

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

'We talk thoughtlessly of the "simplicity of the Gospel."' And it is the idea of the simplicity of the Gospel, says Mr. GAMBLE, that makes our present-day preaching so unsatisfactory. Sermons, he says, are universally required. Their omission is resented as the abandonment by the clergy of their most useful and their most difficult function. Yet the sermons we preach are rarely found to be satisfactory. They often miss the mark. And the reason of their frequent and pathetic missing of the mark is due, he says, to the thoughtless way in which we speak of the 'simplicity of the Gospel.'

The Rev. John GAMBLE, B.D., Vicar of St. Mary's, Leigh Woods, Bristol, has published a volume of sermons under the title of *Christian Faith and Worship* (Macmillan; 5s. net). And he has written a preface to the volume. For the sermons which make up this volume are not thrown together at random. Mr. GAMBLE has a definite idea of what a sermon ought to be. In this volume he has arranged his sermons so as to bring out his idea. And what the idea is he tells us in the preface.

The idea is 'to begin at the beginning.' That lucid expositor, Professor HUXLEY, said that he made it his invariable practice in his discourses to begin at the beginning. Mr. GAMBLE begins

at the beginning also. He assumes little or no knowledge of the subject on the part of his hearers. For he is convinced that we deceive ourselves when we say that owing to the simplicity of the Gospel we may begin wherever we please.

But what is the beginning? The beginning is God. 'In the beginning God' is an excellent text for the preacher to keep in mind even though it may be only half a sentence. We take our text and we make our sermon, and throughout the sermon we speak of God as if the people who are hearing us knew as much about Him as we do. They do not know so much. They know very little. We say God is this and God does that, and all the while the God they have in their mind is a wholly different Being from the God we have in our mind. When Mr. GAMBLE is about to preach a sermon in which he is to speak about God, he sees to it first of all that his hearers and he have the same God in their mind.

Again, if his sermon is to be about Jesus Christ, Mr. GAMBLE begins at the beginning. For he has discovered that quite a host of ambiguities cluster round the name of Jesus Christ. 'What do we mean when we say that God was made man? How shall we bridge the interval between the close of St. Mark's Gospel and the opening paragraph of the Epistle to the Ephesians?' Mr.

GAMBLE does not ignore the 'things hard to be understood' which the author of 2 Peter found in the Pauline letters. But he takes care not to enter upon them abruptly. He begins at the beginning.

And he begins at the beginning when he preaches about the life to come. 'Ruskin, it will be remembered, said in one of his prefaces, that he did not know, in addressing his countrymen, whether he should regard them as believers or disbelievers in a life beyond the grave. There is, indeed, perhaps no point within the scope of religion on which real and avowed belief differ more markedly than they do here. The disappearance of the old conceptions of heaven and hell, the quickened sense of the vastness of the universe, the weakening of all external authority in matters of religion, whether it be that of the Church or the Bible—these have combined with other and less obvious influences to shut out many from what will ever be the most consoling of human visions.'

And for these reasons, when he preaches on the life to come, Mr. GAMBLE begins at the beginning. He is careful that his thoughts meet the thoughts of his hearers. He makes no assumptions which they do not admit. He appeals to no motives to which they do not respond. He presents the hope of immortality in such a way that 'it will again move the imagination and kindle the heart.'

At the Oxford University Press there has been published a book in two volumes written by the Rev. H. F. HAMILTON, D.D., formerly Professor of Pastoral Theology in the University of Bishop's College, Lennoxville, Canada, and entitled *The People of God* (18s. net).

We say purposely 'a book in two volumes.' For although the first volume deals with the authority of the Old Testament and its Religion, and the second with the origin of the Church and the Ministry, the two volumes make one book.

Dr. HAMILTON has written one book because he has one interest. That interest is the reunion of the Churches. If the Churches are to reunite it can be accomplished, he sees, only by each individual Church conceding to the rest all that it can conscientiously concede. He himself is an Anglican. The most serious obstacle to reunion on the side of the Anglican Church is Apostolic Succession. Can the Anglican Church give up Apostolic Succession? He writes his book to show that it can not.

He begins with the authority of the Old Testament and its Religion. For Christianity is Judaism plus the Messiah. It is necessary therefore to know what is Judaism before it is possible to know what is Christianity. And, more than that, the authority of the gospel preached by the Apostles is the same as the authority of the message proclaimed by the Prophets—again with the significant addition of the Messiah. The Messiah did not alter the message of the prophets. He simply added two elements to it. He extended its scope to include the Gentiles, and He gave His messengers authority to remit men's sins. If therefore we are to understand who the Apostles were and what is meant by their Succession, we must understand the authority which the Old Testament prophets and preachers had when Christ came.

