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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

It is unfortunate that many excellent books by continental scholars, and not a few of even first-rate importance, remain inaccessible to English readers who know no language but their own. While it is true, as one may gratefully acknowledge, that some of the epoch-making work of very distinguished scholars, such as Wellhausen and Harnack, has appeared in English dress, it is equally true that work, scarcely less important, both of these and other scholars, has never been translated. Duhm's 'Theology of the Prophets' and Gressmann's influential work on eschatology remain unknown to students ignorant of German, as also all of Sellin's numerous and stimulating contributions to Old Testament science except his Introduction—so well translated by Mr. W. Montgomery—for which we have Professor Peake to thank.

But it is peculiarly unfortunate that Gunkel has remained so long unknown to the English-speaking public. For not only is he a great scholar who has made substantial contributions to Biblical science, but he has done brilliant work of a more popular kind, notably his little book entitled 'Selected Psalms'; and even his scientific work is invested with such literary grace that it could hardly fail to interest and even to fascinate the educated layman who had any interest at all in Biblical science. It is happily possible for English readers to taste Gunkel's quality in his 'Legends of Genesis,' but it is profoundly to be regretted that his great commentary on Genesis has never been made accessible to them in an English translation—surely one of the most charming commentaries ever written on any book, and unquestionably our most brilliant commentary on Genesis.

We welcome, therefore, all the more eagerly the volume entitled *What Remains of the Old Testament* (Allen & Unwin; 6s. net), which has been so skilfully translated by the Rev. A. K. Dallas, M.A., that at no point are we reminded that we are reading a translation. The book contains five essays, happily chosen to illustrate the range and variety of Gunkel's interests. Two of these are technical, one on 'Jacob,' which illustrates the scientific treatment of Genesis, the other on 'The Close of Micah,' which illustrates the literary and other problems lying behind prophecy. These essays will appeal more particularly to scholars.

The other three essays display Gunkel's power of appealing to a wider public. One of them deals with 'The Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History,' and discusses the origin and development of Old Testament literary types—a field in which Gunkel has done pioneer work. In another, on 'The Religion of the Psalms,' he applies this idea of types to the Psalter, whose songs he classifies as Hymns, Songs of Praise, National Dirges, Court Songs, Individual Dirges, and Individual Songs of Praise, and he discusses the various aspects of religion exemplified by these types. This essay is refreshingly different from the

ordinary introductions to the Psalter and is replete with fruitful suggestion. But the longest and, in form, most popular essay of all is that on 'What is Left of the Old Testament,' which gives its title to the volume.

It is a pity that at this time of day such an essay needs to be written at all; for, as Sir George Adam SMITH said long ago, the Book which was indispensable to the Redeemer must continue to be indispensable to the redeemed. But at intervals, from the second century to our own, the Old Testament has been the subject of more or less virulent attack. There are those in our schools and even Churches who contend that, as Christians, we can have nothing to learn from a literature which Christianity has transcended, and there are some who would even be glad to see the study of Hebrew and Hebrew literature disappear from the theological curriculum of students preparing for the ministry of the Church.

No one, of course, could cherish such desires or advocate such proposals who has any idea of the living continuity of history, or who realizes how essentially unintelligible much of the New Testament literature would be, if divorced from its historical antecedents. But we have to reckon with an atmosphere in which ignorance of the Old Testament even as literature and indifference to historical continuity prevail; and it is in view of this atmosphere that Gunkel offers his fine defence of the Old Testament, and especially in view of the needs of the elementary school teachers of Germany who 'received in the Training Colleges an obsolete conception of the Bible.' Though this is certainly not the conception of the Bible taught in the Teachers' Training Colleges of Scotland, it is a conception even yet so widely prevalent in Britain that Gunkel's words are not without their application here.

He frankly admits, of course, the weaknesses of the Old Testament; its science is not our science, nor are its morals always our morals. Jacob's trickery is not the less trickery that it is Jacob's, 'a roguish piece of folk-lore,' and the desire for vengeance that breathes through the last lines of Ps 137 is none the less terrible that it is historically intelligible. But there is more in the Old Testament than things like these; and part of our difficulty in recognizing those other things is just that they have sunk so deeply into the mind of the world that we do not realize that they are the result of original thinking and of long and heroic struggle.

Take, for example, what Gunkel calls 'the imperishable power of the Moral Idea.' In our modern minds religion and morality are indissolubly associated. The Hebrew prophets answered once and for all the question 'Wherein consists the true service of God?' and they answered it in ethical terms. But in this 'the prophets achieved a fundamentally new conception of religion.' With trenchant power they hammered into the hearts of their people, and, through their writings, into the heart of all mankind, the truth that the essence of sin among men is oppression of the lowly, and that righteousness consists in worthy treatment of the poor and the oppressed — a thought which has affected to the very roots all modern social legislation.

