

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Rev. Thomas Stephens, B.A., of Camberwell Green Church, and his deacons, one day found themselves in a difficulty. They did not know what to do with their children. Certain special services for young people had been held. Some of the children responded to the love of Christ, and desired to be recognized as His disciples. The children were from eight to twelve years of age. They desired to be admitted to the Lord's Table. What were the deacons to do?

The deacons did not know what to do. They and their pastor met and talked. They looked at the children, and they looked at the problem. They considered the matter 'from the points of view of parent, child, teacher, Church, and pastor,' but 'it was not settled to anybody's satisfaction at that meeting.'

Then a thought came to Mr. Stephens. Why not write to men, to many representative men, to men in all the Churches, and ask them, What would *you* do? And having determined this, he determined not to be content with asking them about the present matter. The whole question of the relation of children to the Church and to Christ had arisen for him. He sent out a series of short questions covering the whole subject.

His questions were these: (1) Is the child born

in the Kingdom? (2) Is conversion necessary to make it a child of God? (3) Are all children in a state of favour with God? (4) Are all unconverted outside the Kingdom? (5) May they grow up within the Kingdom without consciously being alienated from God? \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Stephens' questions might have been fewer and more penetrating. But they served his purpose. The answers which he quotes have been sent by the Bishop of Durham, a Low Churchman; by the Hon. and Rev. J. G. Adderley, a High Churchman; by Professor James Orr and Dr. John Watson, Presbyterians; by the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, a Wesleyan; by Principal Forsyth, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, and the Rev. Owen Thomas, Congregationalists; by the Rev. John Lewis, a Baptist; and by the Rev. F. W. Stanley, a Unitarian. The answers, or portions of them, are quoted in a volume which Mr. Stephens has edited, and which is published by Messrs. Williams & Norgate, under the title of *The Child and Religion* (5s.). The volume contains eleven essays by eleven writers, to some of which we may afterwards return. But nothing in it is of more interest than the Introduction, written by Mr. Stephens himself, and quoting the answers which were sent to his questions. \_\_\_\_\_

The first question runs, 'Is the child born in

the Kingdom?' What child? Does Mr. Stephens mean all children that are born into the world? Can you say that the children of Muhammadan parents are born within the Kingdom of Christ? Or is the meaning as narrow as the child born of truly Christian parents? The most of Mr. Stephens' correspondents seem to take the question in a middle way, in the sense of children born in a Christian country. And they mostly answer Yes. But Mr. Stanley, the Unitarian, says bravely that all children are born in the Kingdom of God. He says, 'The child comes to *our earth* from the hand of God with a fresh mind and a pure heart, and evokes our reverence for the mystery and sanctity of life. The little one cannot be regarded as a child of wrath, for it has wonderful and fair capacities, and where all influences favour a righteous development, it may be led to admire and cleave to holy things.' In Mr. Stanley's belief, the Muhammadan child is born within the Kingdom of God.

Mr. Lewis is as clearly convinced that no children whatever are born in the Kingdom. The Kingdom, he says, is 'a body of those who, belonging to a rebel race, by an act of their own will, have voluntarily entered on the service of the King. From this point of view I cannot see how anyone can be in the Kingdom until he is old enough to exercise his own choice, and has by an act of faith and love surrendered to Christ.'

Between Mr. Lewis and Mr. Stanley all the rest are found. The Bishop of Durham and Professor Orr agree with Mr. Lewis that every person born into this world needs to be born again. But they both believe that the second birth may occur so near the first as to be practically identical with it: 'in unconscious infancy,' says Bishop Moule; 'from the womb,' says Dr. Orr. Mr. Lidgett is not so definite. He clearly believes in conversion; apparently he believes in conversion for everybody. He even approaches Mr. Lewis so near as to demand 'a conscious and deliberate surrender to Christ,

including both penitence and faith.' But how early the child may make that surrender, he does not say. He says only that 'a child may grow to maturity entirely within the Kingdom of God.'

