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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

LAST month we called attention to the first volume of the *History of Israel*, which carried the story down to the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and was written by Professor T. H. Robinson. We now have pleasure in directing attention to the no less important second volume (Milford; 15s. net), which is written by Professor W. O. E. OESTERLEY, and deals with the period from the Fall of Jerusalem to the Bar-Kokhba Revolt in A.D. 135. It thus embraces the Exile, the Persian, Greek, Maccabean, and Roman periods, and ends at a point over two and a half centuries beyond any data furnished by the Old Testament. The nature of the writer's previous studies has enabled him to handle the intractable material of the post-Exilic period with the same competence as Dr. Robinson has treated the pre-Exilic period.

Of the later period we use the word 'intractable' advisedly, for the literary and historical problems which arise on that field are, if possible, even more intricate and provoking than those which gather round the pre-Exilic period. Except for the later centuries, the evidence is lamentably meagre, obscure, confused, perplexing, sometimes even contradictory, and much of it bears the very manifest stamp of bias; and the new and welcome material which became accessible with the discovery of the Elephantine papyri has raised, as such discoveries almost always do, a fresh series of problems. It is fortunate that the presentation of this period should be in the hands of such a scholar as Dr. OESTERLEY, who, besides an intimate acquaintance with the sources and the vast literature that has gathered round them, has a real *flair* for historical reality and a fine discriminating judgment, which, while declining to be dogmatic where dogmatism would be an impertinence, yet threads its way through the labyrinth and issues in a more than plausible reconstruction of the facts.

The chief difficulty with which the modern historian has to deal, apart from the paucity of the data, is the drastic redaction to which the compiler of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, has subjected his sources. One of the merits of Dr. OESTERLEY'S *History* is that he has made this very plain, and he has not minced matters in his statement of the facts. Dealing with Ezr 1–6 he roundly says that while the Chronicler, in compiling the history contained in these chapters, utilized some valuable documents, 'he has mixed up his material, he has confused names, and he has altered various details in order to bring them into conformity with his preconceived ideas,' with the result that the history contained in these chapters 'cannot be regarded as reliable,' and 'it is impossible to get from the text as it stands any clear idea of the course of events.'

In this case the particular interest that vitiates the Chronicler's presentation of the history is his desire to prove that the rebuilding of the Temple was undertaken by the exiles as soon as, or very soon

after, they returned. In such a matter the evidence of Haggai and Zechariah, who were contemporaries —and who, by the way, Dr. OESTERLEY believes were both 'sons of the Exile and came from Babylonia' —is infinitely to be preferred. These prophets he also believes to have been the last supporters of the monarchical idea: their opponents, who defended the theocratic idea, eventually won the day; and he thinks we may explain the disappearance of the Kingship 'without supposing that outside interference brought this about.' It is far from improbable, however, as Sellin pointed out long ago in his 'Zerubbabel,' that the passionate hopes which were gathering round this 'Messianic' figure may have roused the suspicions of the Persians, and have drawn down their vengeance, especially if those hopes had expressed themselves in the form of a rebellion. In any case Zerubbabel disappears from the scene: if he was executed, that would be well calculated to crush the monarchical idea beyond hope of resuscitation.

The most conspicuous illustration of the Chronicler's attitude to historical sequences is his putting of Ezra before Nehemiah. Whatever may have been his motive—possibly to give the priest precedence over the layman—it has thrown the narrative into inextricable confusion, creating improbabilities which Dr. OESTERLEY has well shown we may unhesitatingly regard as impossibilities; and we are glad to note that he says emphatically, 'there is now no room for doubt that Ezra was Nehemiah's successor,' but we are equally glad to note that he refuses to believe that Ezra is simply a creation of the Chronicler's imagination.

The most radical illustration, however, of the 'animus' of the Chronicler is his anti-Samaritan bias, and the discussion of the relations subsisting between the Samaritans and the Jews is one of the most valuable sections of the *History*. Dr. OESTERLEY points out that the difference, which was rooted in the distant past of Judah and Israel, was not racial or religious, but purely political: it was not till about the year 445 that actual hostility between the Samaritans and Jews began, and the initial act which tended in course of time to bring about a schism was due to the action of Nehemiah in driving out one of the grandsons of the high priest because he had married the daughter of Sanballat.

