THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

Professor Briggs, having left the Presbyterian and entered the Episcopal Church of America, has not given peace to the one and has much disquieted the other. He has not given peace to the Presbyterian Church he has left, because it is greatly agitated over the case of his colleague, Professor McGiffert. And he has much disquieted the other, for every Episcopalian organ is ringing with attack or defence of his theological writings.

The latest to enter the fray is the extreme High Church magazine called *The Church Eclectic*. Though late in coming, *The Church Eclectic* pushes at once to the front, and promises that 'we shall strive to do our part in the battle.' The issue for December contains an article by the editor on 'The Word of God.'

The whole dispute that has gathered round Dr. Briggs since he entered the Episcopal Church may be expressed in a single sentence. Does the Bible *contain* the Word of God, or *is* it the Word of God? If you believe that it contains the Word of God, you mean that you yourself have found truths in it which edify your spiritual life and which you reckon Divine. If you say that it is the Word of God, you mean that all that is contained in the Bible is Divine, not because you have found it so, but because it is in the Bible. The editor of *The Church Eclectic* believes that the Bible is the Word of God.

For if the Bible only contains the Word of God, then we may select from the Bible such portions as suit ourselves and cast the rest away. Moreover, we may find that writings which are not in the Bible suit us better than some that are. So if we cast away the Book of Judges, because we do not find that it is for edification, we may fill its place by the *Imitation* of St. Thomas à Kempis. And that will not do. So the Bible *is* the Word of God.

And if the Bible is the Word of God, then every part of it is the Word of God, and one part quite as much as another. To speak of degrees of inspiration is absurd. A book, a sentence (the editor does not descend to a word, a letter) is either inspired or it is not. If it is in the Bible it is inspired, and it is equally inspired wherever in the Bible it is. The Psalms are more edifying than Judges, the eighth chapter of Romans than the single chapter of Jude; but that does not mean that the one is more inspired than the other, it only means that the *immediate purpose* of the one is edification, the immediate purpose of the other is not.

It is undoubtedly true, says the editor of *The Church Eclectic* that the Scriptures are the word of man as well as the Word of God. Man wrote, not to God's dictation, but along the lines of his own understanding, so that one man's matter and one man's style are different from another's. But what man wrote, God overruled and made His own. So you cannot separate the human from the Divine. You cannot draw a dividing line in any direction in Scripture and say, This is the Word of God and that is the word of man. All is the word of man and all is the Word of God.

Being, then, the Word of God, 'we are bound to regard the Scriptures as inerrant.' But here at last we seem to have an exception. The editor's sentence does not stop at 'inerrant.' 'Inerrant,' he says, 'in all matters in which they are inspired to guide us, *i.e.* in faith and morals.' The Scriptures were not inspired, he says, to anticipate the results of scholarship; they were inspired 'for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.'

So the editor of *The Church Eclectic* does not carry us further than we were. That there is a human element in Scripture, we all can see. The hand that wrote the Epistle to the Romans is not the hand that wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. That there is also a Divine element in Scripture, we are ready to believe. But how that Divine hand comes in or where, he does not tell us. Does he not leave us after all to discover it by finding edification there? He is also right when he says that the human and Divine in the Bible cannot be separated. But what becomes of the rest when the parts that make for faith and morals are taken away? He does not tell us that.

The *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January opens with an article by Professor Hugh Scott on the influence of Ritschlianism upon personal piety. It is an article of independence and value, and we hope to return to it. There are also other articles of attraction in this number, together with one of manifest repulsion. But we shall pass them by for the present in order to touch upon a 'Critical Note.' The note occupies nine closely printed pages. Its subject is the motive of Christ in working His miracles.

