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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

TWENTY-THREE years ago the theological world in general, the German theological world in particular, was startled by the publication of the late Professor Friedrich Delitzsch's two lectures on Babylon and the Bible. Whatever the intention, the effect of these lectures was to contribute to the depreciation of the Old Testament and the exaltation of Babylon. The lectures evoked an enormous literature on both sides of the controversy. The heat of that discussion has died down, but—among scholars at any rate—interest in the controversy has not slackened; and the latest evidence of its vitality is furnished by the Rev. W. Lansdell WARDLE'S Hartley Lecture on *Israel and Babylon* (Holborn Publishing House; 5s.).

Be it said at once that the book renders a most valuable service. Various aspects of the subject have been dealt with from time to time. Ryle, for example, has traced the connexion of the early narratives of Genesis with Babylon, and many have dealt with the relation of Hebrew to Babylonian legislation; but Mr. WARDLE has the right to claim that no single book traverses all the ground which he has attempted to cover. His book is admirable in its mastery of detail, admirable too in its independence of judgment. The questions he discusses include The Origins of Hebrew Monotheism, The Creation Stories, Paradise and the Fall, The Antediluvians, The Deluge, The Sabbath, Yahweh, and The Legislation, and his general conclusion is that the Old Testament is by no means so heavily indebted to Babylon as is commonly supposed.

This is how he puts it—that while Canaan was deeply influenced by contacts with Babylon and Egypt long before Israel appeared upon the scene, yet in his opinion 'the judgment which would make Canaan a mere province of Babylonian culture and civilization is considerably too sweeping,' and, in any case, 'that which we most value in the Hebrew religion was not borrowed: it grew out of the spiritual experiences of Israel's great leaders and prophets.'

The incidental reference to Egypt in the last paragraph leads us to say that Mr. WARDLE'S discussion ranges fruitfully beyond the topics which the title of his book might suggest. He has several valuable paragraphs on Egypt—in particular, a careful discussion of Akhenaten's 'monotheistic reform'—and an interesting chapter on Israel's Ancestors, in which he pleads for the historicity of Abraham, and accepts his immigration into Palestine in the early part of the second millennium B.C. as the earliest origin of the Hebrew people, the second contribution coming from the Habiru (a group which is not to be identified with, but which includes, the Hebrews) in the Amarna period. Mr.

WARDLE suggestively adds that this diversity of origins is a partial explanation of the readiness with which the kingdom divided in Rehoboam's time.

In one place Mr. WARDLE expresses the fear that he may seem to be doing less than justice to Babylon. He need have no such fear. He quotes at considerable length some of the finest of the Babylonian hymns and penitential psalms, and freely admits that they express the longing of 'yearning souls stretching out faltering hands to God,' but he misses in them the bracing ethical atmosphere of the Old Testament and its confidence in a righteous and all-powerful God, and hanging about even the noblest of the hymns he finds the heavy atmosphere of polytheism.

He crosses swords with those who have argued that Israel owes her monotheism to the latent or speculative monotheism of Egypt or Babylon. He makes bold to say that the real source of that monotheism is in the religious experience of Moses, which underlies the tradition reflected in the story of the Burning Bush. The kernel of the Decalogue, perhaps even of the Book of the Covenant, goes back to Moses. (It is interesting to note that he makes the Decalogue negative throughout: the fourth commandment runs, 'Thou shalt not profane the Sabbath,' and the fifth, 'Thou shalt not injure thy father and mother.') But—to return to monotheism—there can be no real comparison between monotheism, as later Israel understood it, and what has been claimed as such for Babylon. The latter was at best vague, philosophical, speculative, esoteric, and lacked Israel's tremendous emphasis on ethics.

The Creation and the Flood stories are very judiciously handled, and the lucidity of the argument is enhanced by the generous quotations from Babylonian sources. The one thing of which Mr. WARDLE is certain is that the Biblical story of Creation is not in any sense a 'version' of the Babylonian myth. The Canaanites would no doubt be familiar with that myth, and Israel would inherit her knowledge of it from them; but—especially with reference to the P story in Gn 1—it is inconceivable that a pious Jew of the Exile could have accepted so important a story from a religion which he abhorred. There are traces, Mr. WARDLE maintains, that Gn 1 must have behind it a long development within Israel itself.

Between the Hebrew and Babylonian Flood stories there are many striking and undeniable parallels, both in form and detail. The story may have come to the Hebrews through the mediation of the Canaanites, not inconceivably it may even have come with Abraham's immigration. But the differences are even more striking than the similarities: the really remarkable thing is the entirely different spirit by which the Hebrew story is animated—a spirit to which the crass polytheistic features of the Babylonian story are simply inconceivable.

