

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

WITH the issue of the sixth volume of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS, the half of the work is published. Since the beginning one volume has appeared every year. What that means only those who have examined a volume carefully can tell. In every volume there are nine hundred pages, of from twelve to fifteen hundred words each, and every word has to be weighed before being committed to paper, for in such a work as this there must be a place for every word, and every word must be in its place. Then there is the reading of the manuscript and the verifying of every reference, quotation, and practically every statement it contains; the typing, re-reading, printing, and all the rest. This volume contains two hundred and sixty-six articles, written by a hundred and seventy-one authors. It is some evidence of the care taken to find the highest authority on every subject that no fewer than a hundred and twenty-eight authors have contributed but a single article to the volume.

Dr. Israel ABRAHAMS of Cambridge writes the article on 'Heresy' among the Jews. The difference between the Jewish and the Christian Church is very remarkable. The Talmud says, 'Once a Jew, always a Jew.' Consequently heresy was winked at, separation detested.

That curious lumber room, the 'Genizah,' is

opened to the eyes of all the world by Professor BACHER of Breslau. He tells the story of the finding of the Hebrew Ecclesiasticus in it, and promises more wonderful works than that. The treasures of the Cairo Genizah have been arranged in alphabetical order: almost every topic of interest to the student of the Bible will yet be enriched by it, including the text and translation of the Bible itself and the commentaries on it.

The vicar of Hilderstone in Staffordshire is an authority on ecclesiastical folklore. His article on 'Grace at Meals' will furnish material for much interesting conversation when Grace has been said. And, more important perhaps, it will suggest forms of Grace, not lengthier but much more appropriate and a little more reverent than those we sometimes hear in these days.

Professor BURKITT's article on the 'Gospels' brings our knowledge quite up to date. The differences between it and Professor BURKITT's own book, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, published so recently as 1906, shows how clear is his appreciation of the issues, and how watchful he is of the least move made by another. 'The Gospel' itself, the evangelical message, is given by Mr. STRAHAN with quite unusual breadth and insight. The article is full of points for the preacher.

There are fifteen articles on 'God.' The idea of God among savage peoples is explained by Andrew LANG. The article on the Biblical and Christian conception has been written by Professor W. T. DAVISON of Richmond. For the study of the Exodus, and especially of its leader, in the light of modern knowledge, Professor WIEDEMANN'S article on the Egyptian idea of God will be found useful. Were the Egyptians Monotheists? WIEDEMANN says No; 'Monotheism had no place among the Egyptians, but they had a leaning towards henotheistic conceptions, which, though they were never consistently applied, yet readily combined with syncretistic tendencies.'

The series of articles on 'Human Sacrifice' have an unpleasant interest for the reader. Yet there are great thoughts and deep feelings hidden behind the horror. The Jewish article is of especial interest at this time when that trial, as horrible in its superstitious hatred as any deed recorded, is going on at Kieff. How easy it is for the statement of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement to transgress, is brought out clearly by Mr. CRAWLEY in his introductory article.

Professor Hermann DIELS of Berlin, who writes instructively on 'Heraclitus,' Professor SELER of the same university, who has a short article on a small tribe of American Indians with peculiar religious ideas, Professor THRÄMER of Strassburg, Professor TROELTSCH of Heidelberg, Professor WISSOWA of Halle, and Professor WÜNSCH of Münster are among the more distinguished of the foreign contributors.

'The newest and most complete work is *The Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. With it English scholars, who have been accustomed to rely so much upon German theological writings, are made independent of us; indeed, as regards the wealth of its contents and the completeness of the separate articles, they have surpassed us.' So says Dr. CHRISTLIEB of Berlin in the fourth volume of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.

In publishing a volume on *St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s. net), Professor H. A. A. KENNEDY is careful to prevent his readers from thinking that in the comparison of religions lies the main clue to the interpretation of Christianity. Again and again, he says, the Old Testament supplies a perfectly adequate explanation of ideas and usages in the Epistles of Paul which it is the fashion to associate with Hellenistic influence. At the same time he finds it 'of real value to understand something of the religious atmosphere in which his converts had lived as Pagans, if we are to grasp the more delicate implications both of his thought and language in those Letters which answered their questions and dealt with their spiritual dangers.'