Dr. Chase (not of Cambridge, but of Minneapolis), who writes the note, says that in a meeting of men who were discussing the social elevation of the poorer classes, it was stated that no higher motive for interest in the poor was needed than the motive of Jesus Christ. That motive was said to be pity. He performed many of His miracles, it was stated, solely out of compassion. And the statement was supported by a quotation from Professor Drummond's *Greatest Thing in the World*. This is the quotation: 'Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things—in merely doing kind things? Run it over with that in view, and you will find that He spent a great proportion of His time in simply making people happy, in doing good turns to people.'

Dr. Chase 'runs it over.' He considers each miracle separately. We need not consider them separately after him. And then he gathers his results. He finds that in five of the miracles compassion is declared to be a leading motive, perhaps the only motive. These are: (1) the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mt $9^{18.\,19.\,23\text{-}26}$ and ||), in which this is the only motive he sees intimated, though faith seems to have been a necessary condition to the result; (2) the cleansing of the leper (Mt $8^{1\text{-}4}$, ||), which is ascribed first to Christ's pity and then to the leper's faith; (3) the raising of the widow's son at Nain (Lk $7^{11\text{-}16}$), where it is stated that 'He had compassion on her,' but where the result is given as glory to God; (4) the healing of the impotent man at the pool Bethesda (Jn $5^{1\text{-}16}$), where pity seems to be the leading motive, though it is stated in the sequel that the man's sins had something to do with it: 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee'; and

(5) the feeding of the four thousand (Mt 15^{32-39} 11, Mk 8^{1-9}), which is ascribed to compassion alone.

Those are the miracles that have to be considered. The rest need not be looked at. For of the rest, thirteen are done in answer to faith, or else in order to produce faith; twelve are wrought as proofs of the Lord's Divinity; in five salvation is the clearly defined result. There remain: (1) the coin in the fish's mouth (Mt 17^{24-27}), in which the motive seems to be the same as that which sent Him into the lonely places of Ephraim, to avoid precipitating His time by giving needless offence to the rulers; (2) the healing of Malchus's ear (Lk 22^{49-51}), which Dr. Chase regards as a practical illustration of 'Love your enemies,' and meant more for the disciples than for Malchus; and (3) the feeding of the five thousand (Mt 14^{15-21}, ||), where compassion is prominent, but it is compassion for those that are lost, not for those that are hungry.

We shall return to the five miracles of pity. First, however, we must ask, with Dr. Chase, if there are any general statements as to our Lord's purpose in coming into the world, and in particular as to His purpose in working miracles.

Our Lord's purpose in coming into the world was 'to give His life a ransom for many' (Mt 20^{28}, Mk 10^{45}). St. Paul seems to interpret that saying —it is the saying of the Lord Himself—when he explains that 'He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Ph 2^{5-8}). He came, we are told again, to accomplish a certain work ('We must work the works of Him that sent Me,' Jn 9^{4}), which was not accomplished until He died on the cross (Jn 17^{4} 19^{30}); and this is interpreted by St. John (1 Jn 3^{5}) and by St. Paul (Ro 4^{25}) as the taking away of our sins. These general sayings and these interpretations of them seem to show that the work of Christ on earth had one and only one end in view, the world's salvation.

Do the references to the miracles agree with that? They do not contradict that, but they do not simply repeat it. They cover larger ground. Sometimes they are pointed to as evidence of Christ's Messiahship. That seems to have been their message to John the Baptist, when he sent disciples to ask, 'Art thou He?' Sometimes they lift up the conception of Messiahship. The demons were cast out to prove the presence of a Messiah who was Prince of the Powers of the air. Sometimes (and especially in St. John) they are appealed to in evidence of His mission, in evidence, that is, that He *had* a mission, what that mission was (the giving of life abundantly, the leading into all the truth) being otherwise expressed. And oftenest of all they are wrought and said to be wrought because faith compelled them.

If this examination is exhaustive, and it seems to be, then Professor Drummond was wrong in saying that Jesus often did merely kind things. That He often did kind things, who would dream of denying? He did kind things always. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ye know that He was most wonderfully kind while He was upon the earth, and every moment of His life upon the earth, even as He is now in heaven. But that He often did merely kind things we have not seen. We have seen that only five times does He seem to have done merely kind things. And now we have to consider whether in these five miracles it was merely a kind thing that He did.

