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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE plain man may be excused if at times he grows weary of hearing of the Crisis, and of the solutions which are daily offered for his acceptance. Still the Crisis is with us, waiting solution, and Dr. Percy DEARMER has done notable service in editing *Christianity and the Crisis* (Gollancz ; 5s. net), the main contention of which is that 'faced with a world-crisis of unparalleled magnitude, Christianity has something commanding, something creative, to say ; that, desperate though the world's ills may be, there is that in Christianity which can provide the remedy.'

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It is a storehouse of information and a marvel of cheapness. Over thirty leading Churchmen and experts in various departments have contributed, and the result is an extraordinarily comprehensive survey of the whole field of human relationships. The work falls into three main divisions. The first describes 'the present chaos,' the second sets forth 'what Christianity is,' while the third unfolds 'the Christian solution.'

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With so great a variety of contributors there is naturally considerable diversity of workmanship, with a certain lack of unity and decisiveness in the conclusions reached. In this respect the book somewhat resembles one of those conferences, so familiar in our time, where the practical findings rarely seem commensurate with the earnestness of the delegates and the ability of their discussions.

Much space is devoted, as was inevitable, to the social and economic order, and here we are treated to a good deal of dubious political economy. The Archbishop of YORK very wisely says : 'There is justifiable irritation at the attempt to give the dignity of religious sanction to any speculation in the field. The gospel contains no illumination concerning the rights and wrongs of bi-metallism, or social credit, or "technocracy."' For Christ did not come to save us the trouble of accurately observing facts, and of drawing correct inferences from our observations. Christianity has no programme for the restoration of prosperity ; it is not even greatly interested in prosperity.' Several of the contributors, however, seem to forget this, and write as if the Kingdom of God were vitally concerned with the maintenance of a certain economic standard. Major Douglas's plan for the reform of the monetary system may be very excellent, but to present it as the Christian solution is, to say the least, injudicious.

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One of the most thoughtful contributions is that on Education, from the pen of Sir Charles Grant ROBERTSON, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham. Assuming that the Christian faith touches life at every point and has a constructive solution to offer to the needs of a new age 'perplexed with intellectual difficulties affecting belief, and moral difficulties affecting conduct,' what guidance has it to offer in the vital sphere of education ?

The issue raised is of momentous import. 'Is instruction in religion an essential part of any sound educational system, without which the training, intellectual and moral, would be both incomplete and misleading? For whether the answer be a clear affirmative, or a no less clear negative, instruction in religion cannot be placed in the category of luxury or optional subjects. . . . Instruction in religion, broadly based on the Christian interpretation of the world-progress and the Christian mentality in all problems and rules of conduct, will either colour all the other secular disciplines, or must be dismissed as a positive and falsifying obstacle to true knowledge and right conduct. The issue must, therefore, be fairly faced.'

The present position is in many ways illogical and indefensible. Owing to the unhappy divisions of the Church, the State has ceased to have a clear mind on the subject. It safeguards the physical development of the children, insisting that every child should be brought up under healthy conditions. It safeguards intellectual development, insisting on the right of every child to receive secular education. In these realms no objections of parents, conscientious or otherwise, are tolerated. But when it comes to the question of religious education the hands of the State are tied, and if parents through carelessness or malice choose to keep from their children's minds the light of God's truth and to pervert them to godlessness the State has nothing to say, and parents are free to act as by a sort of divine right. With all respect to the doctrine of the freedom of conscience, there is much to be said on the other side.

Without religion education is incomplete. The task of education is to equip a man by training from childhood onwards to understand the true nature of his environment, and overcome the difficulties with which his passions and his appetites, his family and communal life, will confront him. For this he will need knowledge and a disciplined brain, vocational training, and the fundamental morals of citizenship. But these are not enough. 'Interpret the world of to-day and its needs in as modern terms as you please, stress as you like the

imperative desirability of scientific knowledge for a modern generation and a new age, and deny the necessity of, or acquiesce in the omission of, religious instruction as an indispensable subject in the intellectual and moral equipment for life which it is the function of education to give, and the result will infallibly be that those so trained will go out into the modern life of their new age imperfectly equipped, and with gaps as serious in their knowledge as in their moral outlook, standards of conduct, and criteria of values. Life will find out the gaps and exact the penalty. It is easy to say, "I have done with God": but what if "God has not done with us?"'