Dr. Watson and the three representatives of Congregationalism are nearer Mr. Stanley. 'I hold,' says Dr. Watson, 'that a child may be born into the Kingdom of God when it is born into the world.' But his 'may be' shows that he does not really differ from Dr. Orr. Dr. Forsyth says that 'children are born into a redeemed world, and so far are members of the Kingdom.' How far is 'so far'? Not very far, apparently, for Dr. Forsyth goes on to expect conversion for all. Mr. R. J. Campbell answers the question, 'Is the child born in the Kingdom?' with a laconic 'Yes.' Mr. Thomas also answers 'Yes,' but he adds, 'Christ claims the children, as He has redeemed them.' Both seem to think of the children of Christian parents.

The answers to the other questions hang upon the answer to the first. Dr. Watson distinguishes regeneration from conversion. He believes in the first, he does not believe in the second. 'I hold,' he says, 'that the conscious crisis called conversion is not necessary to regeneration, for the opposite would mean that every one had to go astray and be brought back to God at a distinct point in his life, which is not the case.' Dr. Orr believes both in regeneration and conversion. He says that 'even in the case of a child which has been the subject of Divine grace from infancy, there is usually a time of crisis or of conscious realization and decision for Christ.' To the Bishop of Durham 'Scripture seems plainly to speak of a regeneration as necessary for every human being.' But he is not so sure about conversion. 'Conversion,' he says, 'we should never narrowly, in our school, define.' Still, he would always hold that wherever a man has his will toward God in Christ, there has been a 'change round' (conversion), at whatever rate and at whatever time it has taken place.

And now, what have Mr. Stephens' deacons done with their children? Mr. Stephens does not tell us.

In a discussion of the Virgin Birth of our Lord contributed to Preuschen's *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, the Rev. G. H. Box, B.D., deals with the presence in St. Matthew's Genealogy of Tamar and Rahab and 'her that had been the wife of Uriah.' These 'strange women' are not in the Genealogy in St. Luke's Gospel. Were they inserted deliberately in the First Gospel? For what purpose?

Mr. Box believes that they were inserted deliberately. He believes that the first two chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel are a Midrash. That is to say, they have an historical basis, but they are not history pure and simple. They are history with a purpose. They are history written for edification.

Mr. Box draws attention to the number of names in St. Matthew's Genealogy. They separate into three fourteens. It is clear enough to Mr. Box, and to most people, that this is deliberate. What is the reason? He believes that Gfrörer was right when he suggested that the number fourteen was chosen because that is the value of the Hebrew letters in the name of David; and three fourteens because the same name is made up of three letters. This is entirely after the manner of a Midrashic commentary. And the intensely Jewish (that is, Jewish-Christian) atmosphere of the first two chapters of the First Gospel is plainly proved by Mr. Box in this very article.

Well, suppose that St. Matthew's Genealogy is Midrashic, supposing that it is written for edification, and that the actual Genealogy of Jesus is to be found in St. Luke, what purpose could be served by the insertion of those three women?

Mr. Box believes that they were inserted in order to anticipate a calumny that was sure to

arise regarding the Virgin Mary. Mr. Arthur Wright holds that the calumny had already arisen before the Genealogy was compiled. And in that way he accounts for 'the relatively late attestation of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.' The whole narrative, he thinks, was kept back until conflict with heresy brought it forward. But whether it was meant to meet or to anticipate the calumny, Mr. Box believes that the purpose of inserting those women's names was to cast the Jewish charge against the Virgin Mary back upon the Jews themselves. Were they the persons to make such a charge when their own Royal House came down through such a history?

Dr. Samuel Daiches, of Sunderland, has contributed an article to the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for April on 'Ezekiel and the Babylonian Account of the Deluge.' What is the Babylonian account of the Deluge? Dr. Daiches does not translate it all. He translates the part with which he has to do here. But it is that part with which we all have most to do. For, whether Ezekiel knew the passage or not, it contains the most significant thing for religion in the whole poem.