There are even aspects of religion in which the Old Testament is not only a valuable but an indispensable supplement to the New. Of the presence of God in Nature the New Testament has very little to say: there is practically nothing in it to correspond to the great Nature Psalms, the eighth, the twenty-ninth, above all, the glorious hundred and fourth. Again, there is little in the New Testament to match the overwhelming interest that the religion of the Old Testament takes in political affairs. And as the corollary of this is the great conception of world-history that permeates most of the prophetic literature and that receives its most systematic presentation in the Book of Daniel. All this is of direct value for our modern world and our modern conception of religion.

The very 'creedlessness,' as it has been called, of the Old Testament is also not without its value. Doubtless this indifference to systematic thinking is, as Gunkel admits, one of the weaknesses of the Hebrew mind; yet its lack of interest in dogma, its

sheer incapacity to deal with or even to imagine the theological subtleties which are just beginning to be apparent in the New Testament, and in which the first four Christian centuries fairly revelled, is a healthy reminder of the limitations of reason and of the importance of seeing things in their true perspective. 'To see this sheer simplicity is good for us, a generation whose spiritual world has come to be as complex as our social conditions.'

Most of us do not adequately realize the finite obligation of the modern world to the Hebrew people and to the Old Testament. We should be prouder of our heritage if we understood it better. Two quotations from thoroughly unprejudiced witnesses illustrate this point. One is from Nietzsche: 'In the Old Testament of the Jews, the book of Divine righteousness, there are men, events, and words so great that there is nothing in Greek or Indian literature to compare with it.' The other is from the great historian of antiquity, Eduard Meyer, who says, 'Hebrew civilization, alone of all the other ancient Eastern civilizations, really stands on the same intellectual level as the Greek.' And Gunkel himself does not overstate the case when he describes the spiritual life of Israel as one of the foundations of the civilization of the Christian nations of Europe. 'Our civilization rests on two bases—the Bible and the civilization of Greece. We have become what we are in virtue of the combination of these two worlds. It would be a revolution, which no one living could estimate, if either of these foundations were to be moved.'

Not the least valuable feature of the Old Testament is its rich and varied gallery of personalities. Our own age is one in which personality tends to be swamped by the uniformity of the influences to which we are all alike subjected, crushed by the mighty machine which reduced us all to the same pattern. In the Hebrew world, unlike the Egyptian and the Babylonian world which was under the domination of despots and priests, personality had and took the opportunity of coming to its own; and 'the Old Testament, in its rugged strength, would be an iron in the blood for our time.'

Even on the score of its literary excellence, the Old Testament furnishes the teacher with an abundance of incomparable material; for where in the literature of the world are narratives that are inspired by a more winning simplicity or by more vivid and graphic power? But to meet the problems that suggest themselves to the growing minds of his older pupils, the teacher must train himself not only to the æsthetic and moral appreciation of the Old Testament, but to an understanding of the critical approach to it, and of the broad lines and results of the critical method.

With equal justice may this demand be made upon the preacher. We are in cordial agreement with Gunkel when he says that 'there should be more teaching on the part of the clergy than has been the case up till now.' A worshipping congregation never fails to respond to expository preaching when it is well done. Many of our best expositions, such as Dods' 'Genesis,' Sir George Adam Smith's 'Isaiah' and 'Minor Prophets,' Professor W. G. Jordan's 'Ancient Hebrew Stories and their Modern Interpretation,' were delivered to congregations in substantially the form in which they are printed. Thus may scholarship tend 'unto edification' not only of the mind, but of the spirit.

A note on the components of the phrase, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ,' may be useful in view of certain current discussions, in particular as to the origin and significance of the title 'Lord.' *Jesus* is the personal name of the human individual; and it is unnecessary to recognize more than a peculiar fitness in the fact that in Hebrew *Jesus* means 'Saviour,' because Jesus was quite a common name among the Jews when the Founder of our religion bore it.

The idea of Saviour is more properly conveyed by the name *Christ*, the Greek translation in the LXX of the Hebrew name Messiah, 'anointed.' But the name Christ lost in time its Hebrew connotation, no longer suggesting to the Greek mind the scion of the house of David who was to restore the fortune

of Israel, or the Son of Man from heaven who was to judge the living and the dead. Indeed, Christ came to be regarded as virtually an equivalent for Jesus.

As for the term *Lord*, the third component of the phrase under consideration, it is a term which is under investigation in our time, Bousset having opened up in his *Kyrios Christos* (1913) the whole problem of its meaning. But it was known, long before Bousset wrote the book above-named, that the term 'Lord' was used in the Græco-Roman religions of St. Paul's day with an absolute religious significance. It was a Divine predicate intelligible to the whole Eastern world.

