

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE first volume of the *DICTIONARY OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS* has now been issued, and the publishers have sent a copy to *THE EXPOSITORY TIMES* for review. We need not ask another to review it, and we need not pretend to be able to review it impartially ourselves. But there are some things which we may be able to say about it without impropriety.

First of all let us endeavour to answer a question which has been put by *The Church Times*. 'The first volume of Dr. Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*,' says *The Church Times*, 'brings with it a question, to be solved by reading, why its matter was not included in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.' The reading of the book will solve the question. This is for those who must have it solved before they read.

Now there is no doubt that the *Dictionary of the Bible* might have contained a good many of the articles which the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* contains. But the *Dictionary of the Bible* already extends to five large volumes. And even if we had thought of it, which we did not, we do not know if we should have had the courage, when the *Dictionary of the Bible* was planned, to make it run to six or seven volumes in order that it might include those new articles which are to be

found in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*. They are not found in any other Dictionary of the Bible. And already it had gone beyond all previous dictionaries in including a series of articles in Biblical Theology and another series on the Language of the English Versions.

But there is another thing to be said in answer to the question of *The Church Times*. A Dictionary of the Bible ought to be confined to the Bible: a Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels cannot be so confined. A very large part of its contents will certainly be found in the Bible. But some of the most important articles belong to the history of the Church. They deal with questions which have arisen since the Canon was closed, questions which to some extent have come out of the experience of God's own people, but to a still larger extent out of modern scientific thought or social conditions. And besides the articles which are altogether extra-biblical, there are very many which have to pass beyond the contents of the Bible before they can give a complete account of their subject.

An example of the kind of article which is altogether outside the scope of a Dictionary of the Bible is the article by Mr. Griffith-Jones on *EVOLUTION*. Evolution is a conception which is

due to modern science. But it has been applied to Christ, and it could not be altogether omitted from a Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels. How does Mr. Griffith-Jones treat his topic? First of all he lays down the basis of discussion, sharply distinguishing between the materialistic and the theistic types of the evolutionary philosophy. He next shows that the theistic theory of evolution is compatible with a process of incarnation. And then he points out the place occupied by the Person and Work of Christ in such a theory. In the fourth division of his article he argues that Jesus Christ is not explicable on naturalistic grounds. In the fifth he discusses the purpose and aim of the Incarnation in the cosmic order, and shows that the old question, 'Cur Deus Homo?' becomes a more burning question than ever in a scheme of evolutionary thought. He ends by describing three pregnant aspects of the historical Incarnation—Christ as the Ideal Man, Christ as the Sufficient Saviour, Christ as the Founder and Head of His Church and the source of the higher spiritual movements of history.

Of the articles which deal with the contents of the Bible, but pass beyond them, it is not necessary to give an example. But a mere reference may be made to Professor Kilpatrick's article on the CHARACTER OF CHRIST. It is an article which, in our judgment, is great enough to give distinction to any dictionary. It is almost entirely occupied with the things of the Bible. But from beginning to end of it there is evidence that the promise of a Spirit who should guide the Church into all the truth, who should take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, has been no dead letter, but has received and is still receiving an abundant and very precious fulfilment.

Now, just one thing more. We have said that the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* is first of all a preacher's dictionary. We wish not to be misunderstood in this. We wish no one to go to it in the expectation of finding ready-made sermons in its pages. For, firm as our belief is that preach-

ing is the chief means whereby the Word of God shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that which He pleases and prosper in the thing whereunto He hath sent it, we know that we should utterly frustrate our earnest desire to have it so, if we delivered the preacher from the necessity of making his message his own.

The Principal of the United Free Church College in Aberdeen has published a volume of sermons. The proper adjective to apply to a Principal is the 'learned' Principal. Principal Iverach is learned. But he has recently earned the reputation of being a preacher. And no man can earn that reputation, drawing the crowd as Principal Iverach does till a great church in Aberdeen or in Glasgow is filled to overflowing in the holiday season, unless he has something more than learning. Dr. Iverach deserves the epithet 'learned' more than most men and principals. But he deserves also to be called a great preacher. For he so uses his learning as to make it a most pliant instrument in the service of the simplicity of the gospel; and as it was with the Master so it is with him, the common people hear him gladly. Principal Iverach is a great preacher, and this is a great volume of sermons.