Thus the real breach between the two took place seventy years after the rebuilding of the Temple, and, despite Ezra's circumstantial story, Dr. OESTERLEY insists that there is no evidence that the Samaritans interfered with the rebuilding. 'The whole idea is a fiction of the Chronicler's.' The antagonism between the two did not arise in that connexion. Later experience has been projected back into the earlier period. 'It is perfectly clear that in Ezr 4^{1-5} the Chronicler has made the conditions of the time of Nehemiah apply to the time of Zerubbabel; and what happened later at the time of the building of the walls is reproduced at the time of the building of the Temple.'

There are other interesting suggestions, if not all new, at any rate urged with fresh point. One is that Ezekiel's relatively friendly attitude to Samaria and his hope of a reunion between the northern and southern kingdoms may be explained by the fact that the prophet may in exile have had 'opportunities of coming into contact with some of those northern Israelites who had been deported and settled down in districts of what had once been part of the Assyrian empire.' They may well have been settled in or near the very districts to which the vanquished Jews in 597 and 586 had been deported.

Another important suggestion is thrown out by Dr. OESTERLEY in his valuable discussion of the Elephantine papyri. The curious and rather baffling fact that the language of the papyri is Aramaic—baffling on the assumption that the colonists were Palestinian Jews—he explains thus: 'We suggest that the original colonists in Elephantine did not come from Palestine, and were not brought into Egypt by Psammeticus, but that they were Israelites from Assyria and belonged to the second generation of the Israelite captives who were deported after the fall of Samaria. . . . Those in the Mesopotamian provinces were in the midst

of Aramaic-speaking people, and would soon have become familiar with Aramaic which they would have adopted in place of Hebrew.' Some of these Aramaic-speaking Israelites may have joined the Assyrian armies which invaded Egypt and established garrisons there. If this explanation be correct, it still remains strange, as Dr. OESTERLEY frankly admits, that the colonists never use the name of Israel in reference to themselves.

Yet one more suggestion. What was 'the book of the law of Moses' that Ezra read at the great public gathering in the broad place before the water-gate? Various opinions have been held. It is extremely improbable that it was the whole Pentateuch. The Priestly Code, or part of it, or the Law of Holiness—all these have also been suggested. Dr. OESTERLEY's suggestion is that 'what was read consisted of extracts from the Pentateuch, in the form which it had assumed by this time, and that these extracts were portions which were generally applicable to all the people, and that these portions were among those which had been added during the Exile; they required explanation because, although the subjects dealt with were in themselves familiar to the people, the new meaning attaching to them was not familiar to them.' And the subjects included—whatever else—Circumcision, Sabbath observance, and the keeping of the Feasts.

These are but a few specimens of the stimulating quality of this admirable *History*, and they are all drawn from the earlier period. The historical intricacies of the later period are unravelled with a sure hand. There is the same mastery of the material, the same power to put familiar things in a fresh light. As here, for example, in discussing the Maccabean revolt: 'when it is asked who took the first step in the attempt to eradicate Judaism, who they were who slaughtered the Jews when they came up to the sanctuary to worship, who laid waste the sanctuary and abrogated the feasts and sabbaths, and brought contempt upon the holy place—the answer is, not the Syrians; but the Jewish Hellenistic party, the "transgressors of the law." And this is Jewish testimony.' And again: 'Whatever faults the Pharisees may have developed it is but bare justice to record that had it not been for them the Jewish religion, with the eternal truths it taught, would have disappeared.'

This volume, as lucid as it is learned, will still further enhance the reputation of Dr. OESTERLEY as one of our foremost authorities on Judaism; and the two volumes together constitute a *History of Israel* which is abreast of the latest investigation and discovery, and does honour to the Biblical scholarship of this country.

The New Morality, as expounded by Bertrand Russell and Aldous Huxley, exalts sexual freedom above the institution of the family. It urges that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the freedom of sex-life. If the ideals of family-life stand in the way of this freedom, the family—noble and beautiful institution as it may be—must be mended or ended. And the opinion appears to prevail with the New Moralists that the tradition of the family will sooner or later come to an end, the State taking over the obligations of parenthood.

