

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE is a significance about the new volume of 'The International Critical Commentary' to which attention had better be drawn at once. The new volume is on *Numbers*. It is written by George Buchanan Gray, M.A., D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis in Mansfield College, Oxford (T. & T. Clark, 12s.). It is a commentary that will enable the wide world to judge whether Dr. Buchanan Gray deserves the high reputation for scholarship which he has gained in Oxford. But it is not in its scholarship that the significance referred to lies.

We are on the edge of another great biblical controversy, and the significance of Professor Buchanan Gray's commentary on *Numbers* lies in the fact that it is the first book that compels us to realize how near that controversy is, and how warily we must walk if we are not to suffer from it.

There are those still living who remember the conflict that raged over the Six Days of Creation. That conflict arose when the student of geology turned his attention to the Bible. Fortunately for the Church, the geologist himself suggested various expedients by which Genesis and Science might be reconciled. And, keen as the issue was, the conflict did not last so long nor cut so deep as might have been expected,

Then came the Higher Criticism. The controversy regarding the criticism of the Old Testament is within the memory of us all, for it is with us still. Its course has been as unfortunate for the Church as the geological conflict was fortunate. Its most responsible advocates, that is to say, its best scholars, have been believers, and even Churchmen. But, on the other hand, there was an early impression that the Higher Criticism was 'made in Germany,' and that was enough to surround it with suspicion. More than all, it touched the sacred person of our Lord. The Higher Criticism is with us still. This generation, it seems probable, must pass away before it is finished.

But already the third great conflict of our day regarding the interpretation of the Bible is upon us. It is the conflict raised by Archæology. Its course thus far has been most curious and conflicting. There are those of us, trained in traditional methods of interpretation, who have suffered more from Archæology than from Criticism. It has staggered us more to be told, as Professor Sayce has told us, that the story of Joseph is an adaptation of an Egyptian fiction, than to be told, as Professor Smith has told us, that Joseph is probably not the name of a person but of a clan. And yet, until quite recently, the Archæologists have fought the Higher Critics and been hailed as the champions of traditional orthodoxy. Quite re-

cently, Professor Friedrich Delitzsch has rudely shattered that delusion, and we see the Critics defending, the Archæologists assailing, the very foundations of our faith. But Archæology got a good start in popular favour, and in its wildest gambols it will never terrify the people as the Higher Criticism has done.

We are on the eve of a new controversy. It will be raised by the Study of Comparative Religion. How radically it will affect our dearest beliefs may be seen at once in Dr. Buchanan Gray's commentary on *Numbers*. We have taught our children the story of Aaron's rod that budded. We have fancied it unique. Its uniqueness was to our minds one guarantee of its miraculousness. Dr. Gray calmly says: 'There are many somewhat similar stories of the miraculous vegetation of dried sticks,' and gives examples. A still closer and more constant companion of our teaching has been the Brazen Serpent. In the *Golden Bough* Dr. Frazer cites the story of the Brazen Serpent in connexion with the custom of getting rid of vermin by making images of them. Thus the Philistines, when their land was infested by mice, made golden images of the creatures, and sent them out of the country. Apollonius of Tyana is said to have freed Antioch of scorpions by making a bronze image of a scorpion, and burying it under a small pillar in the middle of the city. Gregory of Tours tells us that the city of Paris used to be free from dormice and serpents, but that in his lifetime, while they were cleaning a sewer, they found a bronze serpent and a bronze dormouse, and removed them,—after which they abounded there. Dr. Buchanan Gray does not say that he accepts Dr. Frazer's explanation of the Brazen Serpent, but he certainly does not say that he rejects it.

These are simple examples. Others touch us still more nearly. What are we to do with them? What are we to do with the whole subject of Comparative Religion in its relation to the interpretation of the Bible? Shall we speak of it ignorantly as an enemy of our religion? At least

we cannot raise the *odium theologicum* by saying that it is made in Germany. Comparative Religion is the one study Germany seems to have neglected. Shall we say that common-sense—convenient synonym for ignorance—enables us to brush it aside? Or shall we study Comparative Religion a little, and if we find that it asks us to change our ideas of the interpretation of the Bible once more, agree to change them, and discover the Bible itself more divine than before?