A good example is found in the discussion of *gnosis* or knowledge, on which this is his conclusion: 'In view of Paul's intimate connection with the prophetic thought, it is scarcely possible to doubt that his use of "knowledge" is affected by the "knowledge of Jehovah" of the Old Testament. But it seems equally certain that in employing the term and the idea it embodies, he presupposed his hearers' acquaintance with these through the medium of the Mystery-Religions, and at least to some extent adopted the current usage.'

A still better, though less conclusive, example is the word usually translated 'perfect' in the Authorized Version (*τέλειος*). It is probable, says Dr. KENNEDY, that this word belongs to the circle of mystery-ideas. Plato describes the man who rightly uses the recollections of what his soul once saw in fellowship with God as 'being ever initiated into perfect mysteries' and as 'alone becoming truly perfect.' In the Hermetic literature, those who have received the baptism of the Divine mind become 'perfect,' and only the 'perfect,' who have shared in the Divine 'knowledge,' can make another 'perfect.' Hence arises the phrase 'perfect word,' used as a title for one of the Hermetic documents, the revelation which initiates into the knowledge of God.

But this is not the end of the matter. Of the seven passages in St. Paul's Epistles in which the word is used, two definitely contrast 'perfect' with 'childish' (*νήπιος*). Here therefore it must mean 'grown up,' 'mature.' It is the stage of ripe knowledge as contrasted with rudimentary attainment. If we must have one English word to express the Greek word on every occurrence, as the Revisers desired, Dr. KENNEDY would offer us the word 'mature' as (roughly speaking) suitable in all the Pauline passages.

But the end is not even yet. In the later Stoics and Philo, the word is used constantly of the culminating stage of the good life which the philosopher is called to strive after. Now this anticipatory sense is evident in 1 Co 2⁶, 'Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect.' And the 'perfect' of Ph 3¹⁵ ('Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded') seem to be so, not yet in actual attainment, but by anticipation; for the Apostle has just spoken of himself as 'not having yet reached the goal.' Just as Epictetus warns the 'perfect' of the danger of making no progress, so St. Paul sees in his converts the end in the beginning, and can think of them as ideally 'saints' because they have received the new life, although that life has yet to develop in the face of many obstacles.

Professor KENNEDY'S conclusion is that to a full understanding of the word these three ideas must be combined.

Has this investigation of the use of the word 'perfect' in the Pauline Epistles done anything to solve the problem of perfectionism? Most of us deny that there is a problem to solve. Or, if there is a problem, we solve it as Dr. Johnson solved the problem of external existence. We point to sins in the perfectionists. The very word is unsavoury in our nostrils. But the problem remains.

Let us turn for a moment to *The Epistle of*

Priesthood, a volume of studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, by Professor NAIRNE, which has just been published (T. & T. Clark; 8s. net). The volume contains a complete exposition of the Epistle. The exposition is short and satisfactory. Why is it so satisfactory being so short? It is because of the studies which precede. The exposition occupies 134 pages, the studies 296. By these studies we are placed at the point of view of the author of the Epistle; we are brought along the way that he came; we inherit his heredity; we stand as close to Christ; every question that he touches in the Epistle, we can see why he touches it, we can see that his contribution to its solution is the contribution which he was sure to make. Among other things the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews handles the problem of perfection.

It is the perfection of Christ that makes the perfection of believers a problem. If Christ had not been perfect as man, no one would have listened to the claim of perfection made by men. It is true that human, that is to say, Christian, perfection is distinctly asserted in the New Testament. St. John says: 'We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not' (1 Jn 5¹⁸). But there are other passages which show a different feeling, and nowhere more remarkably than in St. John, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves' (1 Jn 1⁸).

Now it is not enough to say that one of these passages expresses the ideal, the other the actual state of the Christian. That may be quite true. But to St. John the words 'ideal' and 'actual' had little of the contrast which they present to us. It is doubtful if he would have understood what we mean by 'ideal'; it is certain that if he had understood he would have rejected it. For it was not as the ideal state for the believer in Christ that he made the assertion, 'Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not.' There would have been little Christianity in that. Sinlessness

as an ideal can be asserted by any code of ethics.

The point of departure from all other ethical codes which St. John was able to make was that in Christ this ideal became actual. It could not be asserted of any but of those who were 'begotten of God'—an assertion in which St. John is at one with St. Paul, and in harmony with the impression which the Acts and Epistles make upon us throughout. But when a man has been begotten of God he sinneth not, 'because he'—that *other* who is begotten of God, 'the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father'—'keepeth him.' He keeps him, not from without, as a shepherd standing outside the door of the sheepfold, but from within, as the shepherd who within the fold identifies himself with the sheep in every hour of their danger. He keeps him as one who was 'in all points tempted like as we are.'