The Rev. G. E. NEWSOM, M.A., Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, has written a timely Essay entitled *The New Morality* (Nicholson & Watson; 6s. net). We wish that the material had been better arranged, and in particular that repetitions had been avoided; but the formal defects of the Essay do not prevent us from observing that it contains much good and forceful writing, and that, taken as a whole, it justifies the publishers' claim for it as 'a vigorous challenge to the modern revolutionary views on Sex and the Family.' Preachers and social workers who would exalt the high morality of the Family above the New Morality will find useful material to their hand in these pages.

Mr. NEWSOM has many an indictment to make in the course of his pages against the tenets of the New Morality. We shall not record them all, but are content to single out the following. He accuses the New Morality of depreciating the goodness of

life by a doctrine of primitive man which belittles what is fine in our inheritance from the animals; by a theory of the family which explains its origin as a barbarism and its decay as a moral liberation; by an ethic of sex which discards the element of permanent devotion; by an estimate of motherhood which is surely untrue to the psychology of woman; and by a vision of the future State as coming under an aimless tyranny of science.

But perhaps the strongest and most useful chapters in the book are the last two, in which Mr. NEWSOM sounds the note of good hope. One of the most hopeful signs of our modern social life is in his view the increase in cultural associations among neighbours. He instances a comparatively new movement, the National Society of Women's Institutes, which held its first annual meeting recently in the Albert Hall, where, from 5000 centres in the country, representatives of some 300,000 members were assembled, full of their social and cultural enthusiasms. This one assembly of people stood for 300,000 homes; and it is on friendship between families, it is contended, that good neighbourhood normally depends.

'We are watching the growing-points of our civilisation when we see an enrichment of neighbourhood pour its refreshing stream into the life of the family, and when we see the family, thus refreshed, developing its essential gifts to purify and warm all the forces of neighbourhood. . . . Any one who has had the privilege of sharing in the normal life of the English people is inclined to sink through the floor with shame when he glances at the morbid sex literature which represents our life of home and neighbourhood as heading away from all this upspringing culture and running downhill to the morass.'

Far from portending the destruction of the family the modern emancipation of women will make for the improvement of the ethical quality of family life. The old impulses and relationships—parental, connubial, fraternal, filial—will remain in all their variety, but the old element of hardness will be melted by the infusion of a finer spirit of comradeship. 'Even quite stupid men have lost their terror at the sight of an educated woman, and the more intelligent men rejoice in the resources of married comradeship that are opened up by the education of women.'

A notable feature of our time is the extraordinary degree of public interest which has been stirred in regard to the problems and findings of physical science. Even the man in the street vaguely apprehends that revolutionary changes have taken place in scientific thought, and there is widespread curiosity to know what bearing these may have upon the ultimate questions of philosophy and theology.

In a very wise and able little book, *Stars, Atoms, and God*, by the Rev. Harris Elliott KIRK, D.D. (Hodder & Stoughton; 3s. 6d. net), this matter is competently dealt with. The writer does not attempt to elucidate the findings of the astronomer and the physicist, though he shows himself to be abreast of the latest knowledge in these fields. What he does is to indicate the positions which have now been reached, and may be held to be provisionally established, and then to consider what these positions imply and how far they may be held to point towards and encourage a spiritual view of the universe. While clearly perceiving and expressly stating that physical science can never discover God or offer direct proof of the reality and value of the spiritual world, he shows how a point has been reached in physical discovery where it becomes almost inevitable to postulate a spiritual background.

The witness of the stars is at first disconcerting. In their immeasurable age and magnitude they dwarf man to utter insignificance. For ages man was able courageously to return the stare of the stars while he conceived this earth the centre of the universe and the stars as intimately bound up with his personal destiny. But now he is compelled to think of himself as 'an atom clinging to a grain of sand,' a physically insignificant item in the vast

sum of things. He has been quite beaten out of his sense of self-importance, and his faith in immortality, his fond hope that he had a secure and permanent place in the universe, has seemed an idle dream.

