

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE present issue of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES closes the first volume of the enlarged series; and on another page will be found some of the leading arrangements which have been made for the next volume.

Elsewhere will also be found the decision of the examiners upon the papers received in connection with the Guild of Bible Study, and the proposals for the session 1892-93.

One of the most promising features of last session's Guild-work was the commencement here and there of *classes* for the study of the portion of Scripture named. These were for the most part new classes. It was not that the subject of the Guild was chosen for the customary Bible class, but that new associations were formed of those who desired to study together some definite portion of the Word of God. This movement ought to be greatly facilitated by the choice of St. John's Gospel as the New Testament portion for next session; for it cannot be denied that the difficulties of the Epistle to the Hebrews are formidable to young students. We shall consider it an especial favour if those who have it in mind to attempt such local Guilds will communicate with us. From our own experience of a local Guild last session, we shall do what we can in the way of suggestion and guidance.

Before passing from the subject of the Guild, let us make the following preliminary statement respecting a parallel movement. Dr. Harper, President of Chicago University, has for several years been at the head of a movement in America for the encouragement of the study of the Scriptures in their original languages. Last year he visited England, and when in Manchester he induced Dr. Maclaren and Professor Marshall to undertake the management of such an effort in this country. These scholars have since associated others with them, and the movement may be said to have made a promising beginning. We have been asked to co-operate, and have replied that we should gladly do so, for the matter is very much after our own heart. Our readers may, therefore, expect that next issue of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES will contain a full statement of the aim in view, and the arrangements which have been made. Meantime, the Rev. Professor J. T. Marshall, M.A., Sunnyside, Fallowfield, Manchester, will reply to correspondents who desire immediate information on the subject.

“And the King of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a great army unto Jerusalem.” This sentence, which occurs in 2 Kings xviii. 17, is historical in more senses than one. It is the record of a historical event. But round itself

there has gathered a history of no little interest, a history of research and discovery of which the last chapter has just been written.

The three words, Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, were for a long time popularly read as proper names. And that opinion was not really overthrown until the name Tartan was discovered in the monuments as the official title of the Assyrian commander-in-chief. Thereupon all three were regarded as official titles, Rabsaris being translated, tentatively, "chief of the eunuchs," and Rab-shakeh, more confidently, "chief cup-bearer."

But Schrader was surprised to find the title "chief cup-bearer" mentioned along with the commander-in-chief and the (presumably) "chief of the eunuchs." He said: "We certainly find 'Tartan' and 'chief of the harem' mentioned side by side in the inscriptions; but we never find any mention of the chief cup-bearer as a high dignitary and state official." He suspected that Rab-shakeh was a Hebraised form of the Assyrian Rab-sak, which had been found in the inscriptions as a title of high military officers. Sak evidently meant "captain." Rab-sak would therefore mean "chief captain" or "commander." And Schrader suggested that "the generalissimo (Tartan) was accompanied by a commander (Rab-sak) and by a captain of eunuchs—the latter possessing literary qualifications. It is not,"—he hazarded the further suggestion,— "it is not the generalissimo or commander-in-chief who delivers the speech, for that would have been beneath his dignity; nor is it the eunuch, for a speech so energetic as that of the Assyrian would have sounded very strange from his lips, but it is the Rab-sak, that is, according to my view, the general staff-officer."

The identification of Rab-shakeh with the title Rab-sak of the Assyrian inscriptions was accepted at once, and has been quite confirmed since then. The translation is also fairly established. The

Tartan is now recognised by Assyrian scholars as the general of the Assyrian army, and Rab-shakeh as the chief of the captains. But when Schrader wrote, the middle word of the three, Rabsaris, had not been met with on the monuments. He was compelled to accept the common translation "chief of the eunuchs," and he knew that his further suggestion as to the silence of the Rabsaris on that historical occasion—that he had not spirit enough for so spirited an oration—was somewhat hazardous.

Now, however, the name has been found and translated by Mr. T. G. Pinches of the British Museum, and Schrader is scholar enough to hail its discovery, though it makes his suggestion a little foolish. Writing to the *Academy*, Mr. Pinches says: "Tartan and Rab-shakeh have been long since explained from the inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia, the former being the well-known *tartanu* or *turtanu*, the latter the *rab-šaki* or 'chief of the captains'; but Rabsaris still remained undiscovered in the numerous inscriptions, except in its Aramaic form, which corresponded with the Hebrew, the only difference being the omission of the *i* in the last syllable. The long lost word, however, has now come to light. In a list of names (apparently a title-list), preserved on a fragment of the right-hand upper part of a tablet (numbered 82-7-14, 3570) in the British Museum, and dated in the fifth year of a king whose name is lost, occurs the title *rabū-ša-rīšu*, 'chief of the heads' or 'princes'—he who had charge of the royal princes (Dan. i. 3)."