The short chapter on the Sabbath and Yahweh is full of suggestion. The word 'Sabbath' is very ancient; the Babylonian *shapattum* was the day of the full moon, and Israel's Sabbath, which, Mr. WARDLE believes, goes back to Mosaic times, may originally have been connected with the changes of the moon; but 'at present no evidence has been produced to show that the Babylonians had any real equivalent of the Hebrew Sabbath' with its humane demand for regular rest from toil. Naturally Mr. WARDLE will have nothing to do with the view that Yahweh was imported from Babylon—certainly not His character, probably not even His name.

A long section, replete with much interesting detail from the Code of Hammurabi, deals with the points of contact between Hebrew and Babylonian Law. In particular there are many striking resemblances between the Book of the Covenant and the Code of Hammurabi, but not even here will Mr. WARDLE allow that Israel borrowed. 'The evidence,' he maintains, 'falls far short of demonstrating any direct dependence of the Book of the Covenant upon the Code,' and the real explanation

of the striking similarities is probably that there is a common Semitic origin for both.

Thus the long argument marches on to its conclusion, which is that 'those who so confidently belittle the traditions and religion of Israel as being no more than copies from Babylonian models fail to justify their contention by evidence which will survive the test of close scrutiny.' In her sense of sin, in her appreciation of the superiority of ethical over ritual values, in her conception of God, Babylon is, if not immeasurably, at any rate indubitably, inferior to Israel. The Hebrew attitude to Babylonian models, even if we were historically justified in regarding them as models, is not so much one of dependence as of revulsion. And the reader who wishes to convince himself that, by the grace of God, the Hebrew people were called to render a unique religious service to humanity, will find material to form his conviction in this wise and able book.

We have called attention before to a change that is taking place in the method of presenting both philosophy and theology in books. The philosopher and theologian are condescending to the general reader and thinker and using his language. One of the great obstacles to the spread of philosophical and theological truth hitherto has been the technical language employed in both worlds. It has been hardly possible for any one not specially trained to understand a philosophical treatise because of its jargon. But to-day we seem to notice a gradual abandonment of this practice and an attempt to write in language which intelligent 'laymen' can follow.

A very good example of this is a book which has come to us from the United States. It is a fairly big book on a great subject: *Introduction to Philosophy*, and its author, Dr. G. T. W. PATRICK, is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Iowa (Allen & Unwin; 10s. 6d. net). It deals with everything included in the general term 'Philosophy,' like Theories of Reality, the Problem of God, Mind and Body, the Search for the Soul, Idealism, Dualism, Materialism, Science and Philosophy, Philosophy and Religion, Theories of Knowledge, Pragmatism, and so on, but all in the most intelligible fashion. The book is thorough and profound, but it is human and unconventional; it is engrossingly interesting and it is (every page of it) delightful reading.

Dr. PATRICK raises the question quite early in his book: Is philosophy possible or profitable? He points out that a negative answer has been given by Positivism, which asserts that we can only know phenomena and that it is useless to try to find out about ultimate reality or first causes, and also by 'Skepticism' in both its ancient and its modern forms. Huxley, for example, held that while we may not deny the existence of God we can know nothing of His real nature. What was then characteristic of the Greek attitude, especially of the later Greek attitude, has been revived in modern agnostic theories.

Dr. PATRICK'S discussion of this is extremely heartening. He points out, for example, that this faint-heartedness in view of great problems is not characteristic of the modern temper. 'A resolute and hopeful facing of every problem with persistent and undaunted efforts to solve it—that is the modern spirit.' Philosophers may differ, human judgment may be fallible, our senses may deceive us; but we will find out which of the philosophers is right, how wrong judgment may be righted, and how the deception of the senses may be corrected. The spirit that conquered the cold and danger of the Antarctic and found the Pole, the spirit that has assaulted and will overcome Everest is our spirit to-day.

Two students were discussing their courses of study. 'I am going to specialize in Organic Chemistry,' said one. 'Why?' asked the other. 'Because,' said the first, 'I believe it offers more

problems now than any other subject.' There is plenty of doubt in modern thought, but it acts, not as an anodyne to lull us into equanimity, but as a spur to drive us to further and more persistent inquiry. Doubt has an important function in our philosophizing, not only in spurring us to action, but in discouraging dogmatism.

Further, Dr. PATRICK points out that *some* world view is inevitable. Consciously or unconsciously every man makes for himself a theory of the relation of the individual to the universe. Most people who decry philosophy have a system of their own, some theory of God even if it be only a denial of His existence, some theory of the universe even if it be only the three-storey one 'Heaven above, Hell below, and the Earth in between,' some theory of values even if it be only that personal gain is the highest good. Therefore let us have as intelligent a theory as possible, formed after a critical and historical study.

It is surprising, when we make such a study, to find how much real progress has been made in solving difficult problems. There is a general impression that the history of philosophy has been a history of speculative and discarded theories, quite in contrast to the steady and triumphant progress of the physical sciences. As a matter of fact the history of science is a history of discarded theories. Euclidean geometry, Newtonian physics, and Darwinism are examples. There has been, of course, a brilliant advance in science. 'But,' says Dr. PATRICK, 'I should say that in the last twenty-five years progress in philosophy has been quite as rapid and quite as brilliant as progress in science.'