The State must take some account of this. In days of controversy it was generally assumed that the main reason for including religious instruction in a curriculum was to serve denominational ends, and it was rightly felt that the State, like Gallio, ought to care for none of these things. But 'the purpose of including instruction in the fundamentals of the Christian religion is not to make good Anglicans or good Wesleyans, any more than the purpose of studying history is to make good Conservatives or good Marxists, or of studying science to make good Darwinians—but to impart instruction which in itself can be a first-rate intellectual discipline, and some knowledge, without which the learner will be imperfectly equipped for life.' This involves as a consequence that religious instruction must get its place in the curriculum as an indispensable subject, with a syllabus drawn by those who know it, and taught by teachers qualified in the subject.

'There are not wanting signs that the real and fundamental issue may be squarely raised and have to be no less squarely answered. Great Britain may have to decide whether she wishes to remain a Christian State, broadly based on the Christian interpretation of life and the Christian code of morals and conduct.' The issue, has indeed been raised, and it touches the heart of the conflict between Christianity and Communism. Assume that the Christian religion is 'capitalist dope' or 'state opium' for the proletariat, then it must, as

in Russia, be vigorously purged out of the body politic as a menace to life and health. But, granted the truth of the Christian view of God and the world, then it becomes a vital national interest to teach it. 'The indispensability of instruction in the Christian religion as part of any sound educational system imposed and paid for by the community will not, in all probability, be decided on purely educational grounds, but on a major premise far more comprehensive in its scope and far more tremendous in its implications. For it will be the validity and value of the Christian faith, as an interpretation of the meaning and purpose of the world-process, and as an essential foundation of right conduct tested by experience, that will be the centre issue.'

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Verily of making many books about the Bible there is no end. But if, as we maintain, it is more than ever desirable, in the present competition of interests, that the Bible should continue to be read, and read intelligently, we cannot have too many books of the type furnished us by Mrs. Jeannie B. Thomson DAVIES, M.A., on *The Literature of the Hebrew People*, which is the first of three volumes to be entitled collectively *The Heart of the Bible* (Allen & Unwin; 5s. net).

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She does not profess to approach her task with the technical equipment of the scholar, though in spelling Nazirite and Nebuchadrezzar thus she avoids slips into which we have known scholars to fall; only she wavers between Jehoiachin and Jehoiakin (pp. 70, 77). But she has something not less valuable than technical equipment; she has sound historical judgment, a true literary sense, and, above all, a thoroughly modern approach to the Bible. It is because sometimes the expert cannot see the wood for the trees that discussions by those who do not profess to be experts have a special value: they see the wood and they can show it to others. Probably the power of interesting and lucid presentation which marks Mrs. DAVIES' book throughout comes from her experience as a trainer of teachers.

She thus defines her aim and hope. 'The aim of this particular venture is to present the writings now collected in the volume called the Bible in an order approaching that in which they came into being. The hope is that a considerable amount of both the Old and New Testaments may be read in a fresh setting, so that questions about the inconsistencies in the Bible, or about its varying levels of morality, or about its uneven value for religious education, can no longer be fired as poisoned darts to attack its life and influence. This is an attempt to combine reading the Bible with learning to understand it.'

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To present the material of the Bible in chronological order is of distinct educational value. In the nature of the case, 'Introductions' to the Old or New Testament do not aim at this; they for the most part discuss the books in the traditional order. But the development of Israel's religion can only be properly appreciated on the basis of an approximation to the chronological order of the material; and, when this is understood, the 'varying levels of morality' and the documentary 'inconsistencies' which cause so much searching of heart to the intellectually honest student who has been trained along fundamentalist lines, simply cease to be problems—at any rate for the conscience. So this thing that Mrs. DAVIES has done was eminently worth doing. It has been well done in Germany by Kautzsch in his 'Outline of the History of the Literature of the Old Testament' and by Budde in his 'Geschichte der althebräischen Litteratur': it is all to the good that we now have in English a book which, like these, introduces us to the Old Testament not through the medium of Genesis, but with an exhibition of very ancient poetry, such as Lamech's Cry of Revenge, The Song of Miriam, and the Song of Deborah.

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It was also worth while to intersperse the discussion of the Biblical material with illustrative and ample selections from that material in the words of the Bible itself. This necessarily occupies considerable space, and captious critics might regard it as a superfluity; for is the Bible not the one book we all possess, and a simple reference to the

passage would enable us to look it up for ourselves? But man is proverbially a lazy animal, and this is just the thing that not one person in a hundred would do. Besides, it is an undoubted convenience to have the general discussion and the illustrative passages, side by side. All will then depend upon the skill with which the selection has been effected.

