

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR HARNACK has just published, in Leipzig, a new book, to which he gives the title of *The Chronology of Ancient Christian Literature down to the Time of Eusebius*. It is the most significant event in the study of the New Testament which the present generation has known. In 1845, Baur issued his *Paulus*. That incident marked the opening of a period of New Testament study. In 1897, Harnack has published his *Die Chronologie*. That incident marks its close.

IN 1893, Harnack published a massive work of over a thousand pages, in which he investigated the materials which the earliest Christian writers had to depend upon. Written in co-operation with Erwin Preuschen, it was a work of marvellous research and patience. Three years have passed. Harnack has all the while been discharging the duties of a laborious chair; he has been issuing numerous monographs and magazine articles; and yet, all alone, he now publishes this book of 732 large pages, and every sentence may be said to be the result of independent research. 'In the whole annals of theological literature,' says Dr. Sanday, who notices the new work in the *Guardian* for 20th January, 'in the whole annals of theological literature, I can remember nothing so systematic and on so large a scale.'

VOL. VIII.—6. MARCH 1897.

But the significance of the work is not in that. It is in the attitude towards the books of the New Testament—their authors and their dates—which Professor Harnack has been driven to take up. 'Retrogressive,' he calls that attitude, 'because one should call things by their right names, and in the criticism of the sources of primitive Christianity we are without doubt embarked on a retrograde movement towards tradition.' And he immediately adds: 'The chronological framework in which tradition has arranged documents from the Pauline Epistles down to Irenæus is in all main points right.'

Now, to understand the significance of that statement, one has to know a little of the criticism of the New Testament Scriptures during the last fifty years, and one has to know a little of Harnack. The former is too long a story to tell just now; but the two go closely together, and this is what Dr. Sanday says of the latter. He says the significance of the statement we have quoted lies in this, that Harnack, 'trained to the utmost in the methods of his countrymen, and coming to the subject with remarkable freedom from prepossession, after having worked through the whole mass of the literature which has grown up round it in all its details, and applied to it many searching

investigations of his own, deliberately arrives at this result as the outcome of his labours, and states it with all the frankness, fearlessness, and decision which are so characteristic of him.'

In this volume Harnack does not investigate the history which the New Testament Scriptures contain. He investigates only the date and authorship of the writings themselves. And Dr. Sanday warns us against a rapid assumption that in respect of the historical contents of the books of the New Testament, Harnack is already on our side. Harnack has not said that; and we do not believe he means that. For in the Preface to his book, he refers to a conversation which he had a few weeks ago with a Dutch theologian, whom he does not name, and the point of it must not be missed. The Dutch theologian remarked that whoever accepts the traditional framework of Christianity, that is, accepts the dates which tradition has assigned to the books of the New Testament, accepts also the supernatural in these books. To which Professor Harnack seems to have answered, God forbid! 'Why should not from thirty to forty years have sufficed to produce the historical deposit in regard to the words and deeds of Jesus which we find in the Synoptic Gospels? Why should we want for this as much as sixty to seventy years? Why should the height on which the fourth evangelist stands not have been attained until seventy or eighty years after Paul? Why should not thirty or forty years be enough?'

But we can wait till Harnack is ready in respect of the history also. If he is the unbiassed explorer we think he is, he will come right, even upon the supernatural itself. Meanwhile his testimony to the dates and authorship is only the more impressive. Let us read the most impressive part of it. Here is Dr. Sanday's translation, and here are Dr. Sanday's italics—

'There was a time—the great mass of the public is still living in such a time—in which people felt obliged to regard the oldest Christian literature, including the New Testament, as a tissue of decep-

tions and falsifications. That time is past. For science, it was an episode in which she learnt much, and after which she has much to forget. The results of the following investigations go in a "reactionary" direction still farther beyond what may be called the middle position of the criticism of the day. *The oldest literature of the Church is, in the main points, and in most of its details, from the point of view of literary history, veracious and trustworthy.* In the whole New Testament there is probably but a single writing which can be called, in the strictest sense of the word, pseudonymous, the Second Epistle of Peter.'

We have given one warning. Let us follow Dr. Sanday and give another. Already there are those who have leaped to the conclusion: If the criticism of the New Testament has returned to the place where it left tradition, may not the criticism of the Old do likewise? It does not follow. We can lose nothing by seeing that it does not follow. For, in the first place, the best New Testament scholars in this country never left the traditional standpoint. Lightfoot and Hort—whom Professor Sanday calls the great ones amongst us—and Professor Sanday himself, have been as free to investigate the conditions of the problem as any theologian in Germany, Holland, or France, and they have been as competent. Yet they never saw the reasons which should drive them away from the general belief of the Church on the authorship and date of the books of the New Testament. Our best New Testament scholars have never departed from the traditional standpoint. But we have scarce an Old Testament scholar left in our midst who is not a Higher Critic.