We are apt to fix our attention on the results obtained by the mechanical and industrial arts, that is, by *applied* science. And it is of this we are thinking generally when we speak of the 'progress of science.' But Dr. PATRICK raises the question whether, after all, many of these discoveries have been of advantage to humanity. 'Is it true that a pasteurised and sanitised society is not necessarily progressive or dynamic?' It is possible too much attention has been given to applied science and too little to applied philosophy. We may have acquired too much wealth and too little wisdom. 'If by philosophy we mean the search for wisdom, the appraisement of values, and the careful logical analysis of concepts, it seems to be just what the world needs now.'

In this number there will be found the first of a short series of meditations on three of the Apocryphal books. The Apocrypha, formerly an integral part of the Bible, has been excluded from public worship by the Protestant Churches generally; and, if the Apocrypha is to be taken as a whole, no one will question the wisdom of the judgment.

The fact that some of the books of the Apocrypha were not in the Hebrew Bible was stressed by Protestantism. In the Vulgate, the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church, these books are found in different parts of the Old Testament—the Wisdom of Solomon, for example, follows the Song of Songs. After the Reformation the Apocrypha appeared in Bibles between the Old and the New Testament. In Luther's Bible they appear there with the prefix 'the Apocrypha, that is, books which are not considered equal to Holy Scripture, and yet are useful and good to read.' Gradually, however, Bibles were brought out without the Apocrypha, and if it had not been for the recognition of it in the Book of Common Prayer it would be even less known than it is to-day.

It is curious to recall how fierce a controversy raged through the British and Foreign Bible Society round the question as to whether the Apocrypha should be included in the Bibles which they sent to the Continent—where it was the custom to use the Apocrypha. It was finally decided that the funds should not be used for the printing of the Apocrypha.

But the Apocrypha contains three works of real ethical and religious worth—2 Esdras, Ecclesiasticus (the Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach), and the Wisdom of Solomon. The meditations by the Reverend Arthur F. Taylor, which are given this month, are based upon texts taken from 2 Esdras. The meditations are unconnected, so that an introduction to the several books is not necessary; but it is interesting to remember that the chief problem of 2 Esdras is similar to that of the Book of Job and some of the later Psalms. The main part of the book consists of four visions. But in the visions no perfect solution of the problem is found. There is a contradiction running through them—hope in the world to come along with hopelessness because all men are irretrievably lost through sin. As Dr. Oesterley says: 'Nothing could better illustrate those alternating emotions which incessantly stir the human heart: the voice of Conscience, and trust in the Divine Mercy.' The meditations may be regarded as sidelights upon the homiletical exposition of Scripture.

History and Criticism.

By Professor Sir Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., F.B.A.

We live in a time of far more rapid increase of knowledge than has ever occurred in other ages; an increase which is quite as remarkable in our ideas of the history of man, as it is in the control and the understanding of nature around us. We can no longer regard ourselves, and the world we live in, on the old basis of what was already proved; everything is changed or modified by the fresh range of our conceptions.

We must always remember that knowledge of all kinds has been so incomplete—seeing things, as Paul says, as an enigma in a mirror—that each age has merely framed a view of things which shall suffice to hold all that it knew. Most of the framing may be mere suppositions, but it has had to be supplied to satisfy the human craving for consistency and connexion. This is especially the case in physical things, where even some most fundamental facts remain entirely irreconcilable by our present theories. How much more likely are we to find contradictions when we deal with the complexities of man and his history.

Much, or most, of the framework of ideas, shaped to contain our experiences, being thus arbitrary, it follows that increase of knowledge always involves some rearrangement of what is accepted, in order to include the new facts. We were educated on the notion of the infinitely hard impenetrable atom, and many other absolute ideas on nature and on man. When the atom has now become a whirligig, which may lose and gain properties, and be knocked into something quite different, much else has also become transmutable in our notions. What has been going on in our relation to matter, has also been going on quite as rapidly and fundamentally in questions of mind.

Our vision of the past of man, of the various stages which have built up all that we now enjoy as a common heritage, has been rapidly extending. A century ago the Old Testament was the one window into that past which lay before the age of the classics. We now have opened many other windows, from which we look over that long scene from different angles. It is vastly more complex, more varied, richer and older, than our fathers had imagined. In the past of our own land we were still at Dr. Johnson's standpoint, that no one could ever know more of the ancient Britons than was recorded, and I remember the time when no one in England understood a flint implement. Now a whole science of history has grown up based on the understanding of the tangible remains of man; the 'ancient Briton' has dissolved into a complexity of invaders of all ages, who have poured in, and been fused together. Our vision has been lengthened a hundredfold—our sense of the past is entirely transformed.

What has been going on in our midst at home may make us realize more readily the expansion of our view in other lands, especially in those