

doubt, was altered as the religion of the Babylonians changed or developed.

What, then, is the religious value of the biblical account of the Noachian Deluge? Surely it lies in the lessons about God and His dealings with man, which that story teaches us. God is there represented as a righteous God, who punishes sin, not merely as a personal offence against Himself, but as an offence against righteousness, and rewards those who courageously set their face against wrong. How far the details of the Bible story are literally true, and how far they are the unconscious creation of tradition, we shall perhaps never know; but we may be practically certain that it has a basis of fact in the early history of a primitive people, and quite certain that its religious lessons are true for all time, for they are confirmed by the continuous revelation of Holy Scripture, and by our own moral and religious sense. It is quite true, of course, that God's rewards and punishments do not

generally follow righteousness and sin in this life by an unerring law. Christ's teaching with reference to the tower of Siloam (Luke xiii. 4) as well as human experience forbids us to think that; but we believe that in the end this will be found to be the general principle of God's dealings with man. And so the story of the Deluge becomes an allegory—a type of God's judgment of the world, which we believe will be only completed in the Last Great Day.

It should be added that the Flood of the Izdubar legends is only one of several analogues of the early Bible stories found in Babylonian tablets. Their general importance is that they show that much of the Jewish beliefs concerning the origin of the world and the primitive history of man was brought with them out of ancient Chaldea, and was handed down, probably in an oral form, for many centuries before it was committed to writing.

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## Our Debt to German Theology.

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### II.

It will be gathered from what has been said that we regard the influence of German theology as, on the whole, good and healthy. Not the least gain is the example given us of thoroughness. Mark, by way of example, the subdivision of labour, which is carried out to a wonderful extent. What with us forms a single subject is parcelled out into different departments, for some of which we can scarcely find names. We take slowly to Theological Encyclopædics, and Symbolics, and Apologetics. Biblical Introduction is gaining ground among us. It is only by such subdivision of labour that justice can be done to wide and complex subjects. Another illustration of thoroughness is found in the monographs on special topics in which German students delight. There is no famous name, and scarcely any obscure name in Church History, which has not been made the theme of special exposition. Round such names as Augustine, or Tertullian, or Origen quite a literature has grown up, and is still growing. In such studies a description of the man and his times, of all that goes to explain his character, is

only introductory to a minute analysis of his works and influence. These monographs are like the studies of a great artist for a serious work. As in spade-labour, every inch of ground is turned over. It is needless to say that many of them are delightful reading. They light up one corner after another of Church History as no general account could do. The first condition of excellence is thoroughness. One charm of a great work of art is finish in detail, the labour lavished on the seemingly insignificant. What Browning says of the grammarian applies to every student—

“Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace,  
That before living he'd learn how to live.”

The chief advantage, however, of our intercourse with Germany is the impulse given to the higher theology. We have spoken already of the German predilection for philosophy. It may often be carried to excess, often lead astray, often result in failure. Still it is a fine trait and an excellent supplement to the practical genius of the English character. There are defeats that are better than some victories. It is needless to discuss the

relative value of the practical and philosophical. Perhaps German Christianity would be better for more of our practical spirit ; we certainly could do with more of the speculative bent. But this exchange being impossible, the next best thing is to combine the two, and learn from each other's excellence. A special danger in our days is to idolise the practical, matter-of-fact side of everything, even of religious truth and work. The impatience for immediate results, for payment on the spot, the praise lavished on rapid success, proves this. "Small profits and quick returns" is the test applied even in the Church. Utilitarianism, in its narrowest sense, is put in place of truth. The quiet thinker, who has only ideas to give, is pushed aside as a dreamer. And yet, in the end, ideas shape history and rule the world. They are to facts as spirit to matter, as mind to body. "Man shall not live by bread alone." His reason can only be satisfied with knowledge and established truth. We know that at last we come to impassable barriers in the limits of man's faculties, and have to conclude with, "We know *in part*." But "*we know in part*." Our knowledge is real and true as far as it goes.

We would also remark that the unbroken tradition of Christian history is in favour of the blending of philosophy and theology. One of the earliest facts in the life of the Church is its recognition of the claims of reason. Its altars have never been usefully served by ignorance. Its greatest names have been kings in the realm of thought. As early as the end of the second century we find a Christian college at Alexandria, the "Catechetical School" so called, the prototype of all theological halls since. Its course of study embraced Natural Science, Philosophy, Ethics, and Theology. Clement and Origen were among its famous teachers. A recent writer says, "It may be doubted whether any nobler scheme of Christian education has ever been projected than this."<sup>1</sup> The school lasted several centuries, and declined only with the Church in those parts. Similar schools existed at Athens, Antioch, Edessa, Nisibis.<sup>2</sup> Then came the age of the great Fathers, who sustained the tradition. In the Middle Ages the interests of Christian learning were far from neglected. The foundations of our universities were then laid. We know the failings of the scholastic system,—its

false methods of reasoning, its gigantic assumptions, its worship of authority. Our ways of proof were as unknown to the men of those days as the Copernican system. Still their aim was noble and their industry colossal. They tried, as we do, to reconcile reason and faith, history and revelation, nature and grace. And to come nearer home, English theology has had its glorious age. The last half of the seventeenth century is thickly studded with immortal names, divided pretty equally between Anglican and Puritan. If we ask why a particular age should be so distinguished, we can get no complete answer, nor is it necessary. Why were Elizabeth's days crowded with men of genius in every field of thought and action? There is no full answer. Our own days are the last in which there should be any desire to lower the standard of Christian learning and culture. The foes of religion meet us with weapons drawn from history, philosophy, science ; we must meet them with better arguments and nobler views. We must demonstrate that true philosophy is on our side. We must out-reason the apostles of unbelief. "The strong man armed" of Agnosticism and Materialism "keeps his goods in peace until a stronger than he"—stronger on his own field and in the use of his own weapons—comes and overpowers him.