And the conditions are different. As Dr. Sanday says, 'the two traditions are very different, and the arguments on which the critical view in each case is based are different. It is far better that the two questions should be worked out independently.'

On another page Professor Cheyne directs attention to the English translation of Maspero's new

book. Some time ago we received a considerably longer communication from another scholar on the same subject. On learning that the matter had come under discussion in *The Athenæum*, we delayed publication of that communication, lest injustice should be done either to Professor Maspero or to the English publishers. Now it seems advisable to let Professor Cheyne's note speak for itself, and to enter a little more fully into the merits of the case.

The book in question is known in France under the title *Les premières Mêlées des Peuples*. A translation into English was published simultaneously with the French original. Its title is *The Struggle of the Nations*, and its publishers are the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Now it may be said at once that all Professor Maspero's work is of the first rank in scholarship, and this book is simply indispensable to the student of ancient history. But the English translation does not represent the original. This is the more surprising that the first volume of Maspero's work, which was translated and published by the same firm a year ago, under the title of *The Dawn of Civilisation*, was a sufficiently faithful reproduction of the French. The changes that have been made in the English edition are never startling, but they are numerous and they are all in one direction. They all tend to tone down the author's critical position—and therein lies the whole explanation and offence.

We need not quote examples. The curious may consult *The Athenæum*, where they are set out in parallel columns. But we must give the other side its hearing. When the Secretary saw the letter in *The Athenæum* (which, as Dr. Cheyne says, stood over the signature 'Verax'), he made reply at once. He admitted the alterations. But he said that they were done with Professor Maspero's sanction, and they were so slight that they did not seem worth referring to in the Introduction. At the same time Mr. M'Clure accepted

the whole responsibility, by saying that while Professor Maspero knew they were to be made, the Committee of the S.P.C.K. did not.

To Mr. M'Clure's letter, 'Verax' makes reply. He acknowledges that the changes are mostly minute; he says they are often cleverly minute; but they are scarcely less offensive on that account, and the number of them makes the difference very great. That Maspero permitted them to be made does not lessen the Society's obligation to the British public. It is inconvenient and even slightly ridiculous, that Professor Maspero should say one thing to his French readers and another to his English. It is an unflattering estimate of the English understanding that the Society adopts. And it is plain that the Society, if it did not know of these changes, has been placed in a thoroughly false position.

Now it will never do to make the Society or its able Secretary the scapegoat for other men's offences. But if such changes are made in English translations, there is the more necessity for the vigorous protest of 'Verax.' If a book is not fit to be translated as it stands, it is not fit to be translated at all. Expurgated editions of every kind, the English public abhors. Maspero's new book is still a magnificent and most stimulating contribution to our knowledge of the ancient East. But we should all have vastly preferred if Maspero had been given us as Maspero is, and not as some of us might wish him to be.

Dr. J. P. Peters of New York contributes a series of Notes on the Old Testament to the *Journal of Biblical Literature* for 1896, and in the first he discusses the site of the Tower of Babel. In his Commentary on Genesis, Dillmann says, that the story of the Confusion of Tongues must have attached itself to some gigantic tower-like but uncompleted building in Babel; and he adds: 'Now, there exist on the west side of the Euphrates, nine kilometres south of Hillah, large ruins of such a tower, called Birs

Nimrud, and long ago this ruin was identified with the Bel Sanctuary of Herodotus, the tower of our passage.' Dillmann himself, however, rejects the identification. He says there are many such towers in that country; and 'it is rather to be supposed that the present ruin of Babil, to the north of the city of Babylon itself, on the left side of the river, the most imposing of all the ruins, and the ancient temple of Bel-Merodach, rising as a high pyramid, likewise later rebuilt by Nebuchadrezzar, is the building known as the Tower of Babel.'

In 1889, Dr. Peters visited both Babil and Birs Nimrud. In 1890 he visited Babil again. He examined its ruins most carefully, and he came to the conclusion that Dillmann was wrong. Babil could not be the Tower of Babel. The ziggurat or tower is a well-marked, easily identified structure. It was built after a pattern. Dr. Peters could see no traces of the pattern in Babil. He went there with expectation of finding in its shapeless ruins the Tower of Babel, he came away convinced that it never had been a tower at all.

