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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE fourth volume of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS has been published, and now a third of the work is in our hands. These four volumes have all been issued within four years, which is just half the length of time it took to publish the same number of volumes of *The Dictionary of the Bible*. And yet there is more matter in each volume of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS, and more work on the part of the contributors and the editors. But the editors' staff is now larger; and fuller experience produces quicker as well as better results.

How is an Encyclopædia made? First of all the need for it has to be realized. Next a clear conception has to be formed in the mind of the editor. He has to determine what is to be the character of the work, and what its scope. Then a list of the topics to be included in it has to be prepared. In the case of a Dictionary of the Bible it is easy enough to prepare a list of topics. There are dictionaries in existence, and all that a new editor has to do is to work over the best of them, and see whether any of the entries are unnecessary, and whether any entries are awanting; more especially whether recent scholarship has brought any topics to the front which were not recognized before. That is comparatively plain sailing. In the case of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS, the editor was confronted with the serious fact that there was no such work in existence. No one apparently had conceived the idea of bringing all religion within the compass of one book. Where were the subjects found?

They were found at first in books. A whole library of books was ransacked for them, and a first tentative list was made out. This list was then separated into parts. Out of it were formed a Semitic and Egyptian list, a Christian list, a Buddhist list, a Muhammadan list, a Greek and Roman list, a Persian list, a Primitive list. Of each of these lists copies were made, and these copies were sent to men who were authorities in the particular department of study. A copy of the Semitic list was sent to Driver, one to Nöldeke, to Goldziher, Sayce, Barton, Paton, Pinches, and others. Copies of the Buddhist list were similarly sent to Buddhist scholars; and so with all the rest. An Ethical and Psychological list was also made out separately and sent to Baldwin, Dorner, Eucken, Iverach, Lloyd Morgan, Paulsen, Sorley, Royce, Arthur Thomson, and others. When these men received their copy, they went over it, scoring out redundancies, supplying deficiencies, marking words they wished to write upon, suggesting authors for other topics.

These lists returned, the editor went over them, one by one and word by word. He brought them

together again, and made out a comprehensive list, covering the whole field of Religion and Ethics. But there was still much to do and many books to read before the list was complete and ready for the assigning of the articles to their authors. When, however, it was ready, the most difficult step in the making of the Encyclopædia was accomplished.

In finding authors for the articles the editor was greatly indebted to the individual lists which had been returned. Altogether this part of the work proved easier than had been anticipated. The best men were found willing to undertake such subjects as fell within their province. No man was invited to take up anything that he had not already studied. It may be noticed that in the four volumes now issued, a considerable proportion of the writers contribute but one article. The founder of the Church Army is an authority on the Church Army and nothing else. The founder of Christian Endeavour is an authority on Christian Endeavour. And when more than one article comes from one contributor the range is strictly defined. Professor De GROOT touches nothing that is not Chinese; Professor NÖLDEKE will not move beyond the bounds of Ancient Arabia.

When an article arrives it is submitted to 'preparation for the press.' At this stage what is known as the 'blue pencil' is in evidence, sometimes much in evidence, sometimes, however, very little. For there are men who were born to write in encyclopædias: they write clearly and yet succinctly; they arrange their matter in the best order, they themselves suggest the passages that may be thrown into small type. There are other men, however, who are not born to do these things and never learn to do them. After the blue pencil has done its work, the article is typewritten and several copies of the typescript are taken. A copy is sent to the author, who goes over it with interest and returns it,—sometimes with remarks. A copy is also read by each of five editors. The corrections made on all these copies are then transferred to one copy, which is sent to press. The article has at last reached the hands of the printer.

Eight copies are made of what is called the 'first proof.' The author receives two; he reads and returns one, and retains the other for reference. The editors read their copies. Again the whole is transferred to one copy and sent back to the printer. The next proof is in page form. The same process of reading is gone over again and the pages are returned to the printer. This is done three or four times, in some cases five or six times, before the sheet is finally passed for printing off.

But what does the proof-reading on the part of the editors mean? It means in the case of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS the reading of every word in the article with the most scrupulous care. It means the verifying of every reference and every quotation contained in it. For although the author is chosen as the greatest authority on the subject, his work is read on the supposition that he is fallible. Every statement that he makes is subjected to scrutiny; every man's name, the title of every book, every date and place of publication is submitted to independent verification. Errors which can be corrected by the means at the editors' disposal are corrected, the author, of course, seeing the correction that is made and accepting it. When a reference cannot be verified and there is the least suspicion of its correctness, the author's attention is in every case drawn to it, and the sheet is kept till the editor is satisfied. For an Encyclopædia which cannot be trusted in matters of fact is not worth publishing.