Was the term 'Lord' applied to Jesus by His disciples and followers? If it was not applied to Him in His lifetime, it was after His death, as witness the saying, 'maranatha' (1 Co 16^{22}). And as soon as 'mari' or 'maran' was translated into Greek by κύριος it took on the connotation of κύριος among Hellenistic Jews and Gentiles, signifying the object of their religious faith. Thus as the distinction between Jesus and Christ, while never actually lost sight of, gradually became obliterated in the usage of the Christian Church, the Greek title 'Lord' became invested with the essential meaning of the Hebrew term 'Messiah' or Christ.

Here is how Deissmann puts it in his *Light from the Ancient East* (the publication of a new and revised edition of this work is noticed in another column): 'St. Paul's confession of "Our Lord Jesus Christ" was his cosmopolitan expansion of a local Aramaic cult-title, *Marana*, applied to Jesus the Messiah by the apostolic Primitive Christians at Jerusalem, and occasionally even by Paul himself in the outer world. Like the complemental thought, that the worshippers are the "slaves" of the Lord, it was understood in its full meaning by everybody in the Hellenistic East, and it facilitated the spread of the Christian terms of worship and of the cult of Christ itself.'

There will always be two minds about mysticism, one profoundly appreciative, the other intensely critical. Some it will irresistibly attract, others it will repel. To some it is the kingly highway to ultimate reality, to others it is a deceitful path leading to an obscure and vacant wilderness. When Wordsworth says:

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can;

John Morley retorts, 'Such a proposition cannot be seriously taken as more than a half-playful sally for the benefit of some too bookish friend. No impulse from a vernal wood can teach us anything at all of moral evil and of good.' There you have two contrasted types of mind, the one logical and matter-of-fact, the other intuitive and mystical. The one is resolved to set everything in the clear light of reason, nor ever to stray beyond the realm within which ideas can be defined and classified, believing that here is for us the one circle of light within which we may safely walk. The other is sensitive to impressions that float in vaguely upon the soul from the dim unknown, feels that somewhere in that encircling gloom lies the true centre of things, and is eager to get away from the region where all can be seen and charted to explore the darkness wherein can be felt the mighty pulsations of the universal heart. Professor Otto has familiarized the world with the numinous, that dread mystery of the Divine which lies beyond our rationalizing, and he has applied to it the epithet '*fascinans*.' The mystic may be defined as one who has an overpowering sense of the *Mysterium Tremendum* and yields himself up to the fascination of it. The non-mystical mind keeps the reins tight in the hands of Reason and desires in all things to be under her control.

These diverse attitudes are illustrated in two papers which appear in the *Hibbert Journal* for April. The first is by Mr. Edmond Holmes on 'The Mystic as Explorer.' 'The mystics are the pioneers, the leaders of mankind, in a great adventure, in the quest of God, in the exploration of the

unmapped realms of Reality.' Reality is to be distinguished from actuality. Actuality admits of no degrees: a thing either is, or is not. But when we speak of 'ultimate reality,' 'supreme reality,' 'innermost reality,' we imply gradations or differences of value. By what standard are these differences measured? 'To this question there is but one answer: An inward standard, a standard which is inherent in self-hood. It is in self, it is in and through our consciousness of self, that we recognize gradation in reality. The distinction between the higher and lower self is a valid distinction, and the difference is a difference in the grade or level of reality.' It is in self, therefore, that the quest of ultimate reality is to be carried on. 'The mystic's quest for God resolves itself into the quest of ultimate reality; and this resolves itself into the quest of the real self.' What does the mystic find in the deepest depths of the self? He cannot tell us. His conviction of the transcendent reality of his experience is equalled only by his feeling of impotence when he tries to describe it. He may be the adherent of some religion or school of philosophy; in any case he has to use the language of symbolism. But all that is on the surface. '*The true mystics are all Pantheists at heart.* They know with an assurance which is beyond all conviction that All is One. They know this through their own oneness with the All, in whom all things are One.'

What is pantheism? The word has two parts: *pan* means all, and *theos* means God. The pantheist is one who deifies the All of Being. In other words, he is one who identifies ultimate reality with the All as a living whole, with the totality of things in their indivisible unity, with the One in the Many, the One to whom the Many owe whatever reality they possess. Why does this conception of reality excite such fierce opposition? Because it says No to some of the most cherished and deep-rooted convictions of the average man. The average man takes for granted the intrinsic reality of his own individual self, and the intrinsic reality of the material world which he looks out upon. No one who has not freed himself from the spell of these two great illusions can even begin to understand what pantheism really means. And the reason why the way to pantheism lies open to the mystics is that they have freed themselves from that spell, not indeed on the plane of intellectual thought, but on the higher plane of inward and spiritual experience.

