

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

No sooner is the history of Egypt written than it has to be begun again. The next historian must note that the campaign of Seti I. in Palestine was more extensive than has hitherto been supposed. Professor G. A. Smith, in his recent journey through the Hauran, discovered an inscription which proves that it extended beyond the Jordan. The inscription is contained on a block of basalt now built into the courtyard wall of a house at Tell esh-Shihâb. Besides the cartouche of Seti, it contains a representation of the king in the act of offering a libation to the god Amen, the goddess Hut standing behind.

The American Revision Committee has finished its work on the whole Bible, and it is expected that 'The American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible,' as it is to be called, will be published before the end of August. Professor Howard Osgood, one of the Old Testament Company, sends a foretaste of its contents to the *Sunday School Times* of the 27th July.

When the Revised Version of 1881 and 1885 was under progress, an American Committee co-operated with the English Revisers, and sent their suggestions from time to time. Some of their suggestions were adopted, some were not. Those that were not adopted were printed in the introduction to the Old and New Testament

respectively. But the American Committee naturally wished to see all their suggestions introduced into the body of the Revision. They have obtained their wish by preparing this Revised Version of their own. And it may be said in a word that this makes the greatest, and almost all the difference, between the English Revised Version and the American.

Professor Howard Osgood makes claim for two improvements specially. The one is the rejection of obsolete English words or words in obsolete uses. The Revised Version retained a large number of 'these dark and twisted words.' Dr. Osgood says that the American Revision has greatly reduced their number 'though it has not been able to get them all out.' One of these words is 'corn.' In England 'corn' means grain of all kinds—wheat, oats, barley, and the like. But in America it means Indian corn, and that alone. Therefore 'corn' departs from the American Revision.

The other improvement is the softening of expressions that sound harsh or repulsive to modern ears. An example will be found in Hab 3¹⁶, where 'I heard, and my belly trembled' of the English Revision appears in the American as 'I heard, and my body trembled.'

These improvements may not seem momentous. They may not even seem to be improvements. But the lay reader—the reader whose mind is less familiar with the antique diction of the Authorized Version—will undoubtedly find the American the easiest to understand of all the translations of the Bible in English. And there are greater differences than these. Occasionally there occurs a new translation. Sometimes it is a return to the Authorized rendering. In Ps 116¹¹ the familiar translation, ‘I said in my haste, All men are liars,’ is restored, in preference to the Revised rendering, ‘All men are a lie.’

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Professor Sanday preached the Anniversary Sermon of the English Church Union on Thursday the 20th day of June, and the *Church Times* published it on the following day. Professor Sanday is not a member of the English Church Union. More than once he told his hearers that he stood before them as a stranger. He was there by invitation of the President. ‘It is good for us,’ he said, ‘to look at ourselves from time to time as we are seen from without.’ The English Church Union was seen by him from without. He wished to let them look at themselves for a little as he saw them.

He chose his text from Ac 11²⁶, ‘The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.’ Some one has called it a characteristic text. It is so. It means more to Dr. Sanday than it does to most of us. He sees more in it. ‘What a throng of crowding associations,’ he says, ‘gathers around these words. Christians—it is a name which now fills the world. We hope that it will fill the world yet more victoriously. We hope that it will gain yet deeper and stronger dominion over the souls

of men. Here we are taken back to its first slender beginnings.’

And even in these its first slender beginnings the word has a story. It was not a name which the Christians gave themselves. Their names were more intimate—the Brethren, the Disciples, the Saints, the Elect. Nor is it a name which could have been first given by the Jews, for it implied a claim to which the Jews could give no sort of recognition. They protested to Pilate and said, ‘Write not the King of the Jews, but that he said, I am the King of the Jews.’ So must they have protested against the name given to the followers of Jesus first in Antioch, and said, ‘Call them not Christians, but call them Nazarenes.’ Nor does Dr. Sanday believe that it was the rough populace of Antioch that coined this name. Their nickname would have been of a different kind. In the earliest use of the word there is no doubt a shade of contempt, but it is cultured contempt, and it is not rudely expressed in the form of the word itself.

