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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

We are all familiar with Q, the initial letter of the German word for 'source', the name now generally applied to the hypothetical document from which the authors of the first and third Gospels are supposed to have drawn the 'teaching' of Jesus which they have in common. But what is X? The question is raised by the publication of the revised Gospels in the Century Bible, especially by Professor J. Vernon Bartlet's *Mark*. In this edition the Synoptic Gospels are dissected, and the sections ticketed according to their supposed sources, in the manner with which we are more familiar in the Old Testament.

X has at least this advantage over Q that it suggests uncertainty. The editors are well aware that the Synoptic problem has by no means been finally solved. Professor Bartlet's own book is a reminder that the question is not even so near solution as many had supposed. It seemed for a time as if Mark's Gospel and Q, the 'teaching' source, were rocks from which mariners in the troubled waters of New Testament criticism might take their bearings. But Professor Bartlet will have none of Q, at least if by that term we mean 'a body of traditional sayings of Jesus in a connected form, with some indeterminate historical element of introductory setting' existing 'in a single written form.'

Professor Bartlet does not deny that the first and third Gospels have drawn on a common 'sayings' source, but he maintains this source was neither fixed nor written. He attaches great importance to the common apostolic tradition, a tradition which would vary somewhat in different localities. Mark's Gospel, on his theory, is based fundamentally on this common apostolic type of tradition, 'in the form best known to Mark himself, in the main that used by Peter.' The other Synoptists used other local forms of this tradition, modified perhaps under the influence of other apostles. The symbol X, then, means this local and variable apostolic tradition, which was not primarily a collection of sayings.

Are the Pharisees caricatured in the Gospels? The 'heathen' are now taking very careful note of what the missionaries say about them and their religion, and similarly the Jews are examining their ancient records to try to show that in the Christian Gospels their forefathers were painted much blacker than they were. In the index to Professor Bartlet's book the references both to Abrahams and to Montefiore have to take refuge in an 'etc.' How does Professor Bartlet deal with the criticism of aggrieved Jews?

In the first place he points out that the Mishna, on which, for example, Montefiore relies, in its written form dates from a century and a half after the

ministry of Jesus. By comparison the witness of the Synoptic Gospels is contemporary. Radical changes may take place in the religious outlook of a people in much less time than one hundred and fifty years, especially in the case of a people that has passed through heart-searching experiences. Further, it may very well be that in the conflict of the early Church with Pharisaic Judaism Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees became exaggerated in the transmission of the tradition both written and oral.

Yet there is no reason to doubt that the fundamental difference in religious attitude between Jesus and the Pharisees was the ultimate cause of the crucifixion, though the Sadducaic priests of Jerusalem may have been directly responsible. And there is one more thing to be said. Not the least of the victories of Jesus is that His prophetic conception of the Law is in our own day liberating the thoughts, the writings, and the piety of broad-minded Jewish scholars and synagogues.

Did Jesus see the end from the beginning? Professor BARTLET grants that Mark has no consciousness of any development in Jesus' conception of the nature of His ministry. Yet, without seeing their purport, Mark drops hints which seem to show that such a development took place. He narrates things clearly not expected by Jesus, things that move Him to 'surprise, disappointment, even indignation.' His filial consciousness was never dimmed, but after the first glad announcement of the coming of the Kingdom, He was reluctantly compelled to face the prospect of partial failure.

To begin with He felt and acted simply as the anointed prophet of His Father's will for Israel. But the hostility of the leaders, the irresponsiveness of the people, led Him to turn to the thought of the Servant of Jehovah, to see that the picture of the salvation of a stiff-necked people only through vicarious suffering was applicable to His ministry. The prophet's function expanded so as to include the priest's. A conflict issuing in His death and seeming defeat was inevitable. But after a brief interval, on Hosea's 'third day,' God would intervene and raise up His own cause in His people Israel, and send again His Christ to restore all things.

Professor BARTLET has a characteristic reconstruction and elucidation of the story of the Transfiguration. The reconstruction he acknowledges to be in part speculative. Matthew and Mark conceive the disciples as sharing the vision with Jesus. But Luke, adhering to his special source, gives an account which, except in one point, is consistent with the idea that the vision was for Jesus only. The one point is that he represents the disciples as actually seeing Moses and Elijah, but that feature may have been an excrescence on the tradition growing out of Peter's half-dazed comment.