It ought not, however, to be difficult to find the Tower of Babel. Babel means Babylon. It must be in or near the city. And Dr. Peters speedily reduces the number, till he fixes it down to one—the same Birs Nimrud we have always accepted.

In one of the corners of this Birs Nimrud some clay cylinders were once discovered. On these cylinders was inscribed the story of Nebuchadrezzar's restoration of the tower. As we read the story, the narrative in Gen. 11¹⁻⁹ comes irresistibly before us. The tower had been ambitiously begun long long ago, but it had never been completed. 'Its summit had not been erected.' Nebuchadrezzar was much impressed with the great extent of its ruins, and with the need of completing the building. As it impressed him, it may be supposed to have impressed others. And it is easy for Dr. Peters to understand how its fame or even the story itself would travel into Judæa. For the

eleventh chapter of Genesis belongs to the Jahvistic narrative, which was written down some two hundred years before Nebuchadrezzar, and at that time communication with Babylon through travellers, merchants, and the like, cannot but have been common.

A discovery is a discovery even though some one has made it already. And there are few things more delightful than a genuine discovery in doctrine or interpretation. But when a fine discovery has been anticipated, not by an early Father, but by some independent worker just before me, the joy of it is somewhat dashed. Mr. Powell, who made the discovery of the duality of our Lord's knowledge, was not a little disturbed to read the whole affair in the *Church Quarterly Review* before he had published a word of it. The *Church Quarterly Reviewer* must have had his moment of amazement when Dr. Schwartzkopff's little book was put into his hand. For Dr. Schwartzkopff had made the discovery and revealed its consequences before the *Church Quarterly* was published.

Dr. Paul Schwartzkopff is Professor in the 'Gymnasium' at Wernigerode. When he published his book, he gave it the title of *Die Weissagungen Jesu Christi*. With admirable despatch, Messrs. T. & T. Clark, recognising the importance of the volume, have had it translated into English. The translator is the Rev. Neil Buchanan, who gave us Beyschlag's *New Testament Theology*. The title of the book in English is *The Prophecies of Jesus Christ* (T. & T. Clark. Crown 8vo, pp. 328. 4s. 6d.). It is a small book. As the saying goes, it may easily be read at a sitting. But it will waken thoughts and purposes that are likely to abide with us many days.

The complete title of Professor Schwartzkopff's book is *The Prophecies of Jesus Christ relating to His Death, Resurrection, and Second Coming, and their Fulfilment*. A more important subject is scarcely to be found, a more difficult is not in

existence. If Professor Schwartzkopff is able to do anything for us here, we shall assuredly listen to him gladly.

Well, he has his new-found theory. Jesus the Christ was God and Man. As Man He was ignorant of things of which as God He had perfect knowledge. And he applies this theory to the prophecies of the Death, Resurrection, and Second Coming with perfect German freedom.

Dr. Schwartzkopff sees the Divine in Jesus in His perfectly sinless character. As the Son of God He knew no sin; He did ever that which was well-pleasing in the Father's sight. He sees the human in Jesus in His intellectual imperfections. He knew not 'that day and that hour,' and He knew not many things besides. Take His prophecies of His Death. Professor Schwartzkopff does not believe that Jesus knew that He came into the world to give His life a ransom for many. At least He did not know it till He had been some time in the world. It was the fate of John the Baptist that first suggested the thought to Him. But when once He saw that He had come to die, He saw that His death was a necessity. The 'religious necessity' of His death was given Him by divine revelation. And thus the human and the Divine went together, and the Person was not divided.

Take the prophecies of His Resurrection. Jesus did not know at first that He would rise again from the dead. And when the thought of it came to Him, He did not know that He would rise with a human body. Nay, Dr. Schwartzkopff does not think He ever knew that, or ever did that. After the death on Calvary, Jesus appeared in a spiritual body, and appears in it still on the right hand of the Father. The human body disappeared—we cannot now tell how.

Take the prophecy of the Second Coming. Here Jesus, the Son of Man, was very much

farther astray—surely almost out of touch, one is driven to say, with His omniscience as the Son of God. It is a commonplace to charge the Apostle Paul with expectance of the Second Coming within his own generation. Dr. Schwartzkopff charges Jesus with the same erroneous expectation. His warnings to His disciples to watch admit of no other explanation. But Dr. Schwartzkopff makes a distinction. Jesus the man was ignorant of the time of His Second Coming, and so we are ignorant still. But the *fact* of it was a Divine revelation, and it is now the surest fact of the future.