Certain recent findings of science, however, would appear to call in question this disparagement of man and of his earthly home, and to suggest that other than quantitive measures must be taken into account. The first of these relates to the unique character of the solar system. It is now generally accepted that the earth and the other planets had their birth in a mighty star-collision, that such a collision must be reckoned an inconceivably rare and perhaps unique event, and accordingly it may well be that in all the wide universe this earth of ours is the only spot capable of sustaining life as we know it. 'If this be true, then the earth regains the status that it lost when the Copernican system was introduced.' Another of the recent findings of physical science is that space, though unbounded, is finite. It is pictured as something after the nature of the surface of a sphere which, though without boundaries, returns upon itself and is of measurable dimensions. This means that the physical universe, however immense, is measurable, and may come to be surveyed and measured in all its length and breadth by the mind of man; which inevitably suggests the thought that the universe cannot be the whole of reality, but is a manifestation of the comprehending mind. A third significant finding of recent science is that the universe is made of perishable stuff. The old idea that matter is eternal and indestructible is quite given up. Matter is found to be of the nature of energy which at some point of time must have been set in motion. 'If we want a concrete picture of such a creation,' says Sir James Jeans, 'we may think of the finger of God agitating the ether.' And this energy with which the physical universe is endowed is running to waste and will inevitably end in a dead level of uniformity when all physical life and motion will have ceased. 'These positions raise questions concerning the meaning and purpose of such a structure, but astronomy cannot answer them. The fact that our small earth is the home of personal mind has an important bearing on final meanings. The more thoroughly the universe in the large is explored, the more impressive becomes the sense of mystery at the heart of it. . . . If mind should turn out to be the only permanent substance in the universe, and if the only way we can know it is in the form of personal consciousness, then the idea of immortality lies at the heart of it.'

Turning from stars to atoms to see whether in the study of the infinitely small we may solve the riddle of the universe, we find that here also physical science has passed through a period of revolutionary change. The concepts of substantiality and constancy, which once held undisputed sway, have now been given up. Matter, as represented ultimately by the atom, was conceived as most substantial, something hard, tangible, and indestructible. Now it has been resolved into protons and electrons revolving in their orbits, and these again are found to be not real entities but merely symbols through which we endeavour to picture the mysterious working of some wholly inscrutable power. Allied to the idea of the substantiality of matter was the idea of the constancy of Nature. All was rigidly determined and therefore predictable. In such a world there was no room for freedom or indeterminate change. But now this mechanical view of the universe has been completely undermined. Researches in connexion with the Quantum Theory have brought to light a principle of indeterminacy at the heart of things. The action of the ultimate units is not predictable, and there is a mysterious discontinuity in their revolutions. Physical science can only speak of these phenomena in general terms and deal as it were in averages. It is no longer in a position to give support to philosophic determinism, and there is no longer any physical argument against free will.

Physical science has thus broken through the material envelope into an immaterial world which can only be imperfectly expressed in symbols. It has been made to see and confess that in handling the purely physical it has not come into touch with the ultimate reality or discovered the hidden meaning of the universe. Physical science has been

departing from established usage, but he was in rebellion neither against his Master nor against any ecclesiastical authority.

Luther led a revolt, largely successful, against the ecclesiastical authorities of his day. Was he then a Modernist? Dr. STEWART denies the title to him and to most of the Reformers, not because of 'their ghastly doctrine of God's capricious injustice, their spirit of relentless persecution, their mania for consigning papists, heretics and witches to a common and early grave'; but because they 'proclaimed as emphatically as any cardinal of the old church that individual choice of belief was sinful, and that on peril of eternal shipwreck each soul must accept "the revealed truth."'

Erasmus declined to take part in Luther's revolt against the Church authorities; yet Dr. STEWART calls him 'the typical Modernist.' Erasmus shared the indignation of Luther at the moral abuses that had crept into Church practice; but he thought he had found a more excellent way of dealing with them. Luther would forcibly separate the good wheat from the tares: Erasmus believed in the method of the leaven. Luther came out: Erasmus stayed in.

Dr. STEWART then seems to follow Pope Pius X. in confining the term Modernists to men who, while departing in important respects from the received traditions of the Church, advocate their reforms from within the Church, not from without. Is there much scientific basis for this limitation of the scope of the term? Erasmus pleaded for studied courtesy rather than virulent abuse, for a patient work of healing rather than the surgeon's knife.