The article by Dr. Oldfield, in the *Hibbert Journal*, on 'The Failure of Christian Missions in India,' has created an unaccountable degree of interest. We have ourselves, though only writing notes on it, received a number of letters on the subject from all parts of India. And besides the replies that have appeared elsewhere, to some of which we have already drawn attention, there is in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal* itself a notable article in reply, by Principal Miller of the Madras Christian College.

Dr. Miller, to put his point into a sentence, denies the failure. And as he makes good his point that Christian missions have not failed in India, he shows that Dr. Oldfield's article was an ill-informed piece of writing, both as regards Christian missions in general, and as regards Christian missions in India in particular. That was our own impression when we read the article, and that is why we call the interest it has aroused unaccountable.

Dr. Oldfield compares the progress of missions in India with their progress in the Early Church. And he says that, but for the faults of the missionaries, 'the missionary saint of the Gentiles would be as powerful to transform men's minds in the East, as he was to sway the thought of the Western world in his day.' Dr. Miller does not say the missionaries have no faults; but what is this that Dr. Oldfield expects of them? His sentence is worth looking at: 'as St. Paul swayed the thought of the Western world in his day'!

It was years after St. Paul's day, years after the missionary saint of the Gentiles had sealed his message by his blood, that Tacitus wrote of the new sect, and showed that his acquaintance with it was of the very slightest. A few years later, Pliny has more knowledge of the workings of Christianity in his own province of Bithynia. But even to Pliny it would have appeared a mere absurdity, that Western thought would ever be influenced by what any Christian might speak or write. 'Even after the day,' says Dr. Miller, 'when men like Tacitus and Pliny showed some acquaintance with the existence of Christianity, generation after generation passed during which the leaders of thought throughout the empire, as certainly as the aristocratic and conservative Hindus on whose opinions Dr. Oldfield relies, would have "all agreed that Christianity was quite an unimportant factor, so far as the conversion of the upper classes was concerned."'

Does Dr. Oldfield manifest more knowledge of missions in India? He does not. Let us give Principal Miller's very words again. 'No weight attaches to the views of one who has been but a few months in India, and has come in contact with those classes only who stand most aloof from Christian effort, and even with them only in those parts of the country where least has been done to bring East and West into any kind of sympathetic relation. For, in almost every place which Dr. Oldfield tells us that he visited, missions are comparatively new, and have made less way than elsewhere with the classes to which his observation was confined. I do not admit that even in those regions the outlook is so dark as he describes; but I can testify from long experience that in southern India—that is, in the Presidency of Madras and the native States surrounding it—things are entirely different.'

Dr. Miller does not deny the faults of the Indian missionaries. But as for that matter of the tennis racquet, of which so much has been made, we may leave Dr. Miller for a moment

and refer to one of the letters which we have received. It would appear that Dr. Oldfield's Hindu host made his clever point by taking advantage of Dr. Oldfield's ignorance. 'There is practically,' says our writer, 'only one time at which a man can play tennis in India, and that is the hour before sunset. If the missionary was in the habit of taking the exercise, which is so necessary to health, in that form, any one would be able to form a good guess where he would be at that hour.'

But to return to Dr. Miller, and end the matter with one more quotation: 'I do not know any better illustration of the whole condition of Indian missions than may be found in one of the best-known warlike operations of the bygone century. When the British army was compelled to embark at Corunna, there was what might well be reckoned a total failure of the attempt to deliver the Peninsula from the grasp of Napoleon. The attempt, however, was renewed. There were gleams of success from the beginning of Wellington's command. Ere long he had secured a fairly safe basis of operations in Portugal. Still, for year after year, it seemed that no real advance beyond it could be made. Even after world-renowned victories he was once and again driven back, so that his task was pronounced impossible by those who judged only the immediate present. There were multitudes of those at ease in Britain, there were critics by the score who had paid flying visits to the field of operations, ready to declare that the whole undertaking was a failure, and that the army ought to be withdrawn. If their counsels had been listened to, the attempt would have been the failure they predicted. But Wellington remained undaunted. He received support which, though too often vacillating and half-hearted, proved to be sufficient. The time came, after much disappointment and delay, when the final advance could be wisely made. It is said that the great captain, as he crossed the frontier of Spain, yielded, as he rarely did, to the love

for theatrical effect, and, turning his horse and taking off his hat, exclaimed, "Farewell, Portugal! I shall never see you again." Whether the story be true or not, the issue showed it to be appropriate. Within one short year thereafter, though even yet not without desperate effort and temporary failure, the Peninsula was free.'