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Mrs. DAVIES knows her Bible too well to confuse the issue by selecting passages other than those which, for one reason or another, are of genuine significance. There are indeed points—very few—to which exception might be taken; for example, the few verses dealing with the dimensions of the Temple might have been omitted. We could also have dispensed with the whole of 1 K 1<sup>1-4</sup>, and not only with the last clause, which she rightly omits. But the writer has a clear eye for the interesting and vital things. She gives us, for example, the stories of Gideon, Elijah, and Elisha, almost intact, also Jehoiakim's destruction of Jeremiah's roll, the deliverance of Jerusalem from the menace of Sennacherib, Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones and River of Life; she gives us a glimpse also of the Hebrew philosophy of history by quotations from 2 K 17, and of the literary power of the Hebrews in Ezekiel's dirge over Tyre. These are but a few out of scores.

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The discussions which accompany the intimate knowledge revealed by the selections throw light upon the formation of the literature and on the inner nature of the history which has sometimes been obscured by the redaction. She is not afraid to speak, for example, of 'very evident contradictions' in the story of the foundation of the monarchy, and she calls attention to the conflicting accounts of the death of Sisera in the poem and the prose narrative respectively (Jg 4 f.), Jael's deed as described in the poem being 'less treacherous and bolder.' She regards J and E as extending beyond the Pentateuch, and carrying the story down to David's triumph over the Philistines, and E to the death of Saul. With the literary criticism of the Old Testament she is thoroughly conversant, though, as a point of textual criticism, it is a pity

she did not add to the lines she twice quotes (pp. 17, 101) of the original version of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple (1 K 8<sup>21</sup>.) the opening line preserved by the Septuagint which is undoubtedly genuine and which makes the poem a complete quatrain.

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She sees no reason to deny the Decalogue to Moses, but she is careful to add that this is only true of its original form, which must have been brief and emphatic. 'The words about graven images, the Sabbath, and the neighbour's *house*, as we now have them, come closer to the conditions of life after the settlement in Canaan than to the life of wanderers in the wilderness.' Remarks like these show that Mrs. DAVIES well knows where the problems lie, and that in reading her book we may be sure that we are in capable hands. Even in a brief summary, however, we should have liked to see the social, political, and religious causes which led to the disruption of the kingdom dealt with at somewhat greater length; but there was much to say in little space, and the writer, who had the right to choose her own perspective, shows, by the brief remark that 'even under David the union of North and South was more nominal than real,' that she has a genuine historical sense.

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The reader to whom this whole approach is new will be interested to be introduced to material from other lands which throws light on the Old Testament, such as the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, the Code of Hammurabi, the Moabite stone, inscriptions of Sargon, Sennacherib and Cyrus, and Herodotus's account of the Assyrian disaster in the time of Hezekiah. Altogether Mrs. DAVIES may be congratulated on having written a book which will clear and reassure as well as instruct the popular mind with regard to the nature of the Bible and the attitude of modern scholars towards it. We know, she says, 'how by means far more wonderful than mere "verbal inspiration" God gave to us the Bible.' Her book helps us to see what those means were, and we shall look forward with interest to the two succeeding volumes.

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In Dr. Hans H. GLUNZ's *History of the Vulgate in England from Alcuin to Roger Bacon* (reviewed in another column), it is contended that the early scholastic method of Biblical interpretation is traceable in the editions of the Vulgate Gospels which appeared after Alcuin. In the school of St. Martin and its successors a literary work was thought of as composed of a duality of word and sense, of outward text and inward meaning. The text was, as it were, a mask rather hiding the true meaning than revealing it. The meaning had to be approached by way of the Fathers.

While the reception of the patristic authority presented early scholasticism with its matter, the manner in which this was connected with the study of the Bible was in accordance with the principle of logical realism. Words were regarded as only accidental, material expressions and significations of the substances underlying them. And the principle was even held in reversed form, so that it was said that not only did a substance correspond to each noun, but also every substance had a word in the language. And further, this 'massive realism' was made a principle of hermeneutics. The patristic commentaries were thought of as containing substances, or the things signified by the words of the Biblical text; *vice versa*, the substances, as laid down in the commentaries, must necessarily find their counterpart in words of the text.