Now Dr. HAMILTON's argument is that to the Twelve, and to the Twelve only, was the authority of the Old Testament prophets transferred and the new authority added. How does he make good his argument? He says that the commission which carried all authority was given on the day of Pentecost, that it was given by the descent of the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit descended only on the Twelve.

Of these propositions the last is the first that is likely to be challenged. What proof does Dr. HAMILTON offer that the Holy Spirit descended only on the Twelve?

First of all, he sees in the election of Matthias in the room of Judas Iscariot the necessity for twelve apostles, and no more than twelve. The apostles were chosen to be witnesses. Matthias was chosen to fill the place of Judas because he had been with Jesus, and, like the rest, had seen the things that he was to bear witness to. But what is to hinder any one else who has been with Jesus from witnessing? What is to hinder Joseph Barsabbas, for example, on whom the lot did not fall? There is nothing to hinder him. There must therefore have been something, says Dr. HAMILTON, in the witness of Matthias which was not in the witness of Barsabbas. That something must have been the authority conferred upon it by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

But there is another proof. It is said (Ac 2¹⁴) that 'Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice.' From this Dr. HAMILTON concludes that only Peter and the eleven *could* address the multitude, because only they could speak with tongues. And if only they could speak with tongues, only upon them had the Holy Spirit fallen.

Is MAETERLINCK a mystic? He claims to be. And Mr. Paul Revere FROTHINGHAM, who writes an article on 'The Mysticism of Maeterlinck' in *The Harvard Theological Review*, admits the claim. But how can a man be a mystic who has not found God?

'Mysticism,' says Mr. FROTHINGHAM, 'is one of the many paths in life which lead to God.' Not only is it a path which leads to God, 'it is the straightest path.' According to those in every age who have found it out and gone that way, 'it leads directly into the presence of the Holy and Divine.' But Maurice MAETERLINCK has never been led to God. If 'Holy' and 'Divine' are spelt with capitals, as Mr. FROTHINGHAM spells them, MAETERLINCK has never been in the presence of the Holy and Divine. How then can he be called a mystic?

MAETERLINCK is interested in himself. He is occupied with his own heart and mind, his own experience of life. He holds to the necessity of trusting instinct and honouring emotion. He believes in the supreme guidance of the 'inner light.' 'While the naturalist looks without, he peers within. While the man of science studies the phenomena of outward nature, he is absorbed with the phenomena of human nature.' Does that make him a mystic? If he has not found God, clearly not. For 'the true mystic pursues this inward path with one great end in view; and because of the *gaining* of that end,' says Mr. FROTHINGHAM, 'he has secured the attention of the world. That end is the consciousness of the Divine, and a conviction that God is the great Reality.' But MAETERLINCK is not conscious of the Divine.

Yet, says Mr. FROTHINGHAM, 'there cannot be the slightest doubt that Maeterlinck is a mystic.' He says, 'In all his leanings toward the shadow-land of Self, in all his love for things unseen, in all his praise of silence, and his perception of the treasures that the humble hold, Maeterlinck is undoubtedly a mystic.' And again, 'He follows in the footsteps of those seers and solemn prophets of the soul who have declared, since the earliest time of human thought, that "within is the fountain of life,"—that within is to be found the secret of contentment and the soul of truth.' And that is all both true and fine—but it does not make MAETERLINCK a mystic.

How can Mr. FROTHINGHAM say that he is a mystic? He says he is a mystic that has not arrived at the goal. 'So far as arriving at the goal which the mystics of all ages have felt convinced that they reached—he distinctly and definitely fails.' These are Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S words. But it is arrival at the goal that makes the mystic. 'The old story tells us'—these again are words of Mr. FROTHINGHAM,—'the old story tells us that the Magdalene went down to the dew-swept garden in the early morning light and found

one waiting for her at the gate whom she took at first to be the gardener, but who turned out to be the very Saviour of her soul. And so it has been throughout the centuries with the men and women whom we speak about as mystics. Their distinction has been always this,—that the way they went has brought them to the very presence of the Highest. With MAETERLINCK, however, although his “thoughts all gravitate in a visionary way to the Eternal, to the Absolute,” he yet never finds, nor feels, himself face to face with a Supreme and Eternal Being who is both creator and inspirer of life.’ And therefore MAETERLINCK is no mystic, and Mr. FROTHINGHAM has altogether made a mistake.