Three things are kept steadily before the editors' minds: first, the aim of the work; next, its reliability; lastly, its readability. Of the first two something has been said; the last is worth a sentence or two also. A reviewer of the first volume (it was that acute scholar who contributes a literary article every week to *The Methodist*

Recorder) remarked humorously that there were authors in it who never wrote so well before. For the editor holds that it is time the reproach of unreadableness were removed from encyclopædias. The articles are condensed, but a condensed article should be more easily and more agreeably read than a profuse or prolix article. It depends upon simple things. Are the sentences complete, the syntax correct, the paragraphs in order, the style characteristic of the author and suitable to the theme? In short, is it really good idiomatic English? The editor has counted it part of his business to see that it is. And, greatest triumph of all, the translations are indistinguishable from original English writing.

What is the use of this Encyclopædia? What is its use to a preacher?

It contains all that a preacher has to preach. It contains all the Christian doctrine, and all the Christian ethics. It sets aside as unnecessary a whole library of books through which the preacher has to wade in order to know what the message of the gospel is and how that message may be proclaimed with most power. It makes vague notions definite—vague notions of Christ and Christianity, of faith and love, of individual responsibility, of fellowship with God and man. It makes wrong-thinking right, and it brings all right-thinking into order.

But the Encyclopædia does more for the man than for the preacher. Before we can preach we must *be*. Men who have passed the prime of their life are afraid of this Encyclopædia. Their doctrine is determined long ago. They may find difficulty in making it interesting now from day to day, but they cannot change it. For change in the doctrine means first of all change in the man. The whole religious outlook has altered within a generation, and a man who is past fifty must be changed in his whole mental equipment to understand and to make use of it. Words like 'psychology' and 'sociology' mark the change somewhat, but there is no word which marks it as does the word 'religion.'

In the *Ethics of the Dust*, RUSKIN has a passage which gives promise of that spring which he scarcely saw even as spring and which only now is passing into summer. He introduces it with the anecdote (which he tells us in the preface is true) of the child of three whose friend had gone abroad. 'The morning after Alice had gone, Dotty was very sad and restless when she got up, and went about, looking into all the corners, as if she could find Alice in them, and at last she came to me, and said, "Is Alie gone over the great sea?" And I said, "Yes, she is gone over the great, deep sea, but she will come back again some day." Then Dotty looked round the room; and I had just poured some water out into the basin; and Dotty ran to it, and got up on a chair, and dashed her hands through the water, again and again; and cried, "Oh, deep, deep sea! send little Alie back to me!"'

Says RUSKIN: 'The whole heart of Greek mythology is in that; the idea of a personal being in the elemental power;—of its being moved by prayer; and of its presence everywhere, making the broken diffusion of the element sacred.'

What leads him to tell this anecdote? It is the discovery, which RUSKIN may not have been the first and certainly has not been the last to make, that the more definite our own faith is, we are the more ready to appreciate the faith of others; the more firmly we grasp the facts and principles of our own religion, the more do we see the necessity of understanding what religion means to other nations. 'I assure you,' he says, 'strange as it may seem, our scorn of Greek tradition depends, not on our belief, but our disbelief, of our own traditions.' And again, 'Do not think you will ever get harm by striving to enter into the faith of others, and to sympathize, in imagina-

tion, with the guiding principles of their lives. So only can you justly love them, or pity them, or praise.'

No doubt to the preacher who lives from hand to mouth, RUSKIN and Religion are together both barred and banned. God forgive him and us that any preacher should have to live from hand to mouth. Certain it is that such preaching must be nothing, of no more efficacy for the coming of the Kingdom than the twittering of the sparrows on the church roof. If the preaching is to be anything, the man must be more than the preacher. In short, he must be a man of God, fully furnished unto every good work. And this THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS seeks to do for him.

It is some time since we had a volume of the series which goes by the name of 'American Lectures on the History of Religions.' The best known volumes of the series are Brinton's *Primitive Religions* and Cheyne's *Life after the Exile*. The new volume is on Babylonia and Assyria, its exact title being *Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria* (Putnam; 9s. net). Its author is Professor MORRIS JASTROW, Jun., Ph.D., of the University of Pennsylvania.