'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,' that is the assertion of His perfection. And that is the first step towards the perfection of the believer. Let us hold it firmly. We find it best in the Gospels. In the Epistles we have words like 'guileless,' 'undefiled,' 'without sin.' But in the Gospels we have active holiness, and that not as an assertion—'in the Gospels,' says Professor NAIRNE, 'it is quite evident that there is no studied purpose to display our Lord as sinless'—but as historical narrative, as the actual history of one who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. In this matter 'the synoptic picture is richer' than that of the Epistles, and 'its touches are as subtle as the whole effect is simple.'

The next step is that this sinlessness of Christ is in the face of temptation, that *in all points like as we are* He was tempted. Professor NAIRNE quotes Dr. DU BOSE here. 'I do not know,' writes Dr. DU BOSE, 'how better to express the truth of the matter than to say, in what seems to me to be the explicit teaching of Hebrews, and of

the New Testament generally, that our Lord's whole relation to sin in our behalf was identical with our own up to the point of His unique and exceptional personal action with reference to it. Left to our nature and ourselves it overcomes and slays all us; through God in Him He overcame and slew it. He did it not by His own will and power as man, but as man through an absolute dependence upon God. And He made both the omnipotent grace of God upon which He depended, and His own absolute dependence upon it, His perfect faith, available for us in our salvation. He re-enacts in us the victory over sin and death which was first enacted in Himself.'

The name which Dr. Rendel HARRIS has given to that branch of study which has to do with twins is 'Dioscurism.' He has been pursuing that study for many years, and has already published more than one book about it. He has just brought his knowledge up to date and presented it to us in a handsome volume with the title of *Boanerges* (Cambridge: At the University Press; 15s. net).

Why Boanerges? Because it is the triumph of the study of Dioscurism that it has explained that hitherto inexplicable expression of the New Testament. And not only its triumph. Out of that explanation all the discoveries that have been made about Dioscurism may be said to flow. The word 'Dioscurism' might have been a more descriptive title; but by choosing 'Boanerges' Dr. Rendel HARRIS has given himself a springing board for the marvellous feats of research which this volume records, and at the same time has associated his enterprise with that which is nearest his heart and ours, the interpretation of the Bible.

The word 'Boanerges' occurs only in St. Mark. There we are told that Jesus, summoning His disciples, summoned 'James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and them he surnamed Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder'

(3¹⁷). Neither Matthew nor Luke has transferred this statement of Mark to his pages. Perhaps, says Dr. Rendel HARRIS, they found the explanation of the word unintelligible or objectionable. Nor is there any other early Christian writing in which the name occurs except Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin says Jesus 'changed the name of the sons of Zebedee to Sons of Thunder (Boanerges)'—which confirms the antiquity of the saying, but does not help us much to understand it.

First, then, What is the origin of the word 'Boanerges'? There is no Hebrew word exactly answering to the termination *erges* or *reges*, but Jerome pointed out that the Hebrew word for thunder is *re'em*, and the middle letter in it (*ayin*) is often transliterated in Greek by *g*. Then it is possible that a mistake was made with the last letter. Whereupon *boane* would be a form of *bene*, i.e. 'sons of,' and Boanerges would stand for *bene-re-em*, or 'sons of thunder.' And Dr. Rendel HARRIS thinks that Jerome may be right, though there is an Arabic root to 'roar aloud' or 'thunder,' *ragasa*, which he seems inclined to prefer.

The next question is, Why did our Lord call James and John 'sons of thunder'? The favourite explanation with the commentators has been, and is still, to compare the forceful action and utterances of James and John with the thunder. Says ORIGEN: 'You will find them very properly called Sons of Thunder on account of the loud voice of their ideas and doctrines.' Says SWETE: 'In the case of James, nothing remains to justify the title beyond the fact of his early martyrdom, probably due to the force of his denunciations (Ac 12²); John's thunder is heard in Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse.'

What is Dr. Rendel HARRIS's explanation? It is that the expression 'Sons of Thunder' is quite intelligible from the standpoint of folklore, and simply means that the persons so named were either actually twins, or so twinlike in appearance

that they might appropriately be spoken of as 'the twins.' For twins are spoken of as 'Sons of Thunder,' 'Sons of the Sky,' or 'Sons of Lightning' all over the world, and nowhere more frequently than in Palestine.