One can see at a glance how much more in keeping with the titles general and chief captain is this. One can see also how much more appropriate it is as the title of the officer to whose charge Daniel and his three companions were committed. It is most significant that it was the guardian of the royal princes who was appointed to watch the training of these young and princely Israelites; who was commanded to see them fit

for their princely destiny. Thus the matter is no trifle. Indeed no fact, even were it infinitesimal in itself and utterly isolated from other facts, if that were possible,—no fact is unimportant in relation to the historicity of the Old Testament. Its importance is guaranteed when we are confident that it *is* a fact.

It is on that account becoming that we should invite our readers' particular attention to the series of papers now appearing in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, and written by Mr. Pinches, under the title of "The Old Testament in the Light of the Literature of Assyria and Babylonia." Unless one is "bitten" by the subject they may appear at first glance somewhat unattractive. But it will be observed that they are so written as to be read and enjoyed by one who is new to the subject; and it cannot be that at such a time as this their great merit can be overlooked. It is with pleasure we are able to state that from henceforth they may be counted upon with more frequency.

There is an uneasy feeling abroad—one finds it openly expressed, now and then—that Assyriology has not yet established its right to be called a science. Its translations, we are told, are in large measure guess-work still, and liable to be overturned by the next translator. Professor Sayce, in the current issue of the *Critical Review*, makes so distinct and emphatic a statement to the contrary, that that feeling ought no longer to find refuge, unless it can make its suspicions good. "Assyriology," he says, "is a progressive science, and the translations of Assyrian texts are necessarily capable of improvement from time to time. It is improvement, however, and not substantial change. Except in the case of so-called 'translations' like those of Mr. Fox Talbot, in which the elementary principles of philology were set at defiance, the progress made in Assyrian translation is not so great as certain young German scholars assert, and as the public is sometimes induced to believe. It is rather in the more exact definition

of individual words, and the determination of the sense of passages, which had baffled the skill of earlier translators, than in any important change of meaning, that a translation made to-day differs from one made by a competent scholar twenty years ago. If, for example, we compare the latest rendering of the great Chaldean Epic of Gilgames with that made by George Smith in the hurry of departure for the East, and at a time when the class of documents to which the Epic belongs was wholly new, we shall find that in all important points the English Assyriologist had already grasped the signification of the cuneiform original. He was not only a pioneer, but a pioneer who also secured the ground which he was the first to traverse."

No doubt it is possible to mention certain inscriptions into which changes of some importance have been introduced. But these, Professor Sayce holds, are usually due to a correction of the reading rather than to a more exact interpretation of it. "Nothing is more difficult than to copy accurately the documents which have been bequeathed to us by the libraries of Assyria and Babylonia. The smallness of the characters, the carelessness with which they have often been written, the broken and otherwise injured condition of the clay tablets on which they are inscribed, render the accurate transcription of a cuneiform text one of the hardest tasks in the world. Even the Assyrian scribes were sometimes at fault when copying a tablet which had been brought from Babylonia; it is not wonderful, therefore, if the copies that we make to-day should need repeated revision."

Further on in the same article, Professor Sayce touches upon the meaning of the name Babel or Babylon. Two derivations are in the field. To many of us it will be reassuring to learn that Kaulen prefers the derivation given in the Bible ("confusion," Gen. xi. 9) as the more ancient and the more correct. But Professor Sayce, though he

has never shown any unnatural desire to suspect the accuracy of the Scriptures, yet here distinctly prefers the Babylonian derivation, *Bab-ilu*, or the "Gate of God." "Why," he asks, "does Dr. Kaulen say that the explanation of the name of Babylon as *Bab-ilu*, or the 'Gate of God,' is a later and popular etymology. It is the only form known to the 'early' inscriptions, and goes back not only to Accadian days, but even to the age of the invention of cuneiform writing. The 'later' popular etymology is naturally that which connected the name with the 'confusion' of languages, and for which the Book of Genesis is at present our sole authority. Indeed, it is doubtful whether a verb *babîlu*, 'to confound,' occurs at all in Assyrian. I, at all events, have never met with it."

In our issue for August there appeared some notes upon 1 Cor. vii. 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (R.V.).

