

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

CANON CHEYNE contributes to this number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES the first of a short series of articles upon "Possible Zoroastrian Influences on the Religion of Israel." The subject, at first sight appearing somewhat technical, if not even fanciful, is thoroughly removed from both fancy and mere technicality, first by the broad human treatment of it in Canon Cheyne's hands, and, secondly, by its intimate bearing upon questions of living biblical interest, especially upon the problems which surround the Psalms. Canon Cheyne's *Bampton Lectures on the Psalms* will shortly be published. They are sure to attract widespread attention; and it is the author's wish that these articles should appear and be read before the lectures, as in some sense an introduction to them. Moreover, we are soon to hear more of the Parsis and their religion. M. James Darmesteter has chosen this as the subject of the next course of Hibbert Lectures.

The July number will contain an account of the remarkable articles which have appeared in the *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, by Professor Klostermann of Kiel, on the Old Testament criticism. By a skilful use of the lower or textual criticism, Professor Klostermann is believed to have given the higher criticism the greatest shake that it has yet received.

With the issue this month of the second volume, Professor Swete has completed the Cambridge *Old Testament in Greek* (two vols., crown 8vo, pp. 828, 880, 7s. 6d. each). The number of books

that are indispensable is really very small, but for the study of the Old Testament a good copy of the Septuagint is absolutely indispensable; and Professor Swete's edition is, without question, the best. Many years hence we are promised a larger edition, with extended *apparatus criticus*; but this edition is altogether so satisfactory for the working student's ends and purposes, and it has been placed so thoroughly within reach by the generous enterprise of the University Press, that few of us need wait the appearance of the larger edition, or lament that it is beyond acquisition when it does appear. The book, as we have it, is the result of a marvellous perseverance and most conscientious scholarship. It is quite worthy to stand beside Westcott and Hort's *Greek New Testament*.

Professor Swete's Septuagint is itself part of a wider movement. The signs are now become very clear that in all future study of the Old Testament, the non-Hebrew Versions will hold a position of much greater influence than heretofore. And the first and most needful step is the possession of a critical edition. In the current issue of the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Professor H. P. Smith pleads for such an edition of the Vulgate also, as the indispensable preliminary to the use of that version. Meantime it has become imperative upon men who are neither skilled linguists nor professed exegetes that they should know something of the history and character of, at least, the greatest of the versions. We hope to be able to publish a series of articles, written by

scholars who have made special study of the subject. The first, an introductory paper by Professor Kennedy, will be found in this number. Professor Swete will shortly contribute another on the Old Latin Version. That which may seem to some of us uninteresting and out of the way will speedily—as acquaintance ripens, and we perceive how much light the subject throws upon current Old Testament discussions,—become interesting enough and full of practical stimulus. It is this kind of reading that makes the full man, and the full man is the greatest preacher and the best hearer.

Professor J. F. M'Curdy, of University College, Toronto, contributes an article to the *Knox College Monthly* for March on three recent commentaries on Isaiah—Delitzsch, Orelli, and Smith. He holds that the chief merits of Mr. Smith's book are two: the use which it makes of the historical element in Isaiah, and its persistent demonstration that to understand Isaiah the book, we must understand Isaiah the man. His appreciation of Delitzsch as a commentator is very high, but also marked by the discrimination of a scholar. "Probably no commentator of the age," he says, "brought so many gifts to the interpretation of the Bible as did Franz Delitzsch. Chief among these are his ability and penetration, his originality and acuteness of thought, his abundant and various learning in all departments of research that bear upon the Old Testament, his open eye for all that can shed light upon doubtful passages or illustrate half-hidden beauties of phrase or allusion, and the genial faculty, more spiritual than intellectual, that enabled him to gather up all the meaning of a passage, and show its place and bearing in the divine order and substance of revelation. Walking hand in hand with such a guide through the Garden of the Lord, one can not only gather its ripened fruit, but also breathe the fragrance of its flowers and gaze upon their loveliness."