Who then first called the disciples Christians? The form of the word tells us that they were persons who spoke Latin. They were familiar with the *Pompeiani*, or followers of Pompey; the *Cæsariani*, or followers of Cæsar; the *Herodiani*, or partisans of the Herodian dynasty. So the *Christiani* were followers of the Christ, followers of Him who claimed to be king of the Jews.

Now Antioch was the centre of the Roman government of the East. There the *legatus* of Syria held his court. Vassal kings or princes like Agrippa II. (the first person whom we hear making use of the name) would constantly be coming and going. Clerks and officials were in steady employment in carrying on the machinery of government. These governmental circles were early brought into contact with Christianity. There is the evidence of Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch, and of Theophilus the patron of St. Luke. There is also the striking fact that at a

very early date many books, both of the Old Testament and of the New, were translated at once into Latin and into Syriac. Dr. Sanday has reason to believe that these two versions were made in near proximity to one another, and that the Latin translators had special acquaintance with the details of Roman provincial administration. Where were these translations more likely to be made than at Antioch? And who were more likely to coin this convenient and non-committal title than just the clerks and government officials who surrounded the legate there?

So the title 'Christian' is of deep interest to Dr. Sanday in its origin. But it is not for the interest of its origin that he brings it before the members of the English Church Union. For him and for them it has a deeper interest than that.

Coined by pagans, first used by persons who merely wanted a short and convenient label for the followers of a new superstition, the name Christian has been accepted by these followers themselves. From that day till this it has been most often on the lips of the world, and most widely welcomed by the Church. Of all the names ever invented, it is the most inclusive and the most uniting. That is why Dr. Sanday chose it.

He would like to have chosen 'Churchmen.' That also is a good name. 'It is for us,' says Dr. Sanday, 'one of the most sacred and beloved of names.' And it is about the Church, it is to the members of the English Church Union, it is to them as Churchmen, that he came to speak. But he could not choose the title 'Churchmen.' For it is not always a uniting name. There are those whom it repels. It comes to them as a militant name. It comes with a claim behind it. And that claim excludes as well as includes. He could not use the name of Churchmen because it has not been applied, as it ought to have been applied, to all those who have been baptized into the name of Christ. The mission of the English Church Union, as Dr. Sanday conceives it, and as

its very name implies, is a mission for unity. But the name of Churchmen does not make for unity always, and Dr. Sanday cannot use it.

The mission of the English Church Union, as Dr. Sanday conceives it, is a mission on behalf of unity. Christendom is divided. The Church of Christ is broken in pieces. It is the mission of the English Church Union to draw the separate parts together again. Dr. Sanday recognizes that mission. He calls it, as he well may, a grand mission. He acknowledges the frankness with which the English Church Union holds out the right hand of fellowship to other Churches, the loving care its members exercise 'not to suffer the breach which divides us from them to be made wider by any act of ours.'

But he has somewhat against them for all that. No man ever uttered censure less censoriously. Is it uttered at all? It is there, but we cannot find the words which carried it. We may therefore be somewhat rough and emphatic, but we are not wholly mistaken in saying that Dr. Sanday censures the English Church Union for dividing even while it seeks to unite. Going back to the time when the great Churches had not yet separated from the common stock, it seeks to recall these Churches to their earliest unity; but there are Churches that are nearer, with whom the breach is narrower, the separation more recent; and Dr. Sanday seems to say that the English Church Union is not so careful 'that the breach which divides us from *them* be not made wider by any act of ours.'

The *Union Magazine* for August, which is edited by Professor Orr and Professor Denney, contains a note on 'The Wells of Beersheba.' In the *Encyclopædia Biblica* the hope is expressed that nobody will go to Beersheba looking for the seven wells from which the place was formerly believed to have taken its name. But the editors of the *Union Magazine* point out that Professor

G. L. Robinson has gone to Beersheba looking for seven wells, and has found them. That he has found them is admitted, they point out, even by Professor Lucien Gautier of Geneva, their reference being to his letter in the July number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. They close their note with the words, 'Thus curiously Genesis comes out once more right end up.'