It may be remembered that this passage had already been dealt with in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. In reply to a request, Principal Simon of Edinburgh contributed a full and painstaking article upon it, which will be found in vol. ii. pp. 221-223. He gave himself chiefly to the last clause, which has reference to the standing of the children, and which he translated: "Else verily your children are unclean; as it is, however, they are holy." How can holiness be ascribed to the children because of the faith of their *parents*; how can holiness be denied to the children on the ground of the unbelief of their *parents*? That was the question Dr. Simon understood he had to answer. And he found the answer in "Paul's conception of mankind as constituting an organic whole." To this conception the apostle directly turns again and again. Notable examples are the illustration of the human body in this epistle, commencing: "For as the body is one

and hath many members, and all the members of the body being many, are one body" (1 Cor. xii. 12-27); and the parable of the tree and its branches in the Epistle to the Romans (xi. 16, 24). "This conception," says Dr. Simon, "is one of those which, in my judgment, dominates Paul's whole thinking, and it is often present as a co-determining factor when no distinct allusion to it is either made or is even apparent. He was what one may call an organic thinker, as distinguished from a fragmentary thinker, like, perhaps, Peter. His whole mental life, conscious and unconscious, worked, so to speak, as the living energy in a seed works, along certain lines or channels, whose course was defined beforehand by such ideas as that of organic unity."

Since the publication of Principal Simon's article, we have received a paper on the subject from Mr. James M'Clelland, of New Brighton. It gives a view of the passage at once straightforward and new; and although we do not think it is necessary to publish the paper in full, the leading points of it may well be stated here.

It cannot be denied that the great difficulty in the way of the ordinary interpretation is the translation of the last part of the verse. In both our versions it is: "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." Now it is open to question whether the Greek words found here (*ἕνεκεν ἁγία*) should ever be translated by the English word "else." Not one of the examples commonly adduced absolutely *demand*s that translation. The passage which is most frequently quoted as an example is 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. But one has only to read the clumsy and extraordinary translation of that passage in the Revised Version, with its still more extraordinary marginal note, to see that something is wrong there. In any case, the natural translation of the words before us is "since indeed"; and it is in Mr. M'Clelland's favour that that is the translation he prefers. But it is still more unmistakably in his favour that he

insists upon the verb being rendered in its proper tense. That tense is the present, "are," not "were unclean." Surely our Revisers, who have been blamed for their scrupulous adherence to the exact forms of the Greek tenses, must have been under some strong compulsion when they departed from their custom in this case. And surely that compulsion must have been a mistaken conception of the meaning of the passage.

But again, Mr. M'Clelland insists upon "unpurified" as the correct rendering of the Greek word (*ἀκάθαρτος*) given in our versions as "unclean." It is the word which the Septuagint have employed to translate the frequently recurring expression (*טמא*), in the Levitical ritual, rendered "unclean" in our English versions. In the New Testament its most frequent occurrence is as a designation of demons or evil angels—"unclean spirits," they are very often described, especially in the Gospels. But it is also used of food, as in St. Peter's vision of the sheet let down from heaven: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and *unclean*." Still, Mr. M'Clelland prefers to render the word "unpurified" here. And his reason immediately appears. "Unclean" suggests the opposite of holy—"Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." But Mr. M'Clelland believes that there is no such suggestion intended. It is just that suggestion, he holds, that has caused us to miss the apostle's meaning.

Mr. M'Clelland's rendering, then, is this: "Since, indeed, your children are unpurified, but now they are holy." We have seen that "since indeed" is the more usual meaning of the words of the Greek.

The alteration from "unclean" to "unpurified" is less necessary, but quite legitimate. Indeed, "uncleansed" is distinctly better than "unclean," and would suit Mr. M'Clelland's interpretation at least as well as "unpurified." The apostle's argument is, that the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife. *As a proof of that*, he refers to the position of the children. In the usual interpretation the case of the children is cited, not as a direct proof, but by way of warning. What would the result be if it were not so? The children would be unclean. No, says Mr. M'Clelland; the proof is direct. The case of the children is cited as a parallel case to that of the unbelieving husband. They are uncleaned, as he is; they stand outside, as he does; nevertheless, they are reckoned holy, "saints," members of the Christian community, and he should be reckoned sanctified also, a "saint" as well as they. Therefore the meaning is not, else your children would be unclean (=unholy), but really they are holy; it is, since indeed (or, just as) your children are uncleaned, *i.e.* in the very same position as if they were unbelievers like their father, and yet they are reckoned saints along with the rest of you.

What, then, does "uncleansed" mean here? "Unbaptized," says Mr. M'Clelland boldly. And thus he finds in this passage, which even Godet looks upon as a strong argument in favour of infant baptism in the Apostolic Church, a direct statement that infant baptism did not exist. Says Dr. T. K. Abbott, of Trinity College, Dublin, in his newly-issued *Notes on St. Paul's Epistles* (Longmans): "The principle which justifies infant baptism is here assumed, but the practice is not implied." To the same conclusion Mr. M'Clelland's able article seems to lead.