He calls it *The Other Side of Greatness* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s.). It is a title without attractiveness, but it touches our curiosity a little. It is taken from the first sermon in the volume. But the whole title of the first sermon is 'Poverty of Spirit, the Other Side of Greatness.' Is that too long a title for a book? It is a title which does more than touch our curiosity, it excites our interest to the uttermost.

The text is Mt 5³, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Few texts are more in need of exposition. There it stands at the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, as the first word to most men of the teaching of Jesus, as the most characteristic word;

and by perhaps the great majority of mankind it is entirely misapprehended. The poor in spirit are sometimes deliberately and often unconsciously identified with the poor-spirited. Principal Iverach calls poverty of spirit the other side of greatness. He believes that the poor-spirited and the poor in spirit are directly opposed to one another. The poor-spirited are among the smallest and meanest of the earth, while none but the great can be poor in spirit.

For before a man can be poor in spirit he must be in possession of an ideal. He must have a vision. He must have a vision of greatness. And he must see that it is too high for him to attain to. Now he must himself be a good man before he can have this vision of an ideal of goodness. He must be great before he can recognize that there is a greatness which is greater than his own.

The Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon. And 'when she had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit left in her.' There was no more spirit left in her; that is to say, she was poor in spirit. And yet she was a great queen. 'She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones.' It was because she was great that she recognized a greater. If she had been poor-spirited she would have had no faculty of discernment. For poor-spiritedness is the suppression of faculty. The Queen of Sheba was not poor-spirited, but she was poor in spirit. She was great enough to discern an ideal of greatness too high for her to attain to.

Sir Walter Scott one day met the Duke of Wellington, and he felt as if he could sink into the ground. Newman was elected a Fellow of Oriel, and as the Fellows welcomed him in the

Common Room, Keble came to welcome him with the rest, and Newman felt utterly abashed. Darwin one day received a visit from Gladstone, and as he told of it, 'Why,' he said, 'he sat on that chair and talked away like you or me.' It is the great poet who perceives the greatness of Homer and Virgil and Dante and Shakespeare, and when he speaks of them, is overwhelmed with poverty of spirit. The little poet says that he could write plays like Shakespeare's if he had a mind. The retort that it is only the mind that is lacking is true, and yet not the whole of the truth. There is no vision, no ideal, no sense of an unattained and unattainable beyond. It is a greater want than the want of mind.

Now come to the religious sphere. The best examples are in the Bible. Isaiah is one. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah saw Jehovah sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. He saw the seraphim above, using their wings in the service of awe and reverence. He heard the one call to the other and say, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.' He was overwhelmed with poverty of spirit. 'Woe is me,' he said, 'for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.'

Was Isaiah poor-spirited? You would not say so if you had seen him in the presence of the Kings of Judah. But he was poor in spirit that day, poor in spirit in the presence of the Lord of Hosts. For he was great enough in goodness to discern the holiness that dwelt far above him in a height unattainable.

Simon Peter is another example. He had been fishing all night, and had taken nothing. In the morning Jesus stood upon the shore. 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.' And when they had found, Simon threw himself at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' He was great enough as a

fisherman to discern a greater. He was great enough as a man to discover that all greatness is ultimately goodness.

A third example is John. The sons of thunder were not poor-spirited. And so one day John found himself in Patmos, exiled for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. He had stood in the presence of magistrates and rulers. He had challenged them, and said, 'Whether is it right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God?' But now he had a vision of the risen Lord of Glory. 'And when I saw him,' he says, 'I fell at his feet as dead.'

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Yes, we call them blessed ourselves. We call them blessed who have had visions of blessedness beyond them, we call them great who have had visions of a higher greatness, holy who have had visions of an unapproachable holiness. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Not because they are great, but because they are great enough to know that there is no greatness in them. 'I do not know,' said Sir Isaac Newton, 'what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.' Blessed is Sir Isaac Newton in his intellectual poverty of spirit, for his is the kingdom of the intellect. And blessed are ye when ye turn from all your disputing as to which of you is the greatest and become as little children, looking up to the goodness of a Father and putting your hand in his. Blessed are ye in the moment in which ye know that your own righteousness is filthy rags. For in that moment yours is the kingdom of heaven.

The recent decision of the Biblical Commission has been received in the Roman Catholic Church with deep and sometimes painful interest. The

notes on the subject which appeared in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for November have been widely read, and a number of eminent scholars in the Church, including two of the Commissioners, have communicated with us regarding them. We may be able to publish some of their letters next month