This is the translation—

Ea opened his mouth and speaks,  
Says to the warrior Bêl:  
Thou sage of the gods, warrior!  
Why didst thou not take counsel and didst bring a  
flood?  
On the sinner put his sin,  
on the evil-doer put his evil deed!  
(But) be merciful so that not (All) be cut off, be  
patient so that not (All) [be destroyed].  
Instead of bringing on a deluge,  
let lions come and diminish mankind!  
Instead of bringing on a deluge,  
let tigers come and diminish mankind!  
Instead of bringing on a deluge,  
let famine come and [smite] the land!  
Instead of bringing on a deluge,  
let pestilence come and waste the land!

There is a familiar ring in these words. What

do they remind us of? They remind us of the passage in the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel (verses 12-20). There also the scourges of a country are famine, wild beasts, and pestilence. It is true that the sword is added, and that the order is not quite the same. But the parallel is undoubtedly remarkable. More significant, however, is the lesson that is taught. In both accounts the lesson is, that whatever may have been God's judgments in the past, henceforward the innocent is not to suffer with the guilty, but every man is to bear his own sin.

Dr. Daiches has no hesitation in saying that Ezekiel imitated the Babylonian narrative. He was living in Babylon. He was a scholar. The Babylonian tablets were familiar to him. He speaks (4<sup>1</sup>) of taking a tile and portraying upon it a city. He means an ordinary clay-tile of Babylon. He was particularly fond of reading the writers who went before him, imitating their style and quoting their sentences. If the upper classes of exiled Israel, to whom he addressed himself, were now acquainted with the culture of their new country, as seems to Dr. Daiches extremely likely, then Ezekiel, the literary artist, would feel that an allusion to the Babylonian story of the Deluge would be readily understood by them and appreciated.

Now in the study of Ezekiel there is a more important question than his relation to the literature of Babylon. Few questions of Old Testament scholarship are more important or more difficult than the determination of the date of the 'Law of Holiness.' The Law of Holiness is found in Leviticus, chapters xvii. to xxvi. And the question is, Are these chapters or the Book of Ezekiel earliest? That they are not independent is certain. Which is the original and which the copy?

Again Dr. Daiches does not hesitate. Ezekiel never was original. He has his gifts as a writer and a prophet, but originality is not one of them. He himself would probably have said, the less

original the more a prophet. He copies Jeremiah. We have seen that he imitates the Babylonian tablets. Dr. Daiches has no doubt that he imitated Leviticus likewise.

But now a striking thing appears. With all his learning in Babylonian lore, with all his literary dependence, Ezekiel never learned from Babylon a word of religion, he never imitated a Babylonian religious idea. Dr. Daiches is as clear on that as on the other things. And on that he has abundant support from others. Says Gunkel (*Schöpfung und Chaos*, 169f.): 'Ezekiel got his cosmogony and his history from the Babylonians; his faith is ever his own.' When Frederick the Great asked for a short proof of the miraculous, the answer was 'The Jews, my Lord.' This is the meaning of the answer. Ezekiel copied the Babylonian cosmogony, but where did he get his God?

Before closing his article Dr. Daiches adds a word on another difficult matter. Where did Ezekiel find the expression 'son of man,' of which he is so fond, and what did he mean by it?

Dr. Daiches believes that he got that also from the Babylonians. In the Code of Hammurabi (175 f.) mention is made of a *mārat avelim*, which means 'the daughter of a freeman.' If there was a *mārat avelim*, it is probable that there was also a *mār avelim*, the son of a freeman. Dr. Daiches thinks that Ezekiel's 'son of man' is a translation of the Babylonian *mār avelim*, and that it signifies 'freeborn son.'

There would then be no suggestion of human frailty in the name. Rather would there be a certain touch of irony. Were Ezekiel's fellow-exiles free citizens now of Tel-Abib? And were they proud of it? Or does the expression signify a member of the aristocracy of the new country? In either case, was there not a gentle recall to their real position and the source of their true greatness, in the frequent use

of the title by this patriotic prophet of the Exile?

