

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

MR. ARTHUR C. BENSON has for some time been contributing to the *Church Family Newspaper* a weekly article under the general but well-chosen title of 'Along the Road.' In one of the weekly issues the title of the article itself is 'The Search.' That is a very ill-chosen title. The title of the article ought to have been 'The Elder Brother.'

'I had a strangely intimate talk some years ago with a friend of mine. I say strangely intimate because, though I had known him for long, he had never opened that particular door in his mind to me before, and I found myself in a very unfamiliar place; indeed, the experience was as strange as if one perceived a door in a house that one knew well, and, opening it, found oneself in a room the very existence of which one had never suspected. And, to carry the parable a little further, I felt the same sort of stupidity about my own dull perceptions as I should feel about the concealed room. I should say about the house, "Of course, I ought to have seen that there was a great space in the ground plan of the house not accounted for, and I might have been more curious to know how it was taken up." Just so I felt about my friend's mind, because this new corner of it explained so much.'

That is how MR. BENSON begins. And if we are ever going to understand the Elder Brother, so

that we may escape his elder-brotherliness, we are sure to be greatly helped by studying him in a living friend. This friend of MR. BENSON was wealthy and 'in a sense famous.' He was also an unmarried man—which MR. BENSON seems to say the Elder Brother was likely to have been. Moreover, he spent his time in doing things which for the most part could just as well have been left undone. He attended meetings of Societies in which he was not interested. But he had to fill in every minute of his time in some way. For (and here is the point of it) he could never be left alone with himself.

'I now see,' says MR. BENSON, 'that he was just afraid of his own thoughts.' And that is itself a singular thing. It is singular because it shows that he had thoughts. MR. BENSON says that the man who has thoughts is singular. But he is still more singular in being afraid of them. Well, one day, after MR. BENSON and he had dined together, 'with that kind of simplicity that can only be attained by wealth,' in his finely-appointed house in London—after they had dined together, he suddenly said with great seriousness that he felt rather bitterly, now that his life was nearly over—he was a man of between sixty and seventy—that he had somehow lost his way, and that he had always been bustling about on the outskirts of life.

He told Mr. BENSON that the trouble was due to his never having married. Which leads one to be almost certain that the Elder Brother was an unmarried man. He said that if he had had a wife and children, 'a fretful invalid wife and some ill-conditioned, ungainly children,' it would have been different with him. But being unmarried he had never had a chance to live, and it was to hide himself from his own thoughts, his thoughts of his life's futility, that he occupied his time so assiduously.

Mr. BENSON reminded him that he had friends to whom he had shown himself friendly. He admitted it. 'But it is not that that I mean; it is just the lack of the essential touch of life that I have missed.' And then he said, 'It is just the difference between looking at a tiger through the bars of a cage, and meeting it face to face in a jungle.'

It is not that there is no other way of meeting the uncaged tiger face to face than by marrying. Marrying does not always do it. Mr. BENSON told his friend of a wise old lady who said that 'marriage is very much like anything else.' It is only that this rich man felt that if he had been compelled to do that which cost him sacrifice, sharp skin-piercing sacrifice, such as he would have had if he had married a fretful wife, then he would have been able to live. He had not lived. He had never once really had his back to the wall.

'Well,' said Mr. BENSON, 'that's a mournful tale; but let me ask a question, if it is not impertinent. I have always thought you a religious man—what has that meant to you?'

'Ah,' he said, 'that's a hard question! I sometimes seem to have come into that too easily, to have inherited it, like my wealth. It has always been to me a beautiful and uplifting thing; but now that I am old, it seems to me that I have never paid a price for it. I have never found the narrow gate, with pain and difficulty. It has been

a procession, not a pilgrimage. I have never lost myself to find myself. I said that I had lost my way; but that is not at all the same thing as losing oneself; one only carries one's burden more consciously than ever! And though I am not ungrateful for my religion, it has not only not simplified things for me, but it has made things more elaborate, because it has introduced more motives into it all, and increased the complexity of life. Religion, to be vital, must be the one constraining impulse, not one of many attractive influences.'

O wise Elder Brother! Not a word of complaint—for why, there is not even a younger brother coming home to vex him. If he had but gone astray and known it. 'For the saving thing,' says Mr. BENSON, 'is to feel like the Psalmist, "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost."'

The Bishop of Bloemfontein is the author of three books. The first is the most original. But its title, *The Spirit of Man*, was unattractive, and only a few persons made its discovery. The second was called *Ara Coeli*, a title with a strong Ruskin suggestion, and this was supported by the sub-title, 'An Essay in Mystical Theology.' So the second book made a considerable impression. *The Spirit of Man* was published as long ago as 1891, but it should be looked for yet. *Ara Coeli* appeared in 1908. The third book is just published. Its title is *Faith and Experience* (Methuen; 3s. 6d. net).

The idea of the book is that our supreme need is knowledge—which is quite true, sometimes glaringly so; and that knowledge can be made ours only by the combined exercise of faith and experience. Experience of a matter does not enable us to say we know it, for it may not be worth knowing, and knowledge is a great thing. To say that we know pain because we have had toothache for six weeks is to degrade that word from its high estate. Knowledge is partly of the

unseen. That is to say, a thing must be at least partly beyond sight to be great enough for the application of the great word knowledge. It must be a matter of faith.