The earliest trace of the influence of the method of interpretation above outlined, in which were blended the two principles of patristic authority and logical realism, is to be found in the Harleian MS. 2788 of the British Museum, a gold MS. from Tours, which was probably written there in Alcuin's time. In Lk 15<sup>17</sup>, instead of the Jeromian form *quantum mercenarii patris mei abundant panibus* ('how many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare'), we find the variant *quantum mercenarii in domo patris mei abundant panibus* ('how many hired servants in my father's house have bread enough and to spare'), a reading which had never occurred in the whole preceding history of the Latin Bible. The addition *in domo* would

remain a puzzle if the new method of Biblical interpretation arrived at in St. Martin about that time did not give a clue to the solution.

In Bede's commentary on Luke, which rests upon St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, the prodigal son of the parable is explained as signifying worldly philosophy which would fain satisfy its hunger after truth, because the empty phrases of the philosopher leave it unsatisfied, but it has left the true master, Christ. And in the commentaries of Ambrose and Augustine the words *in domo* are to be found, signifying 'in the Church.'

To the interpreter who was convinced that the Biblical interpretations of the Fathers contained the true sense and the metaphysical reality hidden in the words of the text, a very important point in Lk 15<sup>17</sup> was that it concealed an allusion to the Church. The father's house is the Church, which the prodigal son has deserted. And as a noun corresponded to a substance, the idea of the Church—so it was concluded—required to be represented in the text. What, therefore, happened was that a word already present in Ambrose and Augustine, *in domo*, was received into the text. Henceforth there could be no doubt about the relation between text and exposition. The great realities said by the interpretation to be hinted at in the text now found a corresponding expression in it.

Such new variants, which very rarely altered at all the literal sense of the text, were gradually taken to be symbols standing for the Church's conviction that the text was incomplete and in need of supplement from the patristic and orthodox Church doctrine. An alteration, like the addition above mentioned, was to the faithful reader a sign directing him to some illuminating passage in the Fathers. One might almost say that the reading served to unite the text to a particular commentary of some Father. Herein may be the reason why not only the simple faithful, but the Church officially, clung tenaciously to the Vulgate Version, as containing the textual symbols particularly dear to the Church, because they stood for the patristic tradition.

In his book, just published, *The New Knowledge about the Old Testament* (Eyre & Spottiswoode ; 5s. net), Sir Charles MARSTON, F.S.A., gives a lucid account of many of the new discoveries made in Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and their significance for the historical character of the Bible stories. There are now, he says, plenty of sources, contemporary with the events they describe, from which to draw for ancient history, and these must be taken into view before the history of remote antiquity can be correctly written. What passes now for ancient history is often mainly conjecture.

These sources are of two kinds. In the first place, buried cities have been laid bare, and earthenware and other articles of domestic use have been dug up which help to date the events in which the city is concerned. Every one who has visited Pompeii will realize how much such excavations have to tell of the past. And in quite recent times the ancient cities of Ur, Jericho, Hazor, and others have been brought to light. The other source of information is to be found in the libraries of clay tablets, indented with inscriptions in cuneiform and other scripts, which have been found in Mesopotamia, Syria, Phœnicia, and Egypt. These are now beginning to yield up their secrets to the scholars who are able to decipher them. Sir Charles MARSTON bewails the fact that so few of these scholars are English. It is much to be regretted, he says, that our universities have taken so little pains to provide a supply of English students trained in the decipherment of these ancient scripts. The main finds are the famous Tel-el-Amarna tablets, those discovered three years ago at Ras Shamra, and the Hittite libraries discovered by Dr. Winckler in Asia Minor. There are also Egyptian and Babylonian inscriptions, and the value of these may be gauged from Sir Charles MARSTON's remark that we know more about Egyptian history of ancient times than we do about our own Anglo-Saxon history.

It may be useful to indicate briefly some of the contributions which have thus been made to our knowledge of Bible times. We have often heard of the Hyksos, the 'Shepherd Kings,' who reigned

over Egypt for so long. Sir Charles says their rule extended to eight hundred years. They came from the north through Syria, and one interesting fact is that they formed part of a great wave of emigration of the Semitic race which possessed and populated the Euphrates Valley about 2800 B.C. One feature of their life was their use of the horse, and it is supposed that this was one of the secrets of their military success, just as the natives of Palestine were able to resist the Hebrews because of their possession of chariots. When Abraham, then, left Ur he was leaving a land long ruled by his own Semitic race, and when he came to Canaan it was to a land also long ruled by his race, the Hyksos. Jericho was a store-city of the Hyksos, and Melchizedek is supposed to have been the last great Hyksos king.