Why was it Moses and Elijah that Jesus saw? The strong recoil of the disciples' minds from the idea of the rejection of Jesus had reawakened the conflict in His own mind. As Jesus wrestled in prayer with the enigma of His destiny, final victory came to Him in the assurance that rejection was God's destined way. So had it been in the picture of the Isaianic Servant. So had it been, though less obviously, in the case of Israel's great deliverer, Moses. This was the lesson that Stephen found in the career of Moses. The Moses who delivered His people was the Moses who had been rejected by them (Ac 7^{35}).

This is not simply clever conjecture; for the author of the Assumption of Moses, written just before Jesus' day, speaks of 'what Moses suffered' in Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness during forty years. In the case of Elijah also, that it was his sufferings on which the mind of Jesus was dwelling seems clear from the conversation as they descended the hill. 'Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they listed, even as it is written of him.'

Of the revised Gospels in the Century Bible, the editions of Luke and John are revisions of the former

issues, those of Matthew and Mark are for all practical purposes new books. Among the four volumes there is a marked difference in the point of view. It is well that it should be so, as otherwise the impression would be given that the unanimity on disputed questions is greater than it is.

Take a test case. The Gospels seem to record three cases of raising from the dead. What have the four editors to say about them? We turn first to the story of Lazarus in the Fourth Gospel. Dr. McClymont leaves unaltered his former statement. This story is neither a mythical nor a legendary growth; nor is it an allegory or fiction invented by the writer to illustrate the doctrine of the Logos, nor is it the story of Dives and Lazarus turned into a miracle. The raising of Lazarus as an historic fact was the culmination of the Saviour's ministry.

The late Principal Adeney, who writes on Luke, contents himself with simply expounding the story of the widow's son of Nain. On Jairus' daughter he is non-committal. 'She is not dead, but sleepeth' might be intended literally, but more probably Jesus was rebuking the hopeless conception of death. Professor Box on Matthew writes that in the account in Matthew and in Mark there is nothing inconsistent with the view that the girl was in a swoon (though Matthew v.[18] has to be reckoned with). He acknowledges, however, that Luke thought the girl was dead.

Professor Bartlet shows his characteristic courage and caution. He notes that Professor Menzies thinks the general effect of Mark is that Jesus acted throughout as if the child were not dead. Luke adds details to make it clear that in his judgment the child was dead. Dr. Bartlet thinks the truth lies between the two. Probably Mark took quite literally the words of Jesus—'The child is not dead, but sleepeth.' The general impression of the whole incident is that Jesus went forward in full faith in His Father's gracious will, to do that which the facts of the case demanded—'whether to heal or to bind up the broken-hearted with words of faith and undying hope in God as Father.'

Much has of late been written on the religious uniqueness of Israel, and with most of it every student of Comparative Religion, indeed every one with even a smattering of history, will be constrained to agree. Israel has presented the world with a conception of God more entirely satisfying than that of any other people, and with a Personality who has no peer among the sons of men. The Jew has left a deep and abiding mark upon the religious language and life of the world.

It comes, therefore, upon us with a shock of surprise to be told by the Rev. W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D., in his recently published volume on *The Sacred Dance* (Cambridge University Press; 8s. 6d. net), that 'the religious uniqueness of the Israelites, as a nation, has been, and often still is, exaggerated to an undue extent.' Yet Dr. Oesterley is right. 'The nation as a whole,' he says, 'was for many centuries no better and no worse than others.'

The truth is that, when we speak of the uniqueness of Israel, we are really thinking of the uniqueness of her great men, notably of the prophets. Doubtless the nation did later—especially after the Exile—rise to a position of 'isolated superiority.' But this national achievement was really and ultimately due to the mighty personalities of the prophets who, controlled and guided by the Divine Spirit, developed inherited conceptions of God into a religion which, for ethical power and purity, had no equal in the ancient world. Speaking generally, it is not so much the people of Israel as her spiritual aristocracy that comes to utterance in the Old Testament.