'Modern intellectualism is as intolerant as old-time ignorance. It used to be the fashion to persecute pioneers in thought and speculation; to-day there is a danger of the bolder advocates of advanced theories acting unreasonably in regard to those who are more cautious and conservative. The Evolutionist says that all scientists of note are on his side, forgetting that the roll of great names against his view is steadily growing. The Higher Critic thinks that Scripture learning and his occupation in literary analysis and historical reconstruction are convertible terms. Hence books against Evolution and the Higher Criticism are not brought under public notice so generally as is the case with works in favour of the theories controverted. Assuredly a frowning on discussion will not assist in the attainment of truth on any subject that may fairly be discussed.'

That paragraph may be found in *The Christian* of February 4th. We found it there, and read it with interest. There may be a question as to the application of the doctrine announced; there can be no question, we think, as to the truth of the doctrine itself. 'Assuredly a frowning on discussion will not assist in the attainment of truth on any subject that may fairly be discussed.' That is the doctrine. It is the very principle we have sought to keep before us every month. We read the paragraph with interest; we read its last sentence with very hearty concurrence.

But we were suddenly taken aback when we passed to the paragraph following:—

‘These remarks are suggested by an article in *The King’s Own* for February by Rev. Dr. Baxter, entitled “Wellhausen at the Stake.” The article does not describe a martyrdom, but deals with a controversy which has taken place in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, in the course of which Professor Wellhausen of Göttingen, the well-known apostle of Higher Criticism, poses as one whom it is the delight of some to misunderstand, and whom, indeed, some would rejoice to see “burned at the stake”! The controversy arose on Dr. Baxter’s book, *Sanctuary and Sacrifice: A Reply to Wellhausen*, a work of deep interest and great importance, issued a few months ago by the Queen’s Printers. The editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES published communications against Dr. Baxter, to which he declined to allow a reply. These are now examined at length, in an article that is a model of respectful argument and strong reasoning. It is shown (1) that a champion of Wellhausen, Professor Peake of Manchester, failed to represent with accuracy the views of his master; and (2) that, in subsequently indorsing the views actually advanced, Wellhausen frequently stultifies himself!’

Now we have not seen Dr. Baxter’s article, for the editor of *The King’s Own* has not done us the honour to send a copy of the magazine which contains it. We, therefore, accept provisionally the judgment of the editor of *The Christian* that it is ‘a model of respectful argument and strong reasoning.’ But we know well enough about the controversy which took place in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. And when we read in the beginning of the next paragraph, ‘It is unfair that silence and misrepresentation should stand in the way of such a book as *Sanctuary and Sacrifice*,’ we sent the following letter to *The Christian*:—

‘SIR,—An article has been published in *The King’s Own* for February, in which I am charged with unfairness to Dr. Baxter of Cameron Manse, St. Andrews, who wrote a book recently in reply to Wellhausen. I am surprised at the publication

of such an article without inquiring whether its statements are accurate, and I am astonished that you also should pen and publish without inquiry, such a sentence as this: “The editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES published communications against Dr. Baxter to which he declined to allow a reply.” Let me state the facts:—

‘A copy of Dr. Baxter’s book was sent for review. I at once inserted a brief notice of it, and then, according to my custom, published in a following issue a full review by Professor Peake. Now you know very well that it is only of courtesy that an editor accepts an answer from the author of a book to a review that has appeared in his columns, for he has then to give the reviewer an opportunity of reply. Yet I accepted from Dr. Baxter and published an answer to Professor Peake’s review, which was a great deal longer than the review itself. Professor Peake answered that. Again Dr. Baxter replied, and most reluctantly I accepted it, and published it again, though it compelled me to admit Professor Peake’s rejoinder. The matter should have ended then, and I told Dr. Baxter so. But Wellhausen himself, having seen the controversy, sent a few lines, which I inserted along with a translation. That there might be no occasion to say that this was giving an unfair advantage to one side, I published, in the same number, a contribution strongly in favour of Dr. Baxter from Dr. Moore of Philadelphia. This communication was many times the length of Wellhausen’s note, and Professor Peake felt himself entitled to a reply to it. But I could not prolong the controversy, and declined to insert his reply. If anyone has reason to say I was partial to the other side, it is surely not Dr. Baxter.’

Now, so far as THE EXPOSITORY TIMES is concerned, it is nothing. But what shall we do with a man who comes forward voluntarily, we might almost say ostentatiously, as a champion of the truth in so difficult a matter as the criticism of the Old Testament, and yet behaves in that way over a matter so simple?