He is a bold Protestant who challenges the meaning which Luther found in his famous text: 'The just shall live by faith.' This bold Protestant writes in the *Primitive Methodist Quarterly* for July. The title of his article is 'The Faith of God,' which itself is bold enough; but we have observed ere now that the Rev. F. Warburton Lewis, B.A., has a singular gift of exegetical insight, and we have read his article.

Is there any proper sense in which we can speak of the faith of God? Our Revisers have said no. If 'the faith of God,' or 'the faith of Jesus Christ,' was found occasionally in the Authorized Version, they changed it into 'faith in God' or 'in Jesus Christ.' But that, in spite of the Revisers, the New Testament writers speak of the faith of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, Mr. Lewis makes sufficiently clear. For to say that the Greek preposition $\epsilon\kappa$, which means 'out of,' must sometimes be translated 'in'; or to say that 'faith' in such a text as 1 Tim 1¹⁴, 'The grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus,' means Paul's faith, is to say that exegesis is not a science.

Mr. Lewis finds much in the New Testament about the faith of God. It was in faith that God created the world. For the world is not made with hands. It is not a manufacture. It is a growth, and Evolution is a good enough name to call it by. If the world had been framed by the hand of God and finished, it would have been due to sight. But the world has to grow, and when God creates the world He has faith that it will grow to the full extent of His purpose concerning

it. He does not manufacture the oak. He creates the acorn, and He has faith that the acorn will grow to be an oak. This is the faith of God the Creator, and Mr. Lewis's text is Heb 11³: 'By faith the worlds have been framed by the word of God.'

The world includes man. Mr. Lewis thinks we make a mistake when we say that man was created with his character fully formed. In character he was created a babe; not manufactured a man. He was to grow up into the stature of the fulness of Christ. So God had faith in the character of the man He had made. For, if He had not had faith in man's character, but had made him with his character fully formed, man would not have been man. To be a man, he must be free. To reach a man's character, he must be left with the freedom of choice. Thus it was by the faith of God that man was 'foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son' (Rom 8²⁹).

But man fell. Did that make the faith of God of none effect? By no means. To the faith of God the Creator it added the faith of God the Redeemer. We say God believed in man still; let us say, more biblically, God had faith in man. God had faith in man as well as love for man, sufficient to send His only begotten Son into the world. For Mr. Lewis is not confounding faith with love here. When his younger son was in the far country, the father had love for him, we know; but he had also faith in him, even when he was feeding upon the husks. The love loved him in the far country, whether he returned or no; the faith believed that he would come home again.

And, when the wanderer has returned, the faith by which he lives in the Father's house is not his faith in the Father, but the Father's faith in him. As that prodigal St. Paul so sublimely puts it, 'The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.'

It is not many months since the remark was

made, that of all Bible lands the land of Palestine had yielded least, by digging, towards the elucidation of the Bible. That reproach is in the way of being rapidly removed. We have refrained from describing the wonderful discoveries which Mr. Stewart Macalister is making at Gezer till it should be possible to offer a 'brief survey of the whole. But the 'finds' are accumulating. Already much of the highest consequence to biblical and archaeological science has been discovered. And we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity presented by an excellent article contributed to the *Biblical World* for June by Dr. E. W. G. Masterman, to give some description of the discoveries up to the date of his visit. Thereafter it will be in the power of all of us to follow the discoverers step by step ourselves. For Mr. Macalister can use the pen as well as the spade, and in the *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund gives, every quarter, a graphic and illustrated account of his work.

Dr. Masterman begins by describing the spot where the discoveries are made. It is the site of the ancient Gezer. Its modern name is Tell el-Jezary. These are but forms of the same name, yet between them lies a period of about four thousand years. And our fortunate discoverer is daily laying bare monuments of a civilization older than the historical Gezer, as well as of races that succeeded one another and passed away before the Israelites arrived in Canaan.