Dr. STEWART acknowledges that, in the circumstances of their day, it was the Luther method, not the Erasmus method, that was needed. In our own day men like Alfred Loisy and George Tyrrell have tried the Erasmus method within the Roman Church, with conspicuous want of success. The Roman Church has lived 'by the machinery of supernaturalism.' 'As crowd psychologists the Roman leaders have been unrivalled, and they made no mistake about the power of sacerdotal magic.' Yet Dr. STEWART believes that in the Protestant Church the place of the Christian Modernist is within the Church. This raises a question of great interest.

As generally understood, the Modernist controversy has reference chiefly to the attitude to be adopted to the results of scientific investigation and of the critical study of the Bible during the past few generations. Why should a clergyman hesitate to accept the new knowledge? The answer is that, since the days of Augustine, the acceptance of the orthodox creed was an essential of salvation, and the new discoveries in physical and Biblical science seemed to conflict with the old creeds.

What, then, was the duty of a clergyman who had signed the old creed but accepted the new knowledge? John Morley had no hesitation in answering the question. He had nothing but withering contempt for the man who had 'secured a livelihood on condition of going through life masked and gagged,' who was compelled to 'recite the symbols of ancient faith and lift up his voice in the echoes of old hopes with the blighting thought in his soul that the faith is a lie and the hope no more than the folly of the crowd.'

Lord Morley was known to his contemporaries as 'honest John,' a designation which was not always applied in admiration. He was a great, and no doubt a convinced, Liberal. When he was appointed Secretary of State for India the hopes of India's politicians ran high. Yet all that Lord Morley gave India was the Morley-Minto Reforms: a step forward indeed, but a step that left India a very long way from self-government. Faced with a concrete situation, 'honest John' did what the rest of us do. The honest Liberal, finding himself in a place where Liberal doctrines did not seem to apply, abandoned neither his creed nor his post; nor do we regard him as a hypocrite for the compromise he made.

But is it quite certain that a Modernist clergyman can no longer recite the historic creeds? Human

language is very elastic ; and one objection to creeds as a safeguard of the faith is the difficulty of framing a form of words that is susceptible only of the interpretation the framer put upon it. People reciting the same creed, all with equal conscientiousness, may differ widely in their theological outlook.

A clergyman who has no sympathy with ancient doctrines of inspiration may nevertheless believe whole-heartedly that the word of God is 'contained in' the Scriptures, and is the only infallible guide to faith and conduct. The question whether we believe that Jesus is the Son of God is often taken as the decisive test of orthodoxy. Do we mean by this : Son of God in a physical sense, with special reference to the Virgin Birth ? Are we thinking chiefly of the moral union of Jesus' will with God's will ? Or are our thoughts in the intangible realm of metaphysics ? Or do we understand the phrase on the analogy of a well-known Hebrew idiom : Son of Man, son of a prophet, son of Belial ?

On the face of it, the statement that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary seems free from ambiguity. But it is at least an arguable proposition that it involves two statements : that Jesus was born of a human mother to a real bodily existence, and that His mother was a virgin called Mary. Is one who believes that the former of these propositions was originally the more important to be debarred from reciting the article because he has doubts about the second proposition ?

Only one who is ignorant of Greek can imagine that there is no ambiguity in the statement : 'I believe in the resurrection of the body.' It has been maintained that the conception underlying the word *sōma* would be more adequately expressed by our word 'personality' than by our word 'body,' and that the Apostle Paul was as incapable as Huxley of saying that he believed in the resurrection of the 'flesh.'

Granted that there are articles in the creeds and items of traditional belief that a Modernist cannot accept in any form, is there to be a fresh schism every time there is a new discovery that seems to conflict with received doctrine ? In the circumstances of our day, have not our Erasmuses a better right to be heard than our Luthers ? Dr. STEWART says that Robertson Smith was dismissed from his Chair in Aberdeen for the views he had expressed about the date and authorship of certain Old Testament books. Would it not be about as near the truth to say that he was dismissed from his Chair because there was more of Luther than of Erasmus in his methods of controversy ?