Only in the case of the feeding of the four thousand is pity the single motive mentioned. But no one believes that pity for the hungry bodies of the multitude was all the motive Jesus had. We have but to recall the after-reference to this miracle, as well as to the feeding of the five thousand. 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,' He said. And when they grossly misunderstood, 'When the four thousand were fed, how many baskets took ye up? How is it that ye do not understand? Then understood they that He

bade them not beware of the leaven of bread.' The pity was there, but it was not there alone. In the case of the disciples at least, that is to say, in the case of all who could profit by it, a higher motive was there, even the salvation of the soul.

We need not linger over the miracles of the healing of the impotent man or the cleansing of the leper. Far more difficult, indeed the only really difficult miracles, are the raisings from the dead. Dr. Chase classes the raising of Lazarus among the miracles which were proofs of Christ's Divinity. And no doubt it was that. But it was more than that. In the three narratives of the raising from the dead one lesson is prominent beyond all others.

It is the littleness of death. Christ Jesus came into the world to save, to save from a great calamity. When He came He found that the greatest calamity men knew was death. So great a calamity was death that when it occurred it paralysed a whole neighbourhood. So terrible an event was it that mourning was raised to a science and made a lucrative profession. All professions bowed before the profession that tore the hair and beat the breast; all occupations, all interests, gave place to a humble funeral procession.

Well, death *is* a great thing, and Jesus knew it. But not this death. She that liveth in sin is dead. That is death, and that death is terrible. But the death of the body is not terrible. The death of the body is not worth calling death. It is natural and simple, and ought to be childlike. It is like falling asleep at night and waking refreshed in the morning.

So when He came to the home in which the daughter of Jairus lay dead, He said, 'Give place; the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.' They laughed Him to scorn, those hired mourners, as indeed they might, for if He had had His way their lucrative profession would be taken from them. We laugh Him to scorn still. 'Terrible to all men is death, from of old named king of terrors.' We quote and say that Carlyle never spoke more impressively. But Jesus knew better than Carlyle. And when He raised Jairus' daughter to life, He gave her back to her mother that she might live the life indeed, and then fall asleep in Jesus.

Again, when He heard that Lazarus, His friend, was sick, He let him die. Why not? Lazarus is none the worse of dying. And when at last He went, that in raising him from the dead He might show how little a thing death is—and did He not show it in word as well as deed?—when He went He heard them weeping, and even upbraiding Him that He was so cruel as to let Lazarus die. He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. His whole frame shook with emotion. They were dead all round Him and did not care. Lazarus was asleep, and they were beating their breasts with anguish.

As for the general question, surely Professor Drummond went far astray when He said that our Lord 'spent a great proportion of His time in simply making people happy.' He spent all His time in seeking and saving that which was lost. And though we are not formally told, we know that even in the case of the raising of the widow's son at Nain, His purpose could not be simply the making of people happy. He could not make people happy till first He had made them miserable. And it would be nearer the truth to say that He spent a great proportion of His time in making people miserable. If the happiness came, it came after, but it never came 'simply.'

At the opening of the New College, Edinburgh, for the present session, Professor A. B. Davidson delivered an address on 'The Uses of the Old Testament for Edification.' The address is published in the *Expositor* for January.

Professor Davidson recognized that in delivering the opening lecture he would be expected to speak 'on some topic connected with the Old

Testament.' The special topic to which, it seems, his mind first travelled was Archæology. But he did not find that there was enough in it for his purpose. Archæology—'in particular the archæology of Egypt and Babylon, considered as casting light on biblical questions, and as corroborative of Bible history'—is a topic of much interest at present. But that may be because archæologists attach an exaggerated importance to their favourite study. Professor Davidson does not find that the antiquities of Egypt, or even of Babylon, are of much use to the student of the Bible.