But, again, we cannot say that we know a thing when we have exercised faith upon it. We must take it into our experience. We must give it time to reveal itself to us; we must give ourselves time to trust to its reality. When Abraham (or any one else) goes out to seek a country, he goes in faith, but he does not know the God who has sent him yet. He must experience that God in the day of the laying of Sarah in the grave, the day in which he sees and says that he has not so much of a country as to set his foot on. He has to experience God in the day of the sacrifice of Isaac, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' Abraham went out by faith in God, but he did not know God until he lay down to die, not having received the promised country but having seen it afar off.

Is there a twofold gospel in the New Testament? HARNACK says there is. He says emphatically that there are two gospels, two different forms of good news.

He describes them in this way. The first gospel 'is a message of joy preached to the poor, the meek, the peacemakers, and them that have a clean heart. It is a message that the kingdom of God is nigh, and that this kingdom will take away the sorrows of the poor in spirit, will fill them with righteousness, and will bring them all the blessings which attend the accepted children of God.' The other gospel is that 'the Son of God came down from heaven, was made man, and through His death and resurrection has redeemed believers from their sins, from death and Satan, and so has made real the everlasting salvation of God.'

Now the question with HARNACK is, Where

did this second gospel come from? He delivered a lecture last year in Berlin at the International Congress of Free Christianity. The lecture may be had from Messrs. Williams & Norgate in London. Its title is *The Two-fold Gospel in the New Testament*. HARNACK has no doubt whatever that there are two gospels in the New Testament. And he seems to have no doubt that the first gospel came direct from Christ. What he undertakes to answer in his lecture is where the second gospel came from.

WREDE could have answered it for him in few words. He would have said that it came from St. Paul. But HARNACK is not quite satisfied with that answer. St. Paul had something to do with it. But that it was a pure invention of St. Paul's, as WREDE would have said, is impossible. For St. Paul clearly indicates that the two great statements which the second gospel contains, that Christ died for our sins and that He rose again, were generally accepted articles of faith at the time when he became a Christian. And this is proved independently by the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. HARNACK holds that there are four sources of this second gospel.

The first source is the teaching of Christ Himself. For HARNACK is persuaded, not only that Christ preached the necessity and the reality of the remission of sins, but also that He associated His own person and work with it. He claimed the power to forgive sins, and at the celebration of the Last Supper He associated His own death with their remission.

The second source is the Old Testament. This source is apparently not quite so sure. For that the Messiah would suffer and die was certainly not the general expectation of Judaism in the time of Christ. HARNACK thinks, however, that this expectation was not altogether lacking, because some persons held John the Baptist to be the Messiah even after he had been beheaded. And then there was the doctrine of the Suffering Messiah in Old

Testament prophecy, especially the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. Of this chapter HARNACK says, with a cautious circumlocution that is almost amusing, 'If its acceptance was striven against in wide circles, an evasion of it, because of the ruling exegesis, was not easily possible.'

The third source is the reasoning of St. Paul. St. Paul's mind was antithetical. He never rested till he had led everything up to great and moving contrasts, and brought it to a paradoxical form. He had read in the Old Testament, 'Cursed is he that hangs on a tree,' and he learned from the first disciples of Jesus that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. From this he proved that Jesus, through the very fact that He was accused, had brought salvation to man. The death on the cross was thus the most necessary part of the life of Christ. But St. Paul had also learned from the early disciples that Jesus had risen again from the dead. And so, just as in the death of Christ he discovered the forgiveness of sins, in His resurrection he found a new spirit working

in man and overcoming the desires of the flesh.

The fourth and last source of this second gospel is the mythology of the heathen world. But HARNACK does not honestly think there is much in that. The myth of a God dying and rising from the dead no doubt confronted St. Paul as he journeyed from Syria to Corinth, and may have had some influence on his thinking. But HARNACK believes that that influence was infinitesimal in comparison with the influence which St. Paul's preaching must have had upon those who were prepared for it by their previous belief in that myth. Their preparation was, after all, only a preparation of bondage. St. Paul's preaching was a wonderful and joyful liberation.

Does HARNACK mean, then, that we should accept the first gospel and reject the second? No; he himself accepts both. The first gospel, he says, contains the Truth; the second contains the Way; both together bring Life.

Codex Edinburgensis.

A HITHERTO UNKNOWN MANUSCRIPT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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II.

THE way is now open for a more technical account of some of the features of the manuscript that are likely to appeal more particularly to the student of the Hebrew text. A MS of the Old Testament, such as the Codex Edinburgensis, may be said to contain three distinct elements, each of which may be, and indeed often is, the work of as many individuals. These are (1) the consonantal text, (2) the vowel-points and accents, and (3) the Masorah (more correctly, it would seem, Masorah, *מסורה*, *מסורה*).

Taking these in their order, we have in the text of our Codex the work of a scribe who belonged, as we have seen, to the German school of copyists

of the sacred text. The heavy and slightly sloping German hand is readily distinguished from the more elegant and upright Sephardic or Spanish hand, which imitated more closely the older Oriental style of writing. In the German manuscript hand of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, several pairs of letters can scarcely be distinguished except by their context, as a glance at the page of Codex Edinburgensis reproduced in the June number will show. Such are *ב* and *ב*, *ד* and *ד*, *ה* and *ה*, *ס* and *ס*; on the other hand, *נ* can never be mistaken for *נ*, as is the case in the early Spanish manuscripts. The final letters do not extend, or extend but little, below the line of the other