Such occasional dependence upon Babylonia as the previous note refers to, would not be regarded apparently as lending support to the Babel-Bibel theories of Professor Friedrich Delitzsch. For in a volume written in reply to Delitzsch, and just published in an English translation (R.T.S.; 2s.), Professor König speaks affectionately of 'S. Daiches, the young Assyriologist,' and quotes approvingly from one of his letters.

Where, then, does the Dean of Canterbury find the 'scholars in this country among whom the theories of Delitzsch have found too much countenance?' Professor Driver is not one of them. And Professor Driver does not know any other English scholar who believes in 'the exaggerated estimate of the influence of Babylon upon the civilization of ancient Israel formed by Professor Delitzsch.'

The Dean of Canterbury is a scholar, and he probably knows the difference between the archæological and the literary critics of the Old Testament, between men like Professor Delitzsch and men like Professor König. He must know the difference. For he has written a preface to the English translation of Professor König's book. Now the sole purpose of that book, of which the title is *The Bible and Babylon*, is to discredit Professor Delitzsch's conclusions. As Dr. Wace himself, in this preface, puts it: 'Professor König, the author of this treatise, is one of the first Hebrew scholars in Germany; and he has subjected Professor Delitzsch's representations to a severe scrutiny, which will at least show that they are at present destitute of any adequate foundation.'

But Dr. Wace is a conservative in theology. He is one of the most conservative scholars in this country. He detests the literary criticism of the Old Testament as heartily as he abhors the

archæological criticism. And apparently he has not escaped the temptation, which must always in such a case be perilously strong, to approve of Professor Delitzsch when he attacks Professor König and the higher critics, and to patronize Professor König when he answers Professor Delitzsch and the archæologists.

So he writes a preface to this book and approves of Professor König. But that path has pitfalls. Professor König answers Delitzsch well. But Professor König is a higher critic. He cannot keep his higher criticism out of even this book. And so the translator has to add 'notes.' When Professor König answers Delitzsch he is delightful; when he does a little higher criticism on his own account he is himself 'answered.'

Professor Driver protests against the whole proceeding. In a letter to the *Guardian* of June 21, he says, 'It is, I venture to think, a little surprising that the translation of Professor König's brochure should have been made by the translator a vehicle for the propagation of opinions in which Professor König profoundly disbelieves, and for the condemnation of books for which he has a high admiration and regard.' Dr. Driver has been in communication with Professor König, who has told him that he retains unchanged the critical position taken up by him in his *Einleitung* in 1893, and adds that a footnote in this new book, to which Dr. Driver has reason for objecting, was not contained in the proofs of the book submitted to him.

In a new book on *The Souls of Black Folk* (Constable; 5s. net), written by one of them (it is written by Dr. W. E. Burghardt du Bois, Professor of Economics and History in Atlanta University), there is a pathetic chapter, entitled 'Of the Passing of the First-Born.' It is not the story of a certain night in Egypt. It is the story of a birth and a death in Professor Du Bois' own home in the West. He tells it well. Clearly this Doctor of Philosophy, 'of negro descent,' has the gift of

expression. But the most memorable thing in the story is the unintentional revelation it gives that the birth of his first-born made a man of Professor Burghardt du Bois.

This chapter in Professor du Bois' book recalls a yet older story in which something similar is hinted at. In the fifth chapter of Genesis, that chapter to which the late Dr. Joseph Parker gave the name of 'Nobodyism,' after you pass Seth and Enos and Cainan and Mahalaleel and Jared, you come upon Enoch. And of Enoch it is said that he lived sixty and five years and begat Methuselah; and that *after he begat Methuselah* Enoch walked with God three hundred years. After he begat Methuselah. Methuselah was his first-born. Is there anything in it?