Throughout the volume, which is a substantial octavo of nearly 500 pages, there runs a distinction which is new in the study of Babylonian and Assyrian religion, although it is of the utmost importance. It is the distinction between the religion of the people and the religion of the priests. Perhaps we might express the distinction roughly by saying that the religion of the people was religion mixed with magic, while the religion of the priests was religion modified by theological speculation. It is a distinction which is seen most clearly in the views that were held of the state of the dead. And the moment we see how unmistakable is the distinction in Babylonia, we are compelled to ask whether there was not a like distinction in Israel.

We are compelled to ask if the Book of Ecclesiastes, for example, tells us what was passing through the minds of the people of Israel. Professor JASTROW does not think it does. He thinks that we are nearer the mind of the people when we read the story of the witch of Endor than when we pursue the religious speculations of the Preacher. But the distinction is more difficult to make in Israel than among the Babylonians. In Israel we have little besides the Bible to work with, and we cannot tell very easily how much of the Bible is folk-belief and how much priestly modification. But in Babylonia there are texts and tablets of unadulterated folk-lore, so that the two forms of religion can be separated and set side by side.

It was the belief of the people of Babylonia that, after this life has come to an end, men and women continue to exist in a conscious or semi-conscious state. It is not an enviable condition. The dead are condemned to inactivity, and it is an inactivity that carries with it the loss of all that has made life worth living. Deep down in the bowels of the earth they are huddled together in a cave. The place is dark, gloomy, and damp. In one poetic work it is described as a neglected and forlorn palace where dust has been allowed to gather. There are slight modifications of this belief. The dwelling-place of the dead is sometimes pictured as a great city, and sometimes, curiously enough, as if it were the temple of a god. But whatever the name or metaphor used, all the sources emphasize the darkness and gloom of the abode of the dead. It is just such a place as Job has in mind when he says (10^{22}) that there even 'the light is as darkness.' Nor is there any return from it. Once and again the shade of some dead man may rise up to earth in order to trouble the living. But it is only to return, after a short visit, to that land of darkness from which there is no escape for ever.

This was the belief of the people, and all their belief; it was not all the belief of the priests. By

speculation, or revelation if you will; by contact, perhaps, in later years with foreign thinking, the priests of Babylonia had reached at least the faint inkling of a view that the gods were actuated by justice and mercy, and that they could not condemn all alike to a fate so sad as eternal confinement in a dark cave. Besides *Aralû*, the abode of gloom, there was also, they came to believe, an 'Island of the Blest,' situated at the confluence of the streams to which those were carried who had won the favour of the gods. Ut-Napishtim, the Babylonian Noah, had won the favour of the gods. When the rest of mankind were destroyed in the Deluge, Ut-Napishtim and his wife were carried to this island by Ea, the god of humanity, and together continued there to lead a life not unlike that of the immortal gods.

These favourites of the gods, however, were excessively few. This is a great and unaccountable surprise. The kings of Babylonia were not sent to the 'Island of the Blest.' The priests themselves do not seem to have found their way thither. Like the kings and heroes of the Greek epic, they all pass together to the land of no return, to the dark and dismal dwelling far below the earth. An exception is not made even in the case of kings like Sargon, or Naram-Sin of Akkad, or Dungi of the Ur dynasty, although these kings have the sign for deity attached to their names and had temples dedicated in their honour just like the gods. Professor JASTROW thinks that the explanation of this may be that the divinity of the Babylonian kings was a political and not a religious prerogative. The head of the State was identified, as it were, with the tutelary god. As soon as he ceased to be head of the State the identification ceased; he became a mere man, and passed to where almost all mere men go.

There is one remarkable thing about the ideas which the Babylonians had regarding the state of the dead. Whether it was popular belief or priestly speculation, no ethical ingredient seems ever to have entered into it. Never once is it hinted in the religious literature of Babylonia or Assyria that the life lived on earth had anything to do with the condition of the life after death. Never once is it suggested that the wicked will find a retribution or the good a reward. There is no figure in Babylonian or Assyrian religion like the Osiris of the Egyptian religion, that judge of the dead who weighs the good deeds against the bad in order to decide the destiny of the soul. While a man is alive he is expected to do everything in his power by confession of sin and by elaborate expiatory rite to secure the favour of the gods or appease their anger. But all his hopes are centred upon earthly happiness and present success. The gods have an interest in the living; with the dead they have no concern.