Professor Davidson does not say this in the interests of the lazy student of the Bible. It is not on record that he ever said much on the lazy student's behalf. So if the lazy student exclaims, 'Ah, I never believed in archæology,' to excuse his laziness and ignorance, Professor Davidson has something more to say to him. He has to say that it is from archæology, we have learned that the cosmology and even the eschatology of the Bible are similar to those of Babylon. And from this he is able to draw the conclusion that the early narratives of Genesis are neither the mere invention of the Hebrew writers nor immediate revelations to their minds. Israel brought her heritage of thought with her from the far East. It lay in her mind till the religion of Jehovah began to work upon it. Then, when it was 'shot through and illuminated with the rays of true religious light,' the writers of Scripture brought it forth, not that they might teach us cosmology, or even eschatology, but that our religion might be right, that we might take up a right religious attitude towards the world that now is, as well as that which is to come. And not only does he bring this immediate conclusion out of his own painstaking study of archæology, but he also draws the remoter inference that, 'as these narratives are not pure creations of the Hebrew mind, but reflexions of ideas common to a large division of the human race, so the strange traditions of early humanity recorded in the first ten chapters of Genesis, and much more the stories of the Patriarchs from the twelfth chapter onwards, have all a real historical basis, and are not mere ideal inventions.'

Those are really great gains from archæological study, and Professor Davidson has no desire to belittle them. But those are not the things we went to archæology for. Those are not the things which some archæologists encouraged us to expect. As mere apology for the historical accuracy of the Old Testament archæology is of little worth. And it does not even touch the great fundamental questions with which we are now concerned—the questions, 'whether there be a living God, and whether He has come down into the history of mankind to purify them and lift them up into fellowship with Himself, and whether there be an eternal hope for the individual and for the race.' So Professor Davidson passed from archæology.

He passed to criticism. Not that he might say what criticism is, or even what it has done. The one is unnecessary, the other impossible. We know what criticism is; no mere man can tell us what it has done. He passed to criticism to say that 'so far as the doctrines of the faith are concerned, criticism has not touched them, cannot touch them, and they remain as they were,' and to make that saying good.

Now, in making that memorable saying good, Professor Davidson first quotes from his own pupil, the late Professor Robertson Smith. He does not call him pupil. He quotes as if he were his master. And he is right so far at least as this, that Professor Robertson Smith's opinion was not a reflexion of Professor Davidson's own, but original and immovable. What he quotes from Professor Robertson Smith is to be had in everlasting remembrance.

'Of this,' said Professor Robertson Smith, 'I am sure that the Bible does speak to the heart of man in words that can only come from God—that no historical research can deprive me of this

conviction, or make less precious the Divine utterances that speak to the heart. For the language of these words is so clear that no readjustment of their historical setting can conceivably change the substance of them. Historical study may throw a new light on the circumstances in which they were first heard or written. In that there can only be gain. But the plain, central, heartfelt truths, that speak for themselves and rest on their own indefeasible worth, will assuredly remain with us.'

It is many years since Professor Robertson Smith made that statement. Professor Davidson accepts it still. He no doubt sees that criticism has done much more with the words of the Bible than readjust their historical setting. But if *a priori* judgments as to what the Scriptures ought to be are set aside, and if we take the Scriptures as we find them, then he believes that the Old Testament can still be used in the Church for edification, and can be handled with the same firmness and assurance in public teaching as in the past.

The trouble is not with the Word of God but with the *a priori* theories. There was a time when an *a priori* theory of what the Word of God must be, contended that the Hebrew vowel-signs were an integral part of the Old Testament. But historical investigation showed that the vocalization of the Hebrew Bible, so far from being as old as Moses, was not so old as Jerome and the Talmud, four or five hundred years after the Christian era. There was another time when it was contended that the Greek of the New Testament must be classical. This was a far less feasible contention, says Professor Davidson, than the other. For thoughts may be as accurately expressed in an impure or non-literary dialect as in a classical one, 'and I daresay there are few of us here who have not heard our Scotch dialect used by good men in prayer with a power and pathos, which, to us at least, was more touching and impressive than the purest English would have been.'