The most interesting part of Sir Charles MARSTON's book is about Jericho. The excavations at Jericho have quite a lot to tell us about all sorts of Bible problems. The ancient city of Jericho was the gateway to Palestine. It barred the route to the western plateau. It also controlled the only copious supply of pure water on the western side of the Jordan for twenty-five miles. Hence the necessity of reducing it as the first step the Hebrews had to take in their invasion. But it was not a city that was strongly defended. The winter climate is delightful, but on the whole the climate is enervating, and the people were not a virile race. It had two sets of walls, one within the other, the outer six feet thick, and the inner twelve feet. This would seem a fairly serious defence. But the walls were badly built, with very shaky foundations. It did not take much to lay them low, and Sir Charles MARSTON thinks that it was an earthquake that brought them down when Joshua was making his assault. Earthquakes are very frequent in these regions, and in 1927 an earthquake shook the country right across the 'Rift' in which the Jordan flows.

In this connexion Sir Charles mentions an extraordinarily interesting fact. We read in Joshua that when the Hebrews were crossing the Jordan 'the waters which came down from above stood,

and rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan' (3<sup>16</sup> R.V.). The site of Adam is El Damieh, about sixteen miles above Jericho. During the earthquake of 1927 the high clay banks of the Jordan at this point collapsed, and so dammed the river that no water flowed down for twenty-one hours, a repetition in our own time of the phenomena described in the Book of Joshua. That earthquakes were associated with Joshua's crossing of the Jordan is suggested by several passages of the Old Testament. 'When Israel went out of Egypt . . . the Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs' (Ps 114); 'Lord, when thou wentest forth out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled.' Sir Charles MARSTON adds that the tracing of such incidents to natural causes in no way conflicts with their miraculous character.

The destruction of Jericho is dated by the author about 1400 B.C. His reasons need not be given here. What is more interesting is what follows from this date. One result is that the date of the Exodus, which is usually given as about 1200, must be wrong. The Israelites wandered for forty years in the wilderness, and if we add this to our 1400 we get the approximate time of the Exodus. It must have been between 1453 and 1417 B.C. Confirmation of this is found in 1 K 6<sup>1</sup>, where the building of the Temple by Solomon is given as happening four hundred and eighty years after the children of Israel left Egypt. Sir Flinders Petrie places the accession of Solomon at 960 B.C. Add to this four hundred and eighty years, and we get

1440 for the Exodus. This item of chronology may not be generally interesting, though it is of great importance for the construction of the history and its background. But there are other points of more general interest. Here is one, for example. The new sources tell us that while Israel was wandering in the desert the Pharaohs of Egypt were conducting campaign after campaign against Canaan. These incursions must have weakened the Canaanite tribes, and in this way the conquest of Canaan was prepared for and made easier for the Hebrews.

Another point of much interest revealed in the tablets is that a great deal of the Mosaic legislation was not original. Discoveries at Serabit (in Sinai) have revealed a temple with a ritual which in many ways approximates to the Mosaic ritual. Also the famous Code of Khammurabi anticipates much of the ritual laws of Exodus. What, however, will come with a greater shock to Bible readers is the discovery that neither the Passover nor the Sabbath was originated in Moses' time. The Passover can be traced back to remote periods. And the Sabbath was a Babylonian festival. 'In the official calendars the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days have special rubrics.' The work of Moses, says Sir Charles, was the revival of Monotheism and the cleansing and adoption of the ritual, the ceremonies and the legislation of his race. This book contains an excellent summary of the work recently done in excavating Bible sites, and, though all its positions cannot be accepted without qualification, its narrative is immensely interesting and of considerable value to Bible students.

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## The Message of the Epistles.

### Second Corinthians.

BY THE REVEREND JAMES REID, D.D., EASTBOURNE.

It is no easy task to capture in a short time the essential message of any of Paul's Epistles. But it is doubly difficult with a letter like Second Corinthians. It is not a theological letter in the ordinary sense of

the word. Paul is not trying to maintain a thesis, or defend a doctrine against those who were mishandling the faith. The core of the letter is practical. It marks the end of a very bitter pain. It contains