Now it is just in this field that German learning is able to render splendid service to the Christian cause. As already intimated, a German is never content with knowing facts. He must know the laws and reasons which explain them. He must idealise. He sees facts, not merely as they are, but as they ought to have been. He idealises, as painters and poets idealise. No doubt there is much that is precarious in such speculations. We may smile as we are treated to philosophies of history, language, politics, art, poetry. Still the impulse is noble. How German thought has enlarged our view of what is meant by proof in things of faith ! We know what it meant a century ago on the lips of Paley and his school. Far be it from us to disparage a writer of such thoroughly English temper as Paley. Still the world has grown in a century. To prove a religious truth now means more than to prove it historically, as in a court of law. It means to prove it in the court of reason and reflection as well, to show that it alone meets deep needs of human nature, and fits in with the great system of things of which human

<sup>1</sup> Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

life is part. Bishop Westcott's work, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, is quite in the spirit of German thought, and is a good example of what is meant. The Gospel is a gospel for man's reason as well as for his practical life. Dr. Dorner says that the business of theology is to set forth Christian doctrine "as truth," *i.e.* to prove it in every way in which spiritual truth can be proved—by history, by analogy, by reason, by those moral instincts and intuitions which underlie all religious faith.

Many a British student has felt that the reading of a strong book, like Martensen's *Christian Dogmatics*, has been like the gift of a new sense, like opening a door into a new world. He sees familiar doctrines, which he thought he knew all about, in new relations, and comes to believe them for new reasons. Even a work like Müller's *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, which gives another impossible solution of an insoluble problem, can scarcely fail to stimulate and strengthen thought.

## "The Memorabilia of Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. G. ELMSLIE TROUP, M.A., BROUGHTY-FERRY.

In an evil moment I agreed to endeavour to give the readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES some idea of this remarkable book. I have found the task almost desperate. The book is a work of genius. Its author has long been known to his friends, not only as a singularly gentle and beautiful spirit, piercing far into the spiritual, but as a man of altogether unique genius. And you cannot review genius. It has its own way of putting its thoughts—its own way of looking at life and things. Sometimes when you think you have hold, it slips out of your grasp away into the ethereal, and you can only wonder or follow with halting, uncertain steps. It needs genius to properly appreciate genius; but this must be said, that, in Mr. Peyton's book, even the commonplace reader has his thoughts wonderfully quickened, and his vision deepened and broadened. Here is new light on big problems—new solutions of them, sometimes very strange, at first sight, perhaps, somewhat Quixotic, but truly, as you turn them over, growing in reasonableness. I should doubt if any book quite as startling in its bold suggestiveness, with its epigrammatic sentences, that positively seem to hit you, and its beautiful sayings packed with thought, has appeared for many a day. The author, who is a reasonable preacher of the doctrine of evolution, uses his large acquaintance with scientific fact to light up his subject, but it is really the poetry of science, and the optimistic side of life,—*e.g.* "this Sama-

ritan female is a thoughtful woman,"—which fascinate him.

The book, in its way a large one of 513 pages, consists of reflections—probably discourses delivered to a congregation—on the first ten chapters of the Gospel of St. John. The field has been well trodden, but Mr. Peyton does not follow the usual paths, and his discourses are not like any others. He has his own conceptions of St. John. He is nothing if not original; and he takes his own view,—that the spiritual life of man is not isolated from the large life of nature,—and works it throughout. Plato, science, the facts of life and their poetry, give him the key into the deep things of the Fourth Evangelist. He refuses to trouble himself about the vexed question of authorship, or lose himself in the "chaotic cockpit of probabilities and improbabilities, where the critic with spurs of the latest manufacture, commonly of German steel, silences his opponents, crowing loud for a brief while, when the sparring begins again unending" (p. 7). That St. John *inspired* the gospel, whether or not he *wrote* it, he is sure; but he prefers to address himself to the real question—the Christian life with its worships, ethics, institutions, enthusiasms, which lie in these chapters. By unfolding these, this Gospel proves its superiority; for "the superior biography of Jesus is the biography not of outward incidents, but of that inner world which He brought with Him, and which He lodged so affectionately in the souls of men, and which now invests our earthly world" (p. 17). "The problem before critics and apologists equally is the correspondence between the potences of this

<sup>1</sup> *The Memorabilia of Jesus, commonly called the Gospel of St. John.* By William Wynne Peyton, Minister of Free St. Luke's, Broughty Ferry, N.B. London and Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black. 1892. 10s. 6d.