More or less is this true of all literature, and very particularly of ancient literature. It is the voice of the aristocracy, intellectual or spiritual, that we hear in it. Time sifts, and, on the whole, it is the best that survives. No one supposes that every Greek epic poet was as good as Homer, or every

statesman as good as Pericles, or every historian as good as Thucydides, or every dramatist as good as Æschylus, or every philosopher as good as Plato. These men were head and shoulders above the people, the intellectual aristocrats of their nation.

Of course these men, like all men, were rooted in national soil, and had much, very much, in common with their contemporaries. Homer is universal, but he is first of all Greek; Shakespeare is universal, but he is first of all English; Burns is universal, but he is first of all Scottish. All the same, these men are giants, and the average of national attainment cannot fairly be inferred from them.

This is more than usually true of the great men of Israel. It is not only that they tower above their contemporaries in ethical insight and passion, but that they challenge those contemporaries, they oppose them, they threaten them, they wage implacable war upon their ethical conceptions and behaviour. Amos declares that their defiance of the moral order will bring upon them an inescapable doom. Hosea finds that there is no fidelity, nor love, nor knowledge of God in the land. Isaiah announces that their callous indifference to the prophetic word is so complete that it can only be adequately punished by the utter desolation of the land. Jeremiah sorrowfully complains that there is not a man in all Jerusalem who does justice and seeks truth. And Ezekiel fiercely challenges the whole history of his people as a continuous exhibition of unadulterated paganism.

In the face of these prophetic criticisms, it is easier to say that the prophets were unique men than that pre-exilic Israel was a unique people. The pages of the historians, too, reflect the same lamentable and unremitting apostasies as the speeches of the prophets. There Israel is described as a stiff-necked people, walking in the way of the heathen, working wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger, and richly deserving the doom which ultimately fell upon them. There is a measure of truth in the unlovely picture of Israel drawn by the caustic pen of Friedrich Delitzsch in his deplorably one-sided book 'Die grosse Täuschung'; prophets and historians alike are witness to that. Even in the century after the Exile, when one might have supposed that the question of monotheism was settled for ever, we find Egyptian Jews frankly recognizing other gods than Jahweh and worshipping them alongside of, and in association with, Him.

All this only enhances our appreciation of the uniqueness of the prophets. It is very clear that they were not the creatures of their environment. Rather were they its sharpest critics, and assuredly not from it did they derive their message. The word that they uttered, while in a profound sense their own, was in a yet profounder sense not their own: it was the word that the Lord had given them to utter. They spoke because they could do no other; because, as one of them put it, the Lord had revealed His secret to His servants the prophets. The message that for centuries they had so persistently reiterated, corroborated as it was by the stern facts of history, did at length sink into the national heart and conscience, and Israel became, and to this day has remained, a unique people.

Yet even in earlier religious usages there are glimpses of this religious superiority of the Hebrews, which is so resplendent in the prophets. Dr. OESTERLEY closes his discussion of the Ecstatic Dance with these impressive words: 'Reviewing the subject as a whole, there is no doubt that Hebrew and Greek practice here illustrates their religious superiority over all the other races. But of these two the Hebrews stand on distinctly higher ground; there is not the remotest reason for believing that the ecstatic dance among them was ever contaminated by the licence which often obtained among the Greeks. Even in the lower planes of religious thought and practice the Hebrews showed that they were in the vanguard of religious evolution.'

Dr. OESTERLEY'S book on *The Sacred Dance*, from which the preceding quotation is taken, is a

solid contribution to a little known department of Folk-lore. He covers, as every folk-lorist must, a wide territory in his search for relevant facts. He brings before us nations, ancient and modern, cultured and uncultured—Hittites, Babylonians, Assyrians, Syrians, Hebrews, Arabs, Greeks, Romans, North American Indians, Malays, Polynesians, and others. But perhaps it would not be unfair to say that his real, at any rate his dominating, interest is the elucidation of the Old Testament. He is first of all an Old Testament scholar; and partly for this reason 'the Old Testament figures somewhat prominently' in his pages, and partly also because in that ancient Hebrew literature most of the various types of sacred dance are to be found, either directly or—as he pretty convincingly shows—by implication.