Professor H. A. A. KENNEDY's book on *St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions*, already noticed, is sufficient to show the value of some accurate knowledge of the religions of the Roman Empire to the student of the New Testament; Sir W. M. RAMSAY's book on *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day* (Hodder & Stoughton; 12s.) shows its necessity.

The volume is made up of fifty-four short chapters, few of which are free from the influence of the pagan atmosphere. But the best example of its pervasion is found in the forty-seventh chapter. There Sir W. M. RAMSAY offers an exposition of one of the most difficult passages in all the Bible—a passage of which the meaning has hitherto been quite out of reach. It is Col 2¹⁸, which in the Revised Version reads as follows: 'Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.'

Sir W. M. RAMSAY thinks that the Colossians are warned by St. Paul against some particular individual. Such an individual is not necessary to his interpretation of the passage, but it gives definiteness to the situation to assume his existence. This individual had been initiated into the Mysteries. He had entered upon the 'New Life' so familiar to the initiated; but it was not the spiritual new life of the gospel, it was hedged within a world of sensuous and external actions and rites. He had 'seen' certain things—seen and handled them, receiving them from the Hierophant. But again they are unspiritual things, with which he is vainly puffed up.

Against this man with his offers of an esoteric

knowledge which consisted in the worship of and humiliation before intermediary beings, as angels, but had no power over the flesh with its appetites and lusts, St. Paul warns the Colossians. And in warning them he uses the very words of the man who had been initiated in the Mysteries. He speaks of 'entering on' or 'taking his stand on' what one had 'seen' (in the Mysteries). The whole passage, says Sir W. M. RAMSAY, consists of three connected and parallel warnings.

The first warning is in the eighth verse: 'See that there shall be no one who takes you captive by philosophy and empty illusion after the tradition of men, after the elemental powers or rulers of the world, and not after Christ.' After this warning there is a statement of the triumphant supremacy of Christ, the Head, over those elemental powers.

Then follows the second warning. It is found in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses: 'Let no one, then, make himself a judge [or critic] of you in meat or drink, or in respect of festival days: which are a shadow of things future, but the body [that casts the shadow] is Christ's.' After which in the eighteenth verse comes the warning against

the man of the mysteries with his false worship and fleshly mind. Sir W. M. RAMSAY translates the verse in this way: 'Let no one cozen you of the prize of your life-race, finding satisfaction in self-humiliation and worshipping of angels, "taking his stand on" (*ἐμβραβεύων*, a mystery word) what he has seen [in the Mysteries], vainly puffed up by his unspiritual mind, and not keeping firm hold on [Christ] the Head.'

'The language of Paul throughout the whole passage shows not only disapproval and condemnation of this mystic theosophy, but also a certain tone of scorn, or at least of lofty and absolute superiority. The man who could think and write in this strain moves on a plane of thought infinitely above the level of that philosophy, or (perhaps one should rather say) pseudo-philosophy. Both taught the way of salvation, or simply 'the way' (Ac 19^{9, 23}, etc.); but in the Mysteries the way was a literal path marked by a white poplar tree and other signs, which the soul learned through the esoteric and mystic lore, whereas in the gospel it was an idea, making itself into a driving force in the conduct of life; it was the intense, overpowering belief in a spiritual fact.'

The Biological Control of Life.¹

By J. ARTHUR THOMSON, M.A., LL.D., REGIUS PROFESSOR OF NATURAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

THE idea of the biological control of life has probably been always—more or less clearly—in the minds of physicians and hygienists, but the focussing of it is distinctly modern. We may date it, in fact, from the work of Darwin and Pasteur.

Darwin changed a relatively static conception of the world of organisms into an intensely dynamic one, making the Evolution-idea current intellectual coin. The forms of life which seemed so stable were shown to be in racial flux—though

¹ An Address delivered at the opening of the School for Christian Workers, Aberdeen, 14th October 1913.

the change might be as imperceptible as a glacier's movement. The *individual*, moreover, was shown to be modifiable or plastic under the influence of environment and function. Thus the whole aspect of things was changed. The outlook became kinetic, and this led on naturally to the practical idea of *the controllability of life*. If flowers and pigeons and the like can be controlled, and controlled so well, then why not human life also? If Man can evolve from out of a wolf the domesticated dog, the dependable guardian of the flocks, may he not hopefully try to evolve the wolfish out of himself?