It does not appear, however, that Professor Gautier admits the inference drawn by the editors of the *Union Magazine*. He has contributed a note on the subject to the July number of the *Biblical World*. He admits the existence of seven wells. He knew of their discovery before he read Professor Robinson's article. For a French lady, Madame Sargenton-Galichon, had visited Beersheba in April 1900, just one month before Professor Robinson, and had sent him an account of the wells then opened, or at least discovered. But that does not prove, he says, that the name Beersheba means 'Seven Wells.' According to Professor Robinson there are 'at least' seven wells at Beersheba. It is by no means impossible that others may be found.

Moreover Beersheba means 'Well of Seven,' which is not quite the same as 'Seven Wells.' Professor Stade, it is true, holds that it is the same, and explains that the placing of the numeral after the substantive is the survival in Hebrew of a Canaanitish idiom. But Professor Gautier can find no proof that the idiom had ever anything to do with the Canaanites. Such as it is, it is good sound Hebrew. It occurs elsewhere in the Bible. In every case of its occurrence, however, the noun is in the plural. Here it is in the singular, and that makes all the difference. As it stands, the word means 'Well of Seven,' and not 'Seven Wells.' Professor Gautier does not know what 'Well of Seven' refers to. He thinks that the reference had got lost long ago; that then it was popularly taken to be the same as 'Seven Wells';

and when that was done it would be easy to increase the number of the wells to fit the popular etymology.

Professor Sanday, as we have seen, believes that the name of 'Christian' was coined by officials of the Roman government in Antioch. He reminds us also that its first recorded use in history is by a Roman official. Let us look for a moment at the baffling sentence in which King Agrippa uses the word.

When the apostle made his bold assault on the conscience of the king, Agrippa answered, 'With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian.' At least so the Revised Version translates his words (*ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι*). But who can believe that the king expressed himself so clumsily?

Professor Potwin does not believe it. In his little book, *Here and There in the Greek New Testament* (Allenson), he turns to the Greek words and considers them. He wonders if the phrase 'make me a Christian' (*Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι*) may not be a Latin idiom turned into Greek. In Latin it is very common to say *agere* so and so, that is, *act the part of* such a one. In Tacitus, for example, Thræsea is said *agere senatorem*, to act the senator; and Pliny says, 'I still am acting the part of householder'—*patrem familiæ hactenus ago*; and there are many more examples to be found in Latin of the apostolic days. Is it possible then that Agrippa spoke in Latin, and that St. Luke, translating him, adopted his Latin idiom?

If that is possible, then it is also possible that the words (*ἐν ὀλίγῳ*), which are so clumsily translated in the Revised Version, 'with but little persuasion,' may also be a Latin idiom. There are similar, if not identical, phrases in good literary Latin; and even in English we have retained the traditional phrases *in toto*, *in extenso*, and the like.

What then would be the translation of Agrippa's baffling sentence? It would be: 'In some degree thou art persuading me to act the part of (that is, to declare myself) a Christian.' And St. Paul's answer catches up the words: 'I would to God that both in some degree and in a great degree not only thou, but also all that hear me this day might become such as I am, except these bonds.'

We appear to be on the eve of a serious decay of the faith. The evidence is of sundry kinds, and comes from divers quarters. One item is as unmistakable as it is unexpected. It is the recently awakened interest in the site of Calvary.

It does not seem that the true site of Calvary will ever be found. Dr. Schick is 'convinced that the Lord has so ruled it that there should always be some uncertainty respecting it.' But that does not prevent the controversy regarding it from breaking forth again at any time. And it has been observed that as the controversy breaks forth anew, faith declines. Or, as Canon Gell puts it conversely, 'As true faith in the Divine Person of the Lord Jesus ebbs and flows, the ebb has always been marked by an almost feverish desire to find the exact spot where the greatest crime man ever committed was perpetrated, and the greatest deliverance man ever experienced was accomplished.'