If, at the instigation of John Morley, all clergymen who accepted the new knowledge had resigned in a body, the spectacle no doubt would have been an imposing and edifying one. But would their sacrifice have served the cause of truth ? Is it not certain that such a course would have given the public a completely wrong impression of the vulnerability of the Christian Faith, would have led men in general to believe that the structure had collapsed when all that had happened was that part of the scaffolding had been torn away, and so would have served the interests of blighting falsehood rather than of truth ?

Moreover, if only conservatives are left to shape the counsels of the Church, then the Church can never restate its faith to meet changing conditions, a task which the Church of Scotland, for example, has faced more or less boldly more than once.

At times Dr. STEWART almost gives the impression that he thinks the Church can dispense with a formal creed. The Modernist, as he conceives him, is indifferent to the truth or falsity of physical miracles, is very tolerant of different views on Incarnation and Resurrection, and is not anxious about the extent or the manner of the inspiration of Scripture.

But Dr. STEWART is equally clear that a man has no right to call himself a Modernist unless he retains the essence of the Faith. And so we come back to creeds again ; for the answer to the question, 'What is the essence of the Faith ?' must be a statement which is in some sense a creed.

The members of a living Church will always want to know what are the things most surely believed among them. A living Church will always try to satisfy this need. May it be that the fault lies in the use to which we put the creed? Dr. Denney said we should rather 'sing' the creed than 'sign' it. He meant the same as Bishop Gore meant when he urged people to regard the Athanasian Creed, not so much as a 'creed,' but rather as a 'canticle.'

The Fellowship of Reconciliation.

By Percy W. Bartlett, London.

We are all pacifists now. We have not agreed yet on the precise extent to which, and manner in which, we are against war; but at least we are substantially united as Christians in an earnest desire and endeavour to make the indispensable Christian contribution to the real peace of the world. We agree that for the construction of positive relations of mutual respect and helpfulness between people and nations, which are of the essence of justice, something opposite to the spirit of war, something characteristically Christian is required. Forbearance and patience are wanted rather than insistence on rights. Sympathy, understanding, interpretation, reconciliation, and even the attitude that we call redemptive, to all of which war is an enemy, must, as we have learned from bitter experience since Versailles, enter into national policies if further tragedy is to be avoided.

Looking backward, we can only regard with tenderness our hostilities and failures in the past, and especially the extremes of feeling about Christian duty engendered within the Church when war struck us in 1914. Sorrowfully we confess that when the great demand of 1914 came upon us it found not only politics and diplomacy bankrupt, but religion also. Some few had spent energy, physical and spiritual, in the older peace work, only to be jeered at by the crowd when their pebbles were of small avail to dam the flood; but most of us had foreseen little of the inevitable results of a commerce, a finance, a colonial policy, a diplomacy in Europe, an armament expenditure all over the world impossible to square with Christian principles. We had not clearly thought of our faith as one that must express itself also in the sphere of economics and politics and in international relationships, or else be mocked; the State, business, and religion were unrelated conceptions. In general we had neither contemplated the dilemma for the Christian of an acceptance or a refusal of the State's call to arms, nor seen the vision of the healing of the nations; and when the storm broke there was no time for the long process of thinking afresh from first principles right up to the action of the moment. The crowd declared emphatically against the hesitancy of thought and discussion at such a time; 'Let everything be thrown into the job of winning the war; and let all talk about principles be postponed until afterwards.' The Church could not withstand the rush of events and emotions. The best she could do was to settle down to the duty of administering her consolations and encouragements to living and to dying. Broadly speaking, she had nothing markedly Christian to say that was immediately relevant to the larger issues. Such a lover of peace as Dean Moore Ede argued that the Church could not separate herself from the nation and that Christians must accept the consequences of agreements made by Governments. Public school traditions of defending the country, standing up to the bully, keeping faith and rescuing the weak, and general ideas about doing a man's job, saving civilization and waging a war to end war found general acceptance without further discussion and became the working creed of the country. Beside such apparently practical and manly principles, any talk about the higher law of Christendom, about peacemaking and forgiveness seemed hopelessly and maddeningly feeble and futile; it seemed to ignore the supreme demands of defence and justice. In such an atmosphere scarcely any felt that they could confidently present the message of the gospel as something more than a repudiation of the paganism, brutality, and utter wrongness of the war method, as indeed an assurance of a way out, through fearlessness, understanding, and love.