And so we find that if, once in a way, a man or woman is carried after death to the 'Island of the Blest,' it is not on the ground of character or conduct. In the Bible we find Noah, like Job, spoken of as perfect and righteous, and that is the explanation of his escape from the Flood. But in Babylonian literature no such encomium is passed on Ut-Napishtim, of whom the utmost that is said is that he was 'a very clever one.'

Is this not the essential difference between the religion of Babylonia and the religion of Israel? Professor JASTROW thinks it is. 'Had an ethical factor been introduced, in however faint a degree, we should have found,' he says, 'a decided modification of the primitive views in regard to the fate of the dead. Perhaps there might have been a development not unlike that which took place among the Hebrews, who, starting from the same point as the Babylonians and Assyrians, reached the conclusion that a god of justice and mercy extended his protection to the dead as well as to the living, and that those who suffered injustice in this world would find a compensatory reward in the next.'

Dr. Edward Carus SELWYN, the author of *St. Luke the Prophet* and other books like it, has

published yet another and a larger volume, to which he has given the title of *The Oracles in the New Testament* (Hodder & Stoughton; 10s. 6d. net).

It is a book of incessant provocation. We do not mean that it always provokes unto love and to good works; but it always provokes to thinking. There is perhaps not one single page of the book with which the student of the Gospels will be wholly in agreement. But there must be very few pages that do not make him stop to think again.

For example. Dr. SELWYN is discussing the date of Christ's birth. Following St. Luke, he maintains that the Nativity took place at the time when Quirinius was *legatus* of Syria, in 6 A.D. There is nothing, he says, in Luke which conflicts with this statement. But what, then, will he do with Lk 3^{23}?

Take the reading of that verse according to WESTCOTT and HORT: 'And Jesus himself when he began was about thirty years of age, being the son, as was supposed, of Joseph.' What is the meaning of 'when he began'? The Revisers say the meaning is, when He began to teach. But that is a mere supposition; and it is scarcely possible, if that had been the meaning, that the words 'to teach' would have been omitted. Dr. SELWYN follows BLASS.

Now BLASS is not satisfied with 'when he began to teach,' and he is not satisfied with 'when he began.' 'When he began,' he says, is unintelligible. Following CLEMENT he changes one letter of one word (ἀρχόμενος into ἐρχόμενος), and then he gets the translation 'coming' in place of 'when he began.' But coming to what? Coming to the Baptism, says CLEMENT. This is CLEMENT'S supposition. And it is just as difficult to believe that 'coming' could be written for 'coming to the Baptism,' as that 'when he began' could be written for 'when he began to teach.'

Let us keep to 'coming.' It might be rendered 'he that cometh.' Now 'he that cometh' is a prophetic term of the Messiah. There is no article with it, just as there is no article with the word for Messiah (χριστός) itself. Luke was fully aware of it as a technical term. It is part of the question which the Baptist sent his disciples to put to Jesus; and it is found in the Hosanna cry: 'Blessed is he that cometh.'

Whereupon we read the verse: 'Now Jesus himself was the coming one'—and the difficulty about the chronology disappears.

'If thou wilt thou canst.' These are the two attributes of God which seem to the popular mind to be for ever in conflict. At the present time it is His power that is in doubt. We have had the Divine Fatherhood so often and so eloquently recommended to us; we have so often been told that 'like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth'—not them that fear Him only, but all mankind, that we have come to believe that God is a God of good intention. But what is to be said of the pain and the poverty that are in the world? We read that it is not the will of our Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. We come to the conclusion that His will is good but He has not the power to make it prevail.

Some time ago, say about the time of the Reformation, it was all the other way. God was a potter; men were the clay in His hands. He had issued His decrees and was daily executing them in the works of creation and providence. The familiar texts were taken from the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: 'For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then

unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?'

Go back another step. In the days of our Lord the will and the power of God were in harmony. What He desired to do that He did. But it was a disastrous harmony. For all the acts of God's providence were directed for the benefit of those in whom He was well pleased. And He was well pleased with that select number only who knew the Law and kept it. The rest—and they were almost the whole race of mankind—were outside His concern and apart from His care. 'This people who knoweth not the law are cursed.'

Jesus broke that harmony. He did not deny that the will and the work of God go together, but He compelled men to consider them separately. He stood for God. He deliberately stood to them in God's stead. When they thought of God, He demanded that they should think of Him. When they saw Him, He was surprised if they did not see God. Now as He stood there, to all appearance a man among men, it was inevitable that they should make up their minds about His attributes separately.