In confirmation of Canon Gell's observation is the curious fact that on no subject of controversy do the disputants on either side use stronger language of one another. In an article on the subject published on the 25th of July, we find within five and thirty lines the following expressions: 'reckless dogmatism,' 'verbose and violent diatribe,' 'violent attacks,' 'incompetence to discuss such questions,' 'audacious statement,' 'credulous dogmatisms,' 'reckless violence,' 'groundless statements,' 'as mistaken as it is offensive.' Such language cannot be necessary to the subject, it cannot be natural to the men who discuss it.

It must be due to the strange historical fact observed by Canon Gell, that interest in the site of Calvary is coincident with decay of the faith.

The newly awakened interest in the place where our Lord was crucified and laid in the grave is due to a proposal to purchase *Gordon's Sepulchre*. This is the name now given to a rounded knoll which (at least in photographs) has something of the appearance of a skull. There was a time when it was called *Conder's Tomb*. But that distinguished archæologist, although he believes that it is the true sepulchre, has declined to be prematurely buried in it. And when General Gordon, who unfortunately was not an archæologist, declared that he also believed this to be the true sepulchre, a hero-worshipping English public at once gave it the name of Gordon's tomb or sepulchre.

The proposal has been widely circulated. It has thoroughly alarmed the supporters of the traditional site. To Canon MacColl, in particular, it seems a monstrous thing 'that two thousand pounds should already have been given for a plot of ground which is intrinsically not worth twenty, and that they are now asking for three thousand more to keep this site in order, and give a salary of seventy pounds a year to a caretaker.' So Canon MacColl has denounced the project on every hand, he has answered his opponents in every journal, and to the *Quarterly Statement* for July of the Palestine Exploration Fund he has written a warmly worded and elaborate defence of the traditional site.

The traditional site has at present fewer advocates perhaps than it ever had. Canon MacColl arrays them on his opening pages, but they are not impressive. The *Speaker's Commentary* is out of date—some of it never was in date. The *People's Bible History*, even with the 'introduction by the Right Honourable Wm. Ewart Gladstone, M.P.,' is a popular American book which never claimed independent authority in matters of this

kind. The other books and men are ancient, and even antiquated. The only witness of first-class authority whom Canon MacColl produces is the genial and venerable Dr. Baurath Schick.

The lack of authority does not prove that the site is wrong. It may prejudice one a little against the site at the outset, and it would have been better for his case if Canon MacColl had passed his authorities by. It would have been better also if he had omitted to speak of 'the elaborate guess-work and slipshod reasoning of Dr. Robinson,' as well as of 'the fantastic paradox of Mr. Fergusson.' The important matter, however, is that he himself recognizes the lack of authority, and really rests his case upon argument and illustration.

His one strong argument is that the tradition of what is called the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre is continuous from our Lord's day until now. He will not admit that the early Christians cared for none of these things. He will not admit that in their conscious possession of a living Lord they allowed the marks of a dead Redeemer to be obliterated. He holds that even when Titus destroyed Jerusalem, the Christians were allowed to return to the city almost immediately. And he thinks that the first spot they would visit would be the place where the Lord had lain. Even after the subsequent rebellion of the Jews and the more complete demolition of the city, the identity of this sacred spot he believes was still preserved. In order to disgust the Jews for ever with the city, the Romans built a temple to Jupiter on the place where the temple of Jehovah had stood, and erected a temple and statue to Venus over 'the place of a skull.' This temple to Venus remained over Golgotha till it was removed by order of Constantine, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre erected in its place. Thus Canon MacColl concludes that the site of the Holy Sepulchre has never been lost, for this conspicuous heathen temple was always there to be pointed to, and

there was always a Christian community in Jerusalem to point to it.

There is another article in the same number of the *Quarterly Statement* on the same subject. It is by Canon Gell of Worcester. Canon Gell does not believe in the traditional site. What Canon MacColl describes as the 'elaborate guess-work and slipshod reasoning of Dr. Robinson' he calls 'Dr. Robinson's fatal objections,' and he says that they are still unanswered. He has no belief in the continuity of the tradition. He thinks that the Emperor Constantine or his mother Helena were as likely to 'arrange' a site to suit their fancy as to search for the true one. They would easily 'arrange' that a place which ought to have been outside the city wall should be within it. In short, they were worshippers and not archaeologists, and he does not believe that they were particular about the site at all.