The site is delightfully accessible to the modern traveller. The Tell may be reached from either Jaffa or Jerusalem by carriage, and it has a railway station within an hour's ride. The traveller to Jerusalem, indeed, whether by road or rail, finds the little hill a prominent object for many miles. And, even apart from the fame which it is acquiring to-day, the site of the ancient city of Gezer is worth a visit. 'Stand on the Tell,' says Dr. Masterman, 'and look around. You are not very high, but the view is magnificent. To the west all the plain between you and the Mediterranean

lies as on a map; to the north-west Jaffa on the sea; Ramleh and Lydda in the middle distance. Winding along the valley of Aijalon, on your right, where in all ages the main road has passed, lies the carriage road to Jerusalem; while at your feet the railway goes round half the Tell's circumference, until it disappears up the valley of Sorek.'

Nor is the spot more attractive to the traveller than to the explorer. Too often in Palestine ancient sites are covered with modern buildings or cemeteries, or with Moslem shrines—most hopeless state of all. Here we have a hill nine-tenths bare, the modern village of Abu Shusheh being accommodatingly placed off the Tell. Only a 'wely,' or sacred tomb, surrounded by the village cemetery, and one small modern house shut off a little space from excavation. The Tell, or mound itself, is about half a mile long. It consists of an eastern and western hill with a valley between. And the whole land is in the possession of Europeans, whose agent is ever ready with his encouragement.

Mr. Macalister began with the eastern hill, which is entirely open to investigation. His method of operation, though he has not been able to carry it out persistently, is to dig trenches right across the hill from side to side, cutting them down to the primitive rock, so that no foot of earth should be left unexamined, or any object of interest left undiscovered. The workmen come from Abu Shusheh and the neighbouring villages. As they pick the earth and shovel it into little baskets, which the women and girls carry away on their heads to empty beyond the marked-out area, they are encouraged by small rewards to keep an eye on every fragment of flint or pottery or metal they come across. In this way each of them gradually accumulates beside him a pile of miscellaneous objects. If an object of special interest, such as an unbroken jar, begins to appear, the active foreman swoops down and carefully supervises its exhumation. If it is a part of a wall that is uncovered, it is left to be examined

by the explorer himself. Walls superimposed one above another, each marking the site of a new city and a new start in life, have been disclosed.

The earliest wall appears to have been simply a rampart of earth. Dr. Masterman calls it Amorite; but we must not at present lay stress upon these titles, for the explorers in Palestine are not agreed as to the names to be given to the pre-Israelite races discovered there. The wall, in any case, is more than four thousand years old. It apparently enclosed a large area of the eastern hill, and passed on through the central platform towards the west. Outside this earthen rampart is a rough stone wall, which seems to have enclosed the eastern hill alone. It is supposed to belong to the time of the Tel el-Amarna letters, and may have been standing when the Israelites entered the land. Outside this second wall is a third, a massive structure, 14 feet thick, and strengthened at the south-east and north-east corners by mighty towers. It has been traced around almost the whole Tell. This wall is supposed to be the work of that Pharaoh who conquered Gezer and gave it to Solomon along with his daughter. Lastly, there is a yet more powerful wall, but of much less circumference, which is attributed to the hands of the Maccabees.

Of more importance than even the walls are the caves and cisterns. Some of them were, without doubt, dwelling-places of the earliest inhabitants. Others are sepulchres. One at least was used by a non-Semitic people as a crematorium.

In one of these caves a discovery was made, which is as mysterious as it is gruesome. It was the discovery of the remains of fifteen bodies. They lay as if they had been buried; stones were placed around them; and in their midst were found a number of handsome bronze spearheads. In all this there was nothing as yet remarkable. The cave might be simply an ancient cemetery.

But it so happened that, just when this discovery

was made, the explorer had with him, on a visit, his father, Dr. Alexander Macalister, the distinguished Professor of Anatomy in the University of Cambridge. Examining the bodies, Professor Macalister was startled to discover that, while fourteen were the skeletons of men of various ages, one was that of a young girl whose body had been sawed in two, the lower half having entirely disappeared. Clearly it was no ordinary sepulture. But what was it? None can yet tell. But almost all are agreed that we have here the evidence of some very early religious rite.