But Professor M'Curdy admits the necessity of some preparation on the part of the student if Delitzsch is to be fully enjoyed. He asks, Why should not every student be *trained* to follow such a master? Then even the condensation of the

style so characteristic of Delitzsch, which makes rapid reading impossible, becomes no hindrance, but rather a positive gain, since it compels young students to closeness of attention and sympathy with the full mind and concentrated earnestness of the interpreter. Meantime, till this is accomplished, he recommends most strongly the commentary by Orelli as easier, shorter, more concerned with results than processes, and more accessible.

"In Christianity, as a formulated system, there are three main elements:—(1) The common foundation of Hebrew religion as contained in the Old and New Testaments, but primarily in the Old; (2) a specially Christian element, which is due to the life and work of Christ; (3) certain peculiar forms of expression, gradually determined upon after six centuries of keen controversy, which are, to a large extent, of Greek origin. . . . At the present moment, attention is being turned in full stream upon the first of these sources. It is likely also, if I am not mistaken, to be directed shortly to the third." Professor Sanday is the sober and responsible seer who commits himself to that prediction. As yet the signs of its fulfilment are as feeble as they are few. The problems of the Old Testament are absorbing the interest of constantly increasing numbers of Christian people. Few of us have yet discovered the existence of a problem in early Christianity which has any claim upon our attention.

Yet if it is to become a controversy in our midst, it is likely to prove the most momentous of our day. Its issues are nearer and more personal than those which belong to the discussions of which the Old Testament is the centre; its conditions will be more intelligible to the popular mind; its issues more vital to the existing doctrine and practice of the Christian Church. Not one, but every Christian community amongst us will be affected by it; though, if the late Dr. Hatch has correctly sketched its outline, the chief gain will belong to the Quakers, and the High Church will be most seriously shaken and removed.

The contention is that much of modern theology, and even of modern Christian practice, is non-

scriptural. It originated in the early Christian centuries, and chiefly in Asia Minor. Partly, it sprang from the necessity for more explicit and minute definition which the early heresies forced upon the Church, but mainly from the transference of Christianity from Palestine to Asia Minor, and its contact there with the modes of thought and religious observance of pagan Greece. "I venture to claim," says Dr. Hatch, as he gathers up the results of his Hibbert Lectures—"I venture to claim to have shown that a large part of what are sometimes called Christian doctrines, and many usages which have prevailed, and continue to prevail, in the Christian Church, are, in reality, Greek theories and Greek usages, changed in form and colour by the influence of primitive Christianity, but in their essence Greek still."

Unless Dr. Hatch is, indeed, the dreamer of dreams which he expects to be called, there is here a Greek question of a more vital order than the retention or rejection of the Greek Grammar at our schools and colleges. By a vote of assembled head-masters, Plato may cease to interfere with the claims of football; but what assembly will be sufficient to remove his influence from the Christian creed and the exercises of Christian worship? "I believe," says Dr. Hatch, "the consideration of this question, and practical action in the determination of it, to be the work that lies before the theologians of our generation." It is extremely doubtful if it will be left to the theologians to settle. Earnest men who are not professed theologians will soon discover the vital importance of it. The Churches will demand from specialists the materials of the problem; they will settle the problem themselves.

In the Hibbert Lectures of 1888, recently published under the direction of Principal Fairbairn (Williams & Norgate, 8vo, 1890, 10s. 6d.), the late Dr. Hatch has indicated the general lines along which these materials must be gathered. He has himself gathered some of the materials. They are more largely doctrinal than practical; but in order to show the nature of the points at issue, it will be easier to separate an article of

religious observance, and the Sacrament of Baptism may be chosen for the purpose.