And then he comes nearer. 'At another time,' he says, and it cannot be long ago, 'the strict conception of the Word of God was held to imply that everything in Scripture which seemed to be historical representation must be regarded as a record of actual facts.' He quotes the saying of a German theologian (for the Germans are either sheep or goats in this matter), that if the Book of Job was not a record of historical fact it was a fraud. But this rigid conception of the Word of God, he says, has now been greatly relaxed. A better acquaintance with the actual Scriptures has done it. Now it is recognized that 'there may be dramatic representation in Scripture, that speeches may be put into the mouths of persons which were never actually spoken, and that even a situation may be idealized or created so as to represent the conditions of a moral problem more vividly to the mind; in a word, that the kinds of literary composition usual among men may be expected in Scripture.'

But it is not so much the form of Scripture that we are concerned with now; it is its substance. Give Scripture the right to appeal to us in its own way, and admit that its own way is as effective as it could be, what if the truth with which it comes is not truth? Surely the use of the Old Testament is impaired for edification if, for example, its morality is less than our morality and its history is our fiction. Professor Davidson deals both with the morality of the Old Testament and with its history.

He deals first with its morality. He points out that the writers of the Old Testament were really speakers. The prophet spoke and then wrote down what he had spoken. Or if it had not been already spoken, the writing was still as speech, for *it was always addressed to the men of the prophet's own day*. Moreover, the addresses were always religious addresses, the writings always religious writings. Things that lay outside the sphere of religion the prophet did not touch. The fisherman might work by erroneous tables of

the ebb and flow of the tide, but he must know that God holds the waters in the hollow of His hand.

It follows that the morality *as morality* is not for us. It also follows that wherever the morality came under the influence of religion it was purified and lifted up. The ruler was allowed to rule according to use and wont, but conduct that contradicted the knowledge of God, he was taught that God would judge. Now it was in its details that morality lay outside the sphere of religion, its principles were within. Religion, in short, was the principle, and could only slowly gather the details within its scope. But it did gather them. There is no express denunciation of polygamy in the Old Testament, as there is no express denunciation of slavery in the New. Yet it was the religion of Jehovah that put an end to the one as it was the religion of Christ that put an end to the other.

Moreover, we have to remember—and we thank Professor Davidson for reminding us of it—that the religion of the Old Testament is a state or social religion. Its legislation is therefore a code of conduct. The religion of Christ, on the other hand, is a religion for the individual. His legislation is a law of the mind. Professor Davidson does not forget that as time went on the law of the Old Testament grew more and more inward, till in the thirty-first chapter of Job—'the high-water mark of Old Testament morality'—not only do we find wrong actions but even wrong motions of the mind and heart condemned. This is, indeed, as we ought to expect it. But it remains that in the Old Testament morality is outward, and a rule of conduct for states; in the New it is inward, and a law of life for individuals.

So we are not to contrast the morality of the Old Testament with the morality enjoined by Christ, and condemn the former. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be made the law of a state. And although Jesus set His own words in sharp contrast with the words of those 'of old time,' Professor Davidson hopes for pardon if he doubts that the reference is to Moses. 'It is probably not to Mosaic law that He opposes His own, it is to the interpretations of Mosaic law current among the Doctors of His day.' It is to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees that He opposes a righteousness which is greater than theirs.

In any case, we must not condemn, but distinguish. And as soon as we see that the morality of the Old Testament is a state morality, we see that the edge is greatly taken from the criticisms that are made upon it. For even in later days, when Israel was no more an independent state, it was distinctly conscious of its separate nationality. It is therefore the community and not an individual who 'curses' in the cursing Psalms. And it is against some other nation, some nation apostate to Jehovah and traitors to His people, that the 'curse' is hurled. 'It is doubtful,' says Professor Davidson, 'if anywhere there be imprecation by an individual against another individual.' Let in the idea of nationality and the question is greatly complicated — as even Christians feel whose country is at war with another.