Dancing and theology may seem a rather ill-assorted pair. But dancing has been a very vital element in religion—'there was scarcely ever worship among the Greeks without song and dance'—and part of the interest of Dr. OESTERLEY's discussion is that he endeavours to pierce behind the religious usage to the theology, or 'savage philosophy,' as he sometimes calls it, underlying it. Many side-lights may be thrown upon the practices of Hebrew and other civilized religions by the analogous practices of uncultured peoples; and many a post-Biblical usage is rooted, we may be sure, in customs of immemorial antiquity which, for various reasons, have received no explicit mention in the Old Testament. Later editors, for example, would be likely to suppress allusions to customs which were manifestly incompatible with Jahweh worship.

The types of sacred dance with which Dr. OESTERLEY deals are eight: the sacred processional dance, the encircling of a sacred object, the ecstatic dance, the dance at vintage or harvest festivals, the dance in celebration of victory, the sacred dance as a circumcision rite, as a marriage rite, and as a burial or mourning rite. All these dances either demonstrably existed, or may be reasonably inferred to have existed, among the Hebrews; and of course they are found throughout the world. It is amusing to read that among the Namaquas, when any one embraces Christianity, it is said that 'he has given up dancing.'

The firmly rooted place of dancing in ancient Semitic life and religion is attested by the astonishingly large number of words to denote it; and it assumed many forms, from simple leaping to the curious limping dance of the Phœnician Baal priests on Carmel, and even to dances involving violent contortions of the body. The amended text of Hos 7^{14} shows that some, at any rate, of the Hebrews lacerated their bodies, like the Phœnician prophets in 1 K 18^{28}, by way of appealing to the deity on behalf of their corn and vines.

To Biblical students probably the most interesting parts of the discussion will be the chapters on the Marriage Dance and Ecstatic Dance. It has long been recognized that the dance which the bride in the Song 6^{13} is invited to execute is a war-dance. But why a war-dance? One theory is that the sword she carries and brandishes during her dance is intended to 'symbolize and proclaim the fact that she is prepared to defend herself from all unlawful approach of other suitors.' Others believe that it is a relic of the ancient custom of marriage by capture. To both views there are valid objections; and Dr. OESTERLEY hazards the interesting suggestion that 'the sword-dance is a relic of the custom of warding off what were supposed to be invisible foes who gather around at the time of marriages.'

In this connexion he makes another equally interesting suggestion. It is well known that dancing was believed to be a means of ensuring fertility: high leaps were supposed to have the effect of making the corn grow high. The uncultured man believes that he can put into motion the working of Nature by means of his own devising. So, argues the writer, 'if he induce or assist the spirits of fertility in producing corn and buffaloes, there is no reason

why he should not by the same means assist them in quickening the child-bearing capacity of a woman.'

Of the Ecstatic Dance there seem to have been two forms, one of which had for its purpose the forcing of the deity to answer prayer. In this, self-laceration takes place, illustrated by the prophets of Baal, who cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them. In this case the loss of consciousness does not necessarily ensue. But the more familiar type is that which had for its object union with the deity. This union is secured by the dance, which continues, with ever-increasing violence, till a state of semi-consciousness or total unconsciousness supervenes, which makes it possible for the deity to take up his abode in the body of the worshipper. Then the man is 'possessed.'

It is at this point that the superiority of the Hebrew religion is most strikingly in evidence. Among the Hebrews, Dr. OESTERLEY reminds us, 'it is the milder type that is indigenous; it is a means of receiving the spirit of Jahweh, and this for the practical purpose of divining His will and proclaiming it. The object of it was purely devotional; and when an oracle was put forth it was only to declare the will of their God.' It is here that the literary prophets stand pre-eminent. 'They rose to the higher belief that *this* means was not necessary for achieving the purpose for which it was used. It had served a useful purpose; but having served its purpose it was dropped. The prophets came to the realization that there were more spiritual means whereby union with the deity was brought about; then the sacred dance found no further place among them.'

To the student of primitive religion in general, and of ancient Hebrew religion in particular, this able and well-documented book has much to offer.