In the earliest times (1) baptism followed at once upon conversion; (2) the ritual was of the simplest kind, nor does it appear that it needed any special minister. Both points are shown by the Acts of the Apostles. These were the simple elements of early Christian baptism. When it emerges after a period of obscurity—like a river which flows under the sand—the enormous changes of later times have already begun. The first point of change is the change of *name*. Three of these new names are mentioned—"enlightenment," which is found as early as the time of Justin Martyr, and which became the constant technical term for baptism; "seal," which was used partly of those who had passed the preliminary tests, and partly of those who were actually sealed in the forehead in token of a new ownership; and "mystery," a most significant term, as shall be seen immediately. The second point is the change of *time*. Instead of being given immediately upon conversion, baptism came to be in all cases postponed by a long period of preparation, and in some cases deferred to the end of life. Christians were accordingly separated into two classes, those who had and those who had not been baptized. The word which distinguished the baptized person from the unbaptized is immediately derived from the word "mystery"—they were *led into the mystery*. These are the broad features of the change. There are other points, of slighter importance in themselves, but significant enough in their bearing on the whole problem. Thus (a) the catechumen, as the period of his training drew to a close, received a "password" which consisted of the baptismal formula itself and the Lord's Prayer; (b) sometimes the baptized person received the communion at once after baptism; (c) he was sometimes crowned with a garland; (d) baptism was often administered in the evening under a blaze of artificial light; and (e) baptism was administered, not at any place or time, but only in the great Churches, and only as a rule once a year, the primitive "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" passing into an elaborate ritualistic service.

What is the explanation of these far-reaching changes? They are due, says Dr. Hatch, to the fact that Christianity had got planted in the land of the Greek mysteries and had passed into the hands of men, many of whom had been initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, with the elaborate ritual of which they were more familiar than with the simplicity of scriptural doctrine and practice. "During the earliest centuries of Christianity the mysteries, and other religious societies which were akin to the mysteries, existed in an enormous scale throughout the eastern part of the empire. There were elements in some of them from which Christianity recoiled, and against which the Christian Apologists use the language of strong invective. But, on the other hand, the majority of them had the same aims as Christianity itself—the aim of worshipping a pure God, the aim of living a pure life, and the aim of cultivating the spirit of brotherhood. They were part of a great religious revival which distinguished the age. It was inevitable when a new group of associations came to exist side by side with a large body of existing associations, from which it was continually detaching members, introducing them into its own midst with the practices of their original societies impressed upon their minds, that this new group should tend to assimilate, with the assimilation of their members, some of the elements of these existing groups. This is what we find to have been in fact the case."

Accordingly the new names which are found attached to baptism are derived, Dr. Hatch believes, from the Greek mysteries. "Enlightenment," "seal," and especially the great term "mystery" itself, are explicable only through ideas and usages peculiar to the mystery cult. Unknown to the Apostolic Church, they are well-known to those initiated in the mysteries. Again, the giving to the catechumens of a formula or password belongs to the Eleusinian rites, from which the name for password (*symbolon*) directly comes, a name used for a creed to the present day. So also the baptized received the communion at once after baptism, just as those who had been initiated at Eleusis proceeded at once—after a day's fast—to drink of the mystic *kykeon*,

and to eat of the sacred cakes. And so on through the elaborate range of doctrine and ritual, much of which has been incorporated in the creeds, and remains the believed and practised possession of the Churches to-day.

It is manifest that there is here abundance of material for Dr. Sanday's prophecy. And it will not do to ignore either the author or the book. In an article contributed to the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, Professor Sanday says of the author: "The world knows what it has lost in Dr. Hatch. It is needless now to lay stress on his wide learning, his breadth of view, the freshness and independence which he brought to bear on every subject which he took up, his thorough scientific method, and his remarkable powers of clear and forcible expression. If any one of the German specialists were asked who were our foremost writers on early ecclesiastical history, he would probably name Dr. Hatch, Mr. Gwatkin, and Bishop Lightfoot; and, regarding Bishop Lightfoot rather as a masterly editor of patristic texts than as a historian, strictly so called, he would be pretty sure to give the first place to Dr. Hatch." And, further on, he says of the book itself: "I doubt whether so important a contribution has been made to the real understanding of the first three centuries within our memory."

It is not surprising, therefore, that already the Bampton lecturer for the present year has sounded the note of opposition. Mr. Gore made Dr. Hatch's book the subject of his fourth lecture, delivered at Oxford on the 19th April. Mr. Gore admits a difference in the theology of the creeds from that of the New Testament. But the theology of the creeds is not an accretion from without, but a direct development of New Testament doctrine. There is such a development visible in the New Testament itself. Mr. Gore regards it as the great defect of the Hibbert Lectures, that they take the Sermon on the Mount as the sum and substance of New Testament doctrine, ignoring the theology of the apostolic epistles. On these lines we may expect that the criticism of Dr. Hatch's book will run.