And it is no surprise to find that they first made up their minds about His power. 'If thou wilt thou canst.' For the evidence of His power was every day around them, and He daily drew attention to it. He insisted upon their noticing it. 'That the Son of man hath power on earth'—He thereupon cured the man of his paralysis. He even made it the final and sufficient test of faith. 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?'

For no one who acknowledged the power of God in Christ would be long in acknowledging His goodwill. 'If thou wilt thou canst.' The answer came immediately: 'I will.' And not in word only but in deed. So it was always. His daily life declared His own goodwill. He went about doing good. And so it may be said that the moment they recognized in Him the mighty power of God, that moment they knew as never before how gracious God is.

Thus to those who believed, the harmony between the attributes of God, which Christ seemed at first to destroy, was restored. And the sinner was subject of it quite as much as the saint. What consternation He must have caused among the righteous when He said, 'This man'—this publican and sinner—'went down to his house justified rather than the other'—more just in the sight of God than the just man. This outcast of God went down to his house more under the favour of God than the erstwhile exclusive favourite.

Now return for a moment to the beginning. In our own day we believe in God's goodwill, but we do not believe in His power. What do we think prevents Him from working out His will? There are two answers, the one scientific, the other philosophical.

The scientific answer is, the nature of things. The student of science does not deny the existence of God. Or, if he does, in doing so he is not a student of science. And he does not deny His benevolence. But he says that, however benevolent God may be, He is continually prevented from translating His benevolence into beneficence. He points to the struggle for existence up and down the whole scale of life. And the conclusion he comes to is that there is a nature of things that is more than God. And if it is urged that God must Himself be the author of this nature of things, he replies that then God must have found it impossible to make the world without curtailing His own omnipotence.

The answer to the man of science is, that all questions of what God might have done are philo-

sophical and not scientific questions. As a man of science he has therefore nothing to do with them. Let him attend to the nature of things. That is matter of observation and legitimate inference. Does the struggle for existence defy God's power?

What answer can we give? The answer is the acknowledgment of God in Christ. For the moment that a man recognizes God in Christ he sees, first of all, and sees clearly, that God is no respecter of persons. He sees, in the next place, that it is not the will of God that any man, woman, or child, or living creature upon earth should suffer pain or pass through sorrow. But he sees also, and this is the point, that whatever suffering there may be in the world God's goodwill is not defied; it is only delayed. There are degrees of good. And he sees that the lesser good, which is freedom from pain, is delayed only that the higher good, which is freedom from sin, may be accomplished.

The philosophical dilemma is different. God cannot always carry out His will, says the philosopher, because there is a will that is superior to His. That will is Fate.

Now there is a certain fascination in the idea of a will impersonal, impalpable, but also implacable, above the will even of the Almighty. It may not differ much, as it finds its place in the mind of man, from the scientific conception of the nature of things. But in its origin it is wholly different. It is an inheritance from the Greeks.

And yet the Greeks did not believe in it. It is a marvellous thing that after all our study of the Greek religion, after all that we have been taught so confidently about those half-personal beings, the Furies and the Fates, about that altogether impersonal but much more awful being, Fate itself, it is a marvellous thing, we say, to find that the greatest scholar of the religion of Greece should come forward now to tell us that it is all a mistake. Dr. L. R. FARNELL, the author of *The Cults of the Greek States*, has just issued a book to which he has given the title of *Greece and Babylon* (T. & T. Clark; 7s. 6d.). It is a handsome octavo volume and very pleasant to read. Dr. FARNELL himself speaks of it as a comparative sketch of Mesopotamian, Anatolian, and Hellenic religions. Now in one of the chapters of this book he tells us what is known and may be relied upon as to the conception of God's power entertained by these peoples. And he says that neither Babylonians nor Greeks, in their uncontaminated days, ever believed in a Fate that was higher than the highest God.

They believed in Furies, they believed in Fates, but they were all in the hollow of God's hand. In Fate they did not believe. These are Dr. FARNELL'S words: 'It has often been popularly and lightly maintained that the Hellenic deities were subordinate to a power called Fate. This is a shallow misjudgment, based on a misinterpretation of a few phrases in Homer; we may be certain that the aboriginal Hellene was incapable of so gloomy an abstraction, which would sap the vitality of personal polytheism and which only appears in strength in the later periods of religious decay.'

So then, the belief in a Fate to which God Himself must bow is a purely philosophical conception, and as such the religious man has no concern with it. It is a hypothesis which he does not need, a hypothesis which no man needs; and it explains nothing. The moment that a man says, 'God be merciful,' he sees that with God all things are possible.