In a recent number of the *New Statesman* there is a striking article on 'The American Religious Crisis' which is of more than passing interest. It deals with the remarkable outbreak of theological and critical conservatism which is a feature of present-day American Church life. At three different centres 'incidents' have occurred which have aroused deep feeling and occasional fierce conflict that may have decisive results in the near future.

The best-known case is that of Dr. FOSDICK. He is a Baptist minister, known in this country by his excellent little book on prayer and other books on similar lines. He has been lent to a noted Presbyterian Church in New York on account of his preaching gifts, and has for long been attracting large congregations there. To those who know him from his books his teaching seems not only positive but intensely evangelical. This, however, has not saved him from prosecution on account of his 'modern' critical views, and at the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church his teaching was condemned and a resolution was passed by a majority committing that Church to the most literal acceptance of the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

At the same time two other 'cases' emerged. In New York a popular Episcopalian clergyman expressed views more radical a great deal than Dr. FOSDICK'S, and, when taken to task by his bishop, openly defied him. And then again, in the Middle West and in the Methodist Episcopal Church, still another heretic has been disturbing the waters of orthodoxy in very much the same fashion.

All this seems more like a widespread outbreak of heresy than of orthodoxy. But the remarkable thing is the strength of the movement that has emerged in answer to the heretics. It carried the Assembly of Presbyterianism and it has swept over America like a prairie fire. And, what is more remarkable still, the same intense and aggressive conservatism has shown itself recently in England. It has caused a serious fissure in one of the great missionary societies and reveals its earnestness in

a propaganda that has a powerful financial backing.

What is the explanation of this sudden and widespread movement? The writer in the *New Statesman* analyzes the situation with obvious local knowledge of American conditions. He gives two reasons. One is a post-war fear of revolutionary influences. The real force of war feeling is only now being felt and to it every radical of every kind is a Bolshevik. This is as true in the religious sphere as in others.

The other reason is to be found in the conditions of Church life in America. 'Fundamentalism,' as the conservative movement is called, has little hold in the big cities. But the great mass of American Church members, the writer says, are to be found in outlying farms and holdings away from the centres of culture. These people know nothing of the modern critical attitude, or indeed of modernism in religion of any kind. They are acquainted only with the old ways and the old creed and will have nothing to do with any other.

Professor B. W. Bacon, of Yale, himself a 'higher critic' but also a warm evangelical, goes deeper in a recent lecture delivered to American students. He thinks 'Fundamentalism' is at its root a protest against the barren 'liberalism' which has no gospel and no positive word to say about Christ, the kind of liberalism which has been associated with the name of Germany. As such, 'Fundamentalism' at heart arises from loyalty to the gospel, and for that reason Professor Bacon has a deep sympathy with it.

His contention is that those who have absorbed the newer knowledge and the critical standpoint ought to show that these are not inconsistent with warm evangelical zeal and positive faith in a supernatural Christ. That, he thinks, is the task of the evangelical critics in the near future. What the Church needs is education, and education in the truer view of Scripture by men who believe in it and also believe heartily in the Gospel of Grace revealed in the New Testament. There can be no going back from truth, but the urgent necessity of the hour is to show beyond any reasonable doubt that the truth gained by criticism is not a menace to faith but a help and a buttress to it.

The Church awaits revival and needs nothing so much. It is true, revived life will only come from the preaching of a living Saviour. But it will not come until the mass of church-going people have their belief in the Bible restored to them. Great numbers who know little of the results of criticism know at least that it has discredited the old view of inspiration. And this vague impression means loss of confidence in the Word. The old view will never be given back to these people, because it is not true. What they need is a positive view of Scripture as the Word of God that has a sound basis in truth. When that faith is built up by the Church in its members revival will come.

The Origin of a Famous Lucan Gloss.

By Rendel Harris, Litt.D., LL.D., D.D., Manchester.

When Cureton published in 1858, from a Nitrian MS. of the fifth century, what he described as the *Remains of a very ancient recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac, hitherto unknown in Europe*, it was soon recognized that a text of the Gospels had been recovered, which was of an earlier type than that which was current in the much admired and venerated Syriac Vulgate. The more its superior antiquity was established, the more important was the duty laid on New Testament critics of analysing the variations of the new text from the popular Syriac tradition, and of determining, where possible,