Why is MAETERLINCK not a mystic? Why has he not arrived? In the half-modern, half-ancient town of Ghent, Maurice MAETERLINCK was born in 1862; and to those who are familiar with his writings, it is evident that his early surroundings laid firm hold upon his thoughts. The son of Roman Catholic parents, he was sent for his education to the local Jesuit college. It was hoped that his steps would be guided towards the priesthood. Of the eighteen boys in his special class, eleven followed the traditional course. *But MAETERLINCK revolted.*

There is only one heresy since Christ came, the denial of the divinity of Jesus. For ‘he that denieth the Son the same hath not the Father’; and when heresy involves atheism there is no room for any other heresy beside it.

Therefore it is that the study of the Person of Christ is the first study to engage in. Is He God, or is He not? Until we have found out that we have found out nothing. We may read our Bible, and love our neighbour, and live our life in all its outward activities. But we have not found ourselves. The man that is in us has not attained his manhood.

And so it comes to pass that the volume which

Professor Hugh MACKINTOSH of the New College in Edinburgh has contributed to the ‘International Theological Library’ is the central volume of that series. Its title is *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (T. & T. Clark; 10s. 6d.). Round it all the other volumes take their place. They are interpreted by it. Their worth depends upon it. If the Person of Christ Jesus is not divine, not one of them need have been written.

Scotland and the New College may well be proud that the volume on the Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ was offered to Professor MACKINTOSH. They may well be proud of the way in which he has written it. That he was fitted for this, beyond most men, was evident enough to those who knew him; and especially for this reason, that it was certain he would follow the lines of human experience. In a singularly faultless preface he makes apology for ‘the more or less speculative tone of the concluding chapters.’ Their speculativeness was inevitable. There is no possibility of carrying the proof along the lines of experience and stopping abruptly where experience ends. There are things beyond our experience which we, as well as the angels, ‘desire to look into.’ But he is right if he means that the value of his book is not in its concluding chapters. Its value lies in this, that it reaches the divinity of Jesus in the same way as the divinity of Jesus was reached by the first disciples.

Working then, as the disciples did, upon the humanity of Jesus, Professor MACKINTOSH singles out three aspects of that humanity which appear to him, as they appeared to them, to be unique, and which, when given the value that it is evident they possess, lead at last to the mighty assertion of His Godhead. These three aspects are His sinlessness, His special Sonship, His transcendent risen life.

His sinlessness. Now we may freely confess that no proof of the sinlessness of Jesus, and no argument from it, has ever seemed to us satisfactory. Simply because it is a negative. We

have no sympathy, certainly, with the notion that you cannot prove a negative. A negative is the only thing that you can prove. All other things you have to take on faith. But if the absence of sin were the best that the disciples perceived in Jesus, they need not have risen to any idea of His Person higher than the astonishment of the multitude when they saw that the wind and the waves obeyed Him. It is a convenient word, no doubt. And when it is used, as Professor MACKINTOSH uses it, to express all that positive attitude to evil which the disciples discerned in Jesus, the objection to it nearly disappears.

The sinlessness of Jesus in the use which Professor MACKINTOSH makes of it is the presence in Him of a nature akin to God's. It is the presence in Him of God—so rapidly as that does the evidence work. For to the rest of us, without exception, without conceivable exception now, so large has been the experience and so long, sin is present before we are aware of it. It is present to us, it is ours, before we know it as sin, before we can set ourselves over against it in conscious antagonism. Professor MACKINTOSH goes so far as to say that it 'may be described as a thing of nature.' Be that as it may—and there never is the least occasion to debate that—this is certain, that the attitude of Jesus to sin was positively antagonistic from the first. In other words, 'there was that in Him from the first which offered a completely effective resistance to the corrupt influence of environment, obviated the disturbance of His perfect spiritual growth, and secured the inner fount of subsequent feeling and will from all defilement.'

Now this, we perceive—and the disciples perceived it, for it is still experience—this can come only from some inward and essential relationship to God which does not belong to any other; which, as we have already said, cannot now even be conceived as belonging to any other. Is that not Godhead? If it is not Godhead, what is it?