But if Canon Gell does not believe in the traditional site, neither does he believe in 'Gordon's Sepulchre.' Canon MacColl says that he himself 'walked over and round the skull hill several times, and saw no more resemblance to a skull than is to be seen in any number of mounds in a rocky country.' He has, however, seen pictures and photographs considerably touched up so as to give some likeness to a skull. Canon Gell has as little faith in the skull hill as Canon MacColl. It is not its appearance, however, that troubles him; it is its position. He believes that in the time of Pilate it stood in the very middle of a thickly populated suburb of Jerusalem. And it is to him incredible that the terribly disgraceful, and even obscene, punishment of the cross could have taken place in the very heart of a populous and respectable district.

But Canon Gell has a conclusive argument against Gordon's tomb. If the traditional site is within the ancient city wall, so is this. And whatever else we are sure about, we are sure

that the crucifixion took place 'outside the camp,' that is, outside the bounds of the city as it stood. Whereupon Canon Gell, seeking for a third site, finds it away in the north. He believes that the Holy Sepulchre is none other than the well-known 'Tombs of the Kings.'

There is not a scrap of evidence to go by. The very name has no meaning now. 'The tomb,' says Canon Gell, 'is now called the *Tombs of the Kings*, probably because there is no evidence that any king was ever buried in it.' But there are thirteen statements in the Gospels that have to be satisfied, and this is the only locality and the only tomb that seems to him to satisfy them. One of these statements is that in order to look into the tomb the disciples had to stoop down. It appears to be a serious objection to the Gordon tomb that it takes a man of six feet high to look into it, even when mounted on the rubbish that lies at the foot of the wall. If the rubbish is removed, Canon MacColl would reckon that the sill of the window must be quite ten feet from the ground. He asked Dr. Schick, as they stood together beneath it, how St. John could have 'stooped down' to look in at that window; to which Dr. Schick replied, 'How indeed, unless he brought a ladder with him?' But Canon Gell's 'Tomb of the Kings' exactly fulfils this condition. He tried it, and found that a person near the entrance, or in the vestibule, must stoop to see into the tomb-chamber.

Another difficult condition is that one who 'sits over against' the sepulchre must be able to behold how the body is laid. Canon Gell's tomb satisfies that condition also. Sending his servant to lie down in the tomb, he himself ascended the plateau and looked. At first he saw nothing within. Then he called to his servant to take off his dark blue embroidered jacket. 'As soon as he did so, and lay in his white shirt, I could distinctly see how the body was laid.'

It is some years since Canon Gell made his discovery. He was quite sure of it then. He is not so sure of it now. It is hard to say whether this is a feature that speaks for his discovery or against it. Believers in the traditional site are perfectly sure they are right. 'I can never forget,' says Canon Gell, 'how on one occasion I climbed to the top of the canopy that covers the traditional tomb, and lay there for an hour or more unobserved; gazing down through the open work I saw group after group of frowsy pilgrims from the farthest corners of Russia, pressing as near as they could get to the tomb slab to pour out their sorrows, while streaming tears poured down brown cheeks, not of women only but of hardy men, whose passionate devotion shamed my cold heart, because they believed, *what I knew was a fable*, their dear Lord and mine had been buried in that tiny marble cabinet, which monks persuaded Constantine and Helena had been the sepulchre of Christ.'

Believers in the Gordon tomb are equally sure that they are right. 'I was so convinced,' says Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, 'that this was indeed the place where the Lord lay, that if an angel had suddenly appeared I should not have been at all surprised, but should have turned to him with eager confidence and exclaimed, "That is where my Lord's body rested from Friday to the first day of the week, was it not?" I could not resist the desire to place my poor body on the very spot on which the Sacred Body once rested. For a space I lay there flat on my back.'

Thus the believers in the rival sites are equally confident. Yet they cannot both be right, and they may both be wrong. Canon Gell is not so confident. His very uncertainty becomes an argument in his favour. For Dr. Schick may be right that 'the Lord has so ruled it that there should always be some uncertainty respecting the place of His burial.' Then Canon Gell would be nearest to the mind of Christ.