'The message of the mystic to his fellow-men is that the light of love is at the heart of the world, at the heart of man's own real self, at the heart of all the space and all the ages. For this assurance we owe him an incalculable debt. How can we best repay it? By trying to walk where he has walked. By making him, at however great a distance we may follow him, our leader and our guide. But is he a trustworthy guide? What proof can he give that he has indeed lost and found himself in the light of love? This, that he does ardently desire to help us, that his heart is full of pity for his fellow-men.'

The second paper is by Professor OMAN and is a more critical study of mysticism. 'Mysticism is a phenomenon which always appears in times of political disillusionment and intellectual discouragement.' Its special marks are the process of banishing all ideas of sense from the mind, the reflection of some sort of unificatory theology, and, as its highest aims, ecstatic union with the Divine and passive reception of revelation. The question is whether there is a direct revelation of God which is not through experience of the world. The presupposition of mysticism is that experience is not a manifestation, but a veil which for moments waves aside and gives glimpses of reality. In Shelley's words:

> Life, like a dome of many coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity.

Accordingly mysticism begins with the demand to dismiss from the mind all imagery derived from the senses, and with it all the divisive ways of the discursive reason. But by this path nothing is reached except a sort of luminous vacancy. 'Pure mysticism,' as Edward Caird says, 'arrives at unity with empty hands.' There is no genuine increase of knowledge; the mystic merely sees in vision what he already believes. 'Many have assayed to write what was so given them. But it has all been pious

platitude, of the dullest type of conformity to orthodox patterns; while in every religion any writing ever cherished as a sacred book has been written by men who were facing life and the conflicts of experience, and that with the highest activities of all their powers of mind.' This is further confirmed by the certainty that in ordinary experience there is no such thing as passive awareness and apprehension.

How does mysticism stand in relation to Christianity? 'The fact is that there is no such thing in the strict sense as a Christian mystic. In so far as an external revelation, the Church, religious service and duties to fellow-mortals are essential parts of religion, mysticism is absent, at least the mysticism here meant, the essential aspect of which is that experience is not a revelation of God, but a cloud obscuring his glory, and that we must exclude all concern with it to win direct vision.' It may be that when men lose themselves in a distracting age and in the dissipation of multifarious interests, such excursions from an active life as have been made by some Christian mystics may serve at least a temporary purpose of recollection. But the attitude of mysticism is full of moral danger. 'The contemplative who sets before himself the aim of reaching a state of vision from which he returns exhausted to practical life, there to recover vigour for a longer flight, is surely on the wrong track. . . . This is a shirking of the task of life, and not the real fulfilment of religion, which is, in freedom and independent thinking, to find our true relation to the past and to society and to the whole task of the Kingdom of God. This is a weary road, and mysticism is the most attractive of all caravanserais to linger in by the way. But, if we rest in it for the night, which for most of us at least is not for our real refreshment, we need to be up and facing all that life provides for us of venture early in the morning.'

The Sermon on the Mount.

The New Righteousness (Mt. v. 17–48).

By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

What are we to make of these arresting sayings? People who ignore Christ as an idle dreamer of still idler dreams can irritably push them aside as on the face of them impossible, and not worth considering. For life, so they object, cannot be lived in that quixotic fashion, flinging oneself at windmills, and tilting at the whole set of the world. And so they fold their hands and settle down complacently in the conventional ways, as if these were as inevitable as the laws of Nature. But that won't do for men and women who profess to take Christ seriously, and to have made His mind their guiding star. For us to skip all this, and turn to something soothing and heartening like the prodigal or some of the rich promises, conveniently forgetting this uncomfortable and upsetting teaching, is deliberately to disobey One whom we call the very Word of God: to look Him in the eyes and tell Him that He knows nothing about life; to set our jaws squarely and doggedly and answer, 'I will not.'

Yet what are we to do? Here are we set down to live in this very difficult kind of a world; and here too, obstinately, are these sayings of Christ which don't seem to fit into it at all, that look flatly impracticable, so that quite early glosses were slipped into the later manuscripts to break the force of the wind. 'Whosoever is angry,' said Christ; 'without a cause,' inserted a soul unable to keep up with Him. And indeed they are thrown down in the most arresting way without any qualifications, even such as our Lord Himself practised in the living of His own life; and sometimes with such a noisy clashing of part against part that it is not easy to piece the whole into a consistency within our dull and prosy minds, which in their pedantic fashion ask for little invariable rules and a full code of minute by-laws, and are given instead, much to their discomfiture, mighty principles which we are left to apply for ourselves; and tha through the exercise, not only of loyalty and faith