Next, His special Sonship. This is a very different word from sinlessness. Sinlessness is no word of Christ's using. This is His favourite word, and it was filled by Him with a fulness which makes it to many the one original idea that He has contributed! But these many do not see that the use of Son, as Jesus used it, means more than a revelation of God's Fatherhood. It means, and that on every occasion on which He used it, a special and quite solitary relationship of Himself to the Father.

Where does He use it? Not in the Fourth Gospel only; in the Synoptics also. And there as uniquely as anywhere. For it is in St. Matthew that we have what Professor MACKINTOSH calls 'the greatest Christological passage in the New Testament.' What does He say? He says, 'No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.'

'In spite of attempts to rewrite these verses, we are justified,' says Dr. MACKINTOSH, 'in saying that the knowledge of God professed by Jesus is conceived exclusively as given in and with His filial consciousness.' And what is the knowledge? It is identity of will with God. In no lower sense does He ever use knowledge of Himself. For until we have reached the will we have not touched 'the ultimate and central reality of things.' Jesus knows God and God knows Jesus only in one sense that is adequate to the statement, namely, that the will of Jesus is the will of God. Experience, the experience of the disciples, our experience, has found it so. Not once have we discovered one little rift within the lute. And Christ's own consciousness confirms our experience. And what is identity of will with God? It is Godhead.

Last of all, the risen Life. This is the least to us; to the early disciples it was first and most. For their experience of Jesus, whatever it led them to in their conversation about Him and in their

own hearts, received a shock when the crucifixion took place, almost an eclipse when the burial was over. Then when He rose from the dead their recovery was joy unspeakable, and they could not make enough of the fact that occasioned it.

But the restoration of Jesus to life would have meant little to them, and it would mean nothing to us, but for the circumstance that by the resurrection from the dead He resumed the place which belonged to the Son. That He did so, the disciples could be in no doubt. For He claimed that place. His death and burial seemed to empty the claim of its reality. But the resurrection filled it again. It was a resurrection in power, not at all because it was the reanimation of a dead body, but because it placed Jesus in that position of power at the right hand of the

Father which was His by claim. And it was not long before the disciples recognized the risen life in its results. 'He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.'

And so, as there is but One who has come out of the temptations that are in the world with white garments; as there is but One who has felt and shown that unity of will with God which means Sonship; as there is but One who has made it manifest both by the consistency of His claim with His conduct and by the unbroken experience of all the saints, that He has returned to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; for these reasons—how much more fully and persuasively expressed by Professor MACKINTOSH—for these reasons and for others, when we say *Jesus* we do not hesitate to mean *God*.

Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

BY THE REV. A. H. SAYCE, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D., PROFESSOR OF ASSYRIOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

I HAVE been greatly attracted by a book recently published by Professor A. S. Zerbe, which he calls *The Antiquity of Hebrew Writing and Literature, or Problems in Pentateuchal Criticism* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1911). Professor Zerbe is neither an Assyriologist nor an Egyptologist, but he is a good Hebrew scholar, well acquainted with the latest books on the Old Testament, and thoroughly up to date in the matter of Oriental archæology. His book is written with a candour and openness of judgment that is unfortunately rare, and the arguments and conclusions of those from whom he differs are given in their own words. I am one of the latter so far as his chief contention is concerned, as he seeks to prove that the Phœnician alphabet was known as early as the Mosaic age, and was, in fact, used by Moses himself. Hence he contests the view of myself and other Assyriologists, that a considerable part of the Pentateuch was originally written in the Babylonian script and language.

Personally, I do not think he has been successful in this portion of his work. On the one hand, it is

difficult to get over the archæological testimony, which is—at all events, at present—dead against the use of the Phœnician alphabet in Palestine before the time of David. On the other hand, he does not seem to me to have met the numerous and multiform evidences of a cuneiform original in the Book of Genesis, which I have pointed out in the pages of this journal, by the statement that similar phenomena are exhibited in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. No Assyriologist would admit anything of the kind. Even the writings of the Prophets are free from 'Babylonianisms.' And Dr. Zerbe allows that 'the foreign correspondence of Israel (in 1400–600 B.C.) was probably carried on in the Assyrian language and script.'

Like so many other recent writers, Dr. Zerbe is conservative in his views as to the age and composition of the Pentateuch. After a very searching and fair-minded examination of the theories of the modern critical school, he concludes (1) that most of the matter in J and E originated 'in the Moses-Joshua period'; (2) that 'some editor in