The greatest discovery of all, however, has been a megalithic temple. Dr. Masterman only touches this interesting 'find,' and we shall do no more. It is enough to say that a row of eight pillars or standingstones have been laid bare. The stones range in height from 5 ft. 5 in. to 10 ft. 9 in. The smaller are probably the earlier. The smallest of all has marks upon it, which show that it has been much anointed or rubbed or kissed. No doubt, it is a temple belonging to that Asherah-worship with which Israel had so much wrestling in the land. In the midst of the stones was found a great stone socket, probably intended to hold the asherah or wooden pole itself. Dr. Masterman has been to see the remains of this Canaanite worship on the spot, and he sees in it an instance in which the Israelites failed to obey the command: 'Ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire' (Dt 12³ R.V.).

But to the student of religion a yet more interesting discovery remains to be mentioned. Near the foundations of these pillars a number of jars was found, each jar containing the skeleton remains of a newly-born infant. So this temple bears witness to the custom of the sacrifice of the first-born child. The Israelites did not adopt that custom from the native inhabitants. If they themselves ever practised it, it was in the pre-historic period. But the redemption of the first-born—one of the most significant of Israelite customs, and

most fraught with meaning to us—is evidence both of the existence of the rite and of the power which the worship of Jehovah had of turning a barbarous rite into one of deep religious¹ and moral significance.

The most attractive book of the month has just reached us. It has reached us too late for any kind of review this month. Its title is *Sacred Sites of the Gospels*; its author, Professor Sanday of Oxford.

Professor Sanday is engaged upon a *Life of Christ*. There are many sources for a *Life of Christ*. There is the history of the Church and a man's own experience. But the chief sources are the Land and the Book. Dr. Sanday knows the Book. Last year he went to view the Land, and this volume is the result.

No. Dr. Sanday will not allow us to say that this

book is the result of a single short visit to Palestine. He had other reasons for writing it, and other qualifications. He had, above all, the qualification of a close student of the text of the Gospels. And if others have written a geography of the land because they have been much travelled there, Professor Sanday has written upon the Sacred Sites of the Gospels to show us, once for all, what the text of the Gospels demands.

How many names spring at once to the memory—Capernaum, Bethsaida, Gerasa, Ænon near to Salim, Bethany, and, in these last days, even Bethlehem itself! But we must not stay to speak of it now. The volume is enriched with five-and-fifty of the most beautiful plates from photographs. In what Dr. Sanday calls the reconstruction of the Palestine of the past he has been assisted by Mr. Paul Waterhouse, M.A., F.R.I.B.A. The book is published at the Clarendon Press (13s. 6d. net).

In Memoriam: Robert Campbell Moberly.¹

BY THE REV. W. SANDAY, D.D., LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, OXFORD.

WITH what reluctance does one give up the word of the Old Version 'win'—'that I may win Christ'—for that of the New Version 'gain.' The old Translators were poets; they felt the finer associations of words. 'To win' at once calls up such associations: it makes one think of the prize of knightly tournament or battle, the prize of high courage and heroic effort and great deeds, the wreath of laurel or the chaplet of pine leaves, a prize noble in itself and noble in the way it is won.

'To gain' seems upon a lower level. It suggests the counter, and the calculating spirit of the counter—a spirit perfectly legitimate and useful in itself, but wanting just those high associations that the other word possesses.

And yet there can be no doubt that the Revisers

¹ A sermon preached in the Cathedral, Christ Church, Oxford.

'That I may gain Christ, and be found in Him.'—*Phil. iii. 8, 9.*

were right in deliberately choosing the inferior word.

In the first place, it was the word—or the true equivalent of the word—that St. Paul really used. He really wrote 'gain' and not 'win.' There is no ambiguity about it.

And in the second place, if we take the whole context together, the apostle's meaning is quite clear and harmonious. And it is noble still, though the nobleness comes in by another door.

Let me read the rest of the passage. The apostle has been enumerating the privileges that he had in his old life, on his old footing when he was still 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews,' 'of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, . . . as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the Church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.'