The other question, the question of the historical character of the early narratives of Genesis, Professor Davidson is compelled to treat more briefly. But his words are well chosen. He asks three questions. Who were the writers of the primitive history? On what principles did they write? With what aims? And he answers, The writers were prophetic men. They wrote with the same principles as animated the prophets. They sought the same ends.

Now it was the faith of the prophets that God was the Maker of history. And the only end they had in view in recording it was to reveal His hand. Accordingly, the prophet sees more in history than the ordinary eye can see. He sees God in it, and he sees the end which God has

before Him as the history moves on. He may not give the simple historical succession of events; into the past he may project something of his own experience in the present, or even something of God's purpose for the future. So when we ourselves look back upon the past to trace God's hand, our recollections are not pure and simple, but coloured somewhat by our present. The prophetic writer of the early history of Israel may have reflected back into that history something of the light amidst which he himself stood. But there is continuity even in an individual life. How much more in the life of Israel. 'The principles of the prophetic age were the fruit of the seed sown in the age of the patriarchs and the time of the Exodus.'

Thomas Boston.

WITH LETTER HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED.

By the Rev. George D. Low, M.A., Edinburgh.

Thomas Boston is a great figure in Scottish Church history. Born at Duns in 1676 and dying at Ettrick in 1732, the period covered by his life was a memorable one. It included the persecution of the Covenanters, the Revolution of 1688, the establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland, the Union of the kingdoms, and the Settlement of the House of Hanover in room of the Stuarts. As a little boy Boston lay in the prison at Duns to keep his father company, who, 'being a nonconformist during the time of prelacy, suffered on that head to imprisonment and spoiling of his goods.' In his twelfth year he came under deep spiritual conviction. 'The toleration being granted,' he tells us, 'Mr. H. Areskin preached at Newtoun of Whitsome, and my father took me thither and laid me in Christ's way. At first I was struck with wonder at the words that proceeded out of his mouth, the like whereof I thought I had never heard. At length I was pierced to the heart.' Mr. Areskin was the father of the famous Secession leaders, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine.

Boston attended the Grammar School of Duns from 1684–5 to 1689. As a boy at school he 'desired to be a preacher of the gospel, because of all men ministers were most taken up about spiritual things.' His father sympathized with him in his love of learning and in his desire to become a student, but want of means closed the way. Boston was for a time in the office of a notary, where he learned much that was useful to him in after days: in his work as Synod clerk, and in the drawing-up of important documents. At length his father resolved to face the expense of his college education, and took him to Edinburgh in December 1691. After examination in the Greek New Testament, Boston was received into the class of Mr. Herbert Kennedy, regent, under whom he remained till his graduation on 7th July 1694. In the Book of Matriculation of the Edinburgh College, from 1627–1703, page 137, he signs his name Thomas Bouston. The same spelling is given in the *Catalogue of Graduates* for the year 1694, printed in 1858. These are the only instances we know of variation from the ordinary spelling.

After graduation he began to study theology, and in January 1695 he entered the School of Divinity, then taught by 'the great George Campbell,' who had been appointed to the office in 1690. The only other professor of divinity was Alexander Rule, professor of Hebrew, appointed in February 1694. The session lasted for about three months, and after it was over, Boston went home bearing with him a testimonial from Professor Campbell, setting forth his diligence and honourable character. He returned to Edinburgh in February 1696 to take charge of a pupil, Andrew Fletcher of Aberlady, a boy of nine years. His duties left him free to attend the School of Divinity, but ere a month had passed the family of his pupil removed to Kennet, in the parish of Clackmannan, and Boston's college studies in theology were brought to an abrupt conclusion. 'Though it was heavy to me,' he says, 'that I was