The commentators say there is. Dr. Alexander Whyte is one of the commentators, and he is very impressive on it. 'Enoch, from the day that his little child was born, felt God shed abroad in his heart. He entered every new morning into his own heart to walk there with God. He walked abroad every morning with his child in his arms, and with his God in his heart.' And then he makes his appeal without hesitating: 'Fathers and mothers, young fathers and young mothers, fathers and mothers whose first child has just been born, and no more—seize your opportunity, let not another day pass. Begin to-day. Begin to-night. It is late, if not yet too late, with the most of us; but it is not yet too late with you. It was his first son that made Enoch a saint. As soon as he saw his first child in his image, and in his arms; Enoch became from that day a new man. All men begin to walk for a short season with God when their first child is born; only Enoch, alone almost of all men, held on as he had begun.'

But about this Enoch. Dr. Parker calls the chapter in which Enoch is mentioned a chapter of Nobodies. Well, even nobodies are necessary. The earth is necessary, as well as the salt that salts it. 'When your little child is ill,' says Dr. Parker

himself, 'he needs kindness more than genius, and it will be of small service to him if his mother is good at epigrams, but bad at wringing out a wet cloth for his burning brow.' But it is not a chapter of nobodies. 'It is a long dull road,' says Dr. Parker, 'from Enos to Jared,' but the chapter is not ended when 'round the corner' you come upon Enoch.

And Enoch is somebody. Enoch 'walked with God.' Enoch 'was not, for God took him.' 'By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.' That he should not see death—all the somebodies among us would give all that makes them somebody to obtain that.

It is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that says Enoch was translated. He says Enoch was translated by faith. What an influence to attribute to faith. St. James asks (in our version), Can faith save you? This author affirms that it can translate you. And he is most practical and full of common sense. Our Lord says, 'If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this mountain, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you': and we do not know what to make of it. But the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is one of us. He knows what faith can do for common men. And he says, 'By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.'

How did Enoch show his faith? In two ways. He believed that God is, that was one way. And he believed that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him.

He believed that God is. But we all do that. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' We all believe that there is a God. Is that what Enoch did? No, not that. The devils do that. The devils believe that God is, and tremble. Enoch had faith that God is. We believe the fact, we believe the theological statement, that

God is. But that will not translate us. Enoch *faithed* that God is. \_\_\_\_\_

Why did our Christian fathers fail to make for us a verb out of the noun 'faith'? They made a verb out of hope. They allowed us to say, 'My hope is in God,' and 'He hoped in God.' Why did they not encourage us to say, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in his own proper tongue could say, 'By faith (πίστει) Enoch was translated . . . for he that cometh to God must faith (πιστεῖσαι γὰρ δεῖ) that He is'? We are driven to say, 'must believe that He is'; and there is no virtue in the word 'believe' that it should translate us. \_\_\_\_\_

Enoch *faithed* that God is. And what is faith? 'Now faith is the substance (R.V. assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence (R.V. proving) of things not seen.' So Enoch hoped for God. Do we do that? Our God is a consuming fire; and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; and when we think of it, we rather hope that God is not. Enoch hoped that God is. And he realized his hope. His faith gave his hope substance, assurance; gave him the grasp of his hope; made it real and actual and at hand. It is true that no man hath seen God at any time; but faith is the evidence of things unseen; it makes the unseen seen. By faith Enoch not only hoped that God is, but realized his hope, saw God, and walked with Him. \_\_\_\_\_

Well, that was the one way in which Enoch showed his faith. He *faithed* that God is. He also *faithed* that God is a rewarder of them that seek after Him. That was the other way. And what reward did his faith bring? It brought him translation. 'By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.' \_\_\_\_\_

That he should not see death. What a reward! No weary waiting till the end come; no long-drawn agony; no valley of the shadow of death. 'Terrible,' says Carlyle, 'terrible to all men is

death; from of old named King of Terrors.' Enoch had not to face the terror. What a reward! \_\_\_\_\_

But what faith can do for one man, faith can do for another. If we faith that God is, and walk with Him, that faith is able to save us, that faith is able to translate us. It translated Enoch. It might have translated Christ. For another reason Christ had to die. If He had not come to die for us, it would no doubt have been said of Him, as it was said of Enoch, 'He was not, for God took Him.' \_\_\_\_\_

