

Last year there was published a volume of sermons by an American Methodist, Dr. Carl G. Doney, entitled *The Throne-Room of the Soul.* One of the sermons is on 'The Purpose of Power,' and in some of its phrases it recalls the article on 'Samson' by Professor Vernon, already noticed. Its text is 'A man shall be . . . as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land' (Is 32^2).

As soon as that sermon was remembered, there arose the possibility of so dealing with the career of Samson as to bring out his place in the progress of revelation. Let the text be Dr. Doney's: 'A man shall be . . . as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'

What man? Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? The evangelical tradition says 'of Jesus.' It leaps the centuries and comes to Christ. And it is not wrong. All the beautiful texts in the Bible find their fulfilment in Him. But we need not leap the centuries. Isaiah meant the king of Judah, first of all, perhaps. And after the king of Judah any man. Are not his words, translated as Delitzsch would translate them, 'And *every one* shall be . . . as the shadow of a gigantic rock in a parched land?'

It is a call to every one, to every one who has received the gift of power and recognizes it. And the call is to use the power so as to become a shelter, so as to become the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Let us take examples. It would be best if we could take ordinary instances, the men and women of like passions, and of like circumstances, such as we are. For the power is given to every one to become the shadow of a great rock. The recognition of the gift may be wanting as well as the use of it. But whoever will may have it and use it. There is no doubt that it would be best if we could take ordinary instances, but it is not possible. Ordinary men and women are not sufficiently well known. There is not enough known about them. We must take outstanding examples. Let us take Samson first.

It is not easy, as Professor Vernon has said, to make use of the career of Samson for edification. But we know that he received power. It is distinctly stated that the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. And he used it. He used it according to his understanding and according to his circumstances. His power was in his own right arm. Single-handed he sought to stem the tide of Philistine encroachment. The effort was inadequate, but it was not so utterly inadequate as it seems to us. For it was made in the youth of the nations, and nations, like men, make more of physical strength in their youth than afterwards. According to the gift that was given him, and in spite of certain disabilities, Samson did become to his own time and people the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

The land was very weary. These uncircumcised Philistines were a sore trial. Immigrants into the land of Palestine, which is now called after their name, they had come from afar—some say the island of Crete—and they had seized or built certain strong cities by the seacoast. They were able and ambitious. They desired to possess the whole land. They were not careful to use legitimate means of accomplishing it. Already it had begun to be a life and death struggle between Israel and the Philistines.

And what if the Philistines should win? Is there a promise that through *them* all the nations of the earth shall be blessed? Will Isaiah come from Ashdod? Will the Messiah be born in Askelon? There Samson stood, the shadow of a great rock in that weary, weary land, using the power that had been given him, and in the way he understood it had been given him to use.

Take Samuel next. Samson was an athlete: Samuel was a statesman. Samson used the hand: Samuel used the head. The war is still with the Philistines. But it has now become manifest that no single hand, however strong, can bring relief. Samuel's task is to gather the tribes of Israel together and make a nation of them.

It may be that when the tribes of Israel feel the throb of nationality they will demand a king. Will Samuel refuse to give them a king? Will he plead that they have no king but Jahweh? He may have to give them a king. For God's ways are not as our ways. Through the gift of a king, a King may come.

Moreover, the war is still with the Philistines. And the Philistines are now more formidable than they were in the days of Samson. It may be, not only that the tribes of Israel must be gathered into a nation, but also that the nation requires a leader. And when Saul presented himself—look at him, head and shoulders taller, and a king every inch of him, for it is still the world's youth and the physical has more than its value—when Saul appeared, Samuel anointed him king. Samuel doubted the wisdom of it. But we see now that in that self-effacing act Samuel had become to his people as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Let Isaiah come next. If Samson used his power with the hand, and Samuel with the head, Isaiah reached the heart. But first his own heart must be reached. He must himself get into right relation with God before he can begin to do the work which God has given him to do. Is this a new departure in God's leading? It is most momentous.

Samson had a personal feud with the Philistines, and that personal feud was the occasion (shall we say the opportunity?) for the exercise of the gift which God had given him, that the Philistines might be kept in check. Samuel was a patriot. The personal feud was swallowed up in the national quarrel. Now, the first duty of the patriot is obedience. But obedience to whom? Obedience to the superior. One man has soldiers under him, and he says to this one Go, and he goeth, and to another Come, and he cometh. But he himself is also set under authority. And when it comes to the king at last, even he has his superior in Jahweh. Samuel had to teach Saul that to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

And it sometimes happens that stern things have to be done by the patriot in the name of obedience. 'Then Samuel said, Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.'

But there is a greater sphere than the patriot's.

It is the sphere of the prophet. And there is a greater virtue than obedience. It is reverence. Isaiah learns first of all that the God of Israel is a holy God; and then he learns that the God of Israel is the God not of Israel only, but of the whole earth.

He learns that the God of Israel is a holy God. Samson was not concerned with holiness in God, or with its immediate consequence, righteousness in man. A rude sense of justice he had, but little sense of obligation to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before his God. Even Samuel was more concerned with the welfare of the nation than with his own moral approach to God. Isaiah can do nothing until his lips have been touched with the live coal from off the altar. It is most momentous.

And as soon as he learns that God is a God of holiness, Isaiah learns also that He is the God of the whole earth. The same God who reaches to the heart stands in the centre of the Universe. And ludicrous as it will appear in moments of unbelief, he sees that his message is to the inhabitants of Sidon and to the men of Babylon, and he answers at once, 'Here am I, send me.'

The last is Paul. The athlete, the statesman, the prophet—beyond these there is a higher, the Christian. John the Baptist was a prophet—there hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist. Nevertheless he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.

What is the Christian's secret? It is love. Samson did not understand it. He considered neither the Philistines nor the foxes when he sent the burning brands through the corn. Samuel did not understand it. 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel'—and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. Isaiah did not understand it. But stay—Isaiah had at least a glimpse of it. Or if not Isaiah, then that other who said, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.'

For if love is the secret of the Christian, the secret of love is self-sacrifice. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels (and of prophets), and have not love, I am nothing. Love suffereth long and is kind.'

The shadow of a great rock? Samson will do in the days of youth; Samuel in manhood, when patriotism is the divinity; Isaiah as the years pass, and the patriot finds that there is a God of the Gentile as well as of the Jew. But there is no refuge for a whole wide world of weariness except in the love of Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

The Advent of the Father.

By the Rev. William A. Curtis, M.A., B.D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Aberdeen.

In 1890, after many years of self-denying labour, Mr. Allan published an admirable history of the breezy Lammermoor Parish of Channelkirk, (anciently Childeschirche, *i.e.* Cuthbert's Church), whose people are his flock in spiritual things. Full of minute detail, leaving no house or holding unremembered and no stone unturned, the book was a signal act of ministerial piety towards the parish. Last year Mr. Allan published *The Advent of the Father*.

In *The Advent of the Father*,[1] Mr. Allan has shown that as he moved to and fro among the homesteads of his people at the head of the

[1] *The Advent of the Father*. By Archibald Allan, M.A., Minister of Channelkirk. Glasgow: Maclehose, 1907. Pp. viii + 486. Price 6s.