Do you ask, What would then have become of the mortal and the corruptible? Well, what did become of it? We cannot tell. We only know that that is another matter, that it is a very insignificant and wholly negligible matter. We need not be troubled about that. St. Paul was not troubled about it. He knew that this corruptible has to put on incorruption and that this mortal has to put on immortality. How, he did not know. But he was not troubled. He simply said, 'The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.' \_\_\_\_\_

But we are losing the point of our story. We have run after the body, and have left behind the man. We have gone to the churchyard to visit our dead, and they are alive. We have looked forward doubtfully to a distant resurrection—'I know that he shall rise again, at the last day'—and we have forgotten that 'he that believeth in me, even though he have died, yet shall he be alive; and whosoever is alive and believeth in me shall never die.' \_\_\_\_\_

What did the translation of Enoch mean to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Not the deliverance from death of the body. The body of Enoch was not in all his thoughts. The translation of Enoch was to him the continuance of Enoch's life. And in this he was in touch with

his nation from the beginning of its history. The gift of God to Israel was not resurrection from the dead, but continuance of life. 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' Not for one moment did God cease to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore not for one moment were they dead. When Christ came, He came to renew the offer of the gift. 'I came that they may have—not resurrection but—life, and that they may have it abundantly.'

And if the gift of God to Israel was not resurrection, still less was it the resurrection of the body. The body was not in it. It was 'life eternal,'

the undying life of the man. Says Dr. George Matheson (and Dr. George Matheson in his blindness has a wonderful way of seeing into the heart of things): 'It was not the sight of a dead body that made the Jew a sceptic; it was the sight of a dead soul.' The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Enoch did not die because he did not sin. He gained the desire of the heart of every true Israelite, an unbroken fellowship with God. He was with God here. When God removed him, he was with God there. So far as our eyes could follow him he was not, for God took him; but He took him to be ever with the Lord.

## Messianic Prophecy.

BY THE REV. R. BRUCE TAYLOR, M.A., ABERDEEN.

THE full extent of the change that criticism has made upon the interpretation of the Old Testament is grasped only when men have to use the Scriptures for ordinary homiletic purposes. In the prophetic books a method of interpretation that was accepted as almost axiomatic has been so attacked as, in its rigid form at all events, to have been utterly discredited. The prophets spoke first of all to the men and to the circumstances of their own day; but the passages in them that had much the greater interest for our forefathers were those that were distinctively predictive. The violence of the reaction from a fanciful and unhistoric reading of prophecy has in our time created difficulties peculiar to itself, and in our bewilderment we are sometimes inclined to wonder whether any single passage whatever can be supposed to have been spoken with the consciousness of a personal Messiah who was to come. A return to the sources, and a careful inquiry into their meaning in the light of all that criticism has to say, will go far to steady faith and to deepen belief in the essential inspiration of the Scriptures.

From very early times in Israel's history we find a persistent conviction that the people stood in a special relationship to God. There was more in this than the mere exuberance of patriotism; the relationship was held to have been instituted, not for

political, but for moral ends. The nation had been chosen for purposes that it only dimly saw, but yet it had the sense of having a unique work to do. This special relationship was established, the historical books say, by a series of covenants. Wellhausen may be right in arguing that the term 'Covenant' came into use only shortly before the Exile, but at all events the thing denoted by the *bē'ith* existed from the earliest days of the people's conscious history. It was in this regard that they interpreted the Exodus from Egypt, and the belief has come down as well in the ancient national ballads—

For the portion of Jehovah is His people;  
Jacob the measure of His heritage.  
He found him in a land of the desert,  
In a waste, in a howling wilderness;  
He encompassed him, He distinguished him,  
He watched him as the apple of His eye;  
As an eagle stirreth his nest,  
Fluttereth over his young,  
Spreadeth abroad his wings, taketh them,  
Beareth them up on his pinions:  
Jehovah alone did lead him,  
And no strange God was with him.—Dt 32<sup>9-12</sup>.

For a long time it was the nation as a whole that was thought of as the object of God's choice and as the instrument of His purposes of grace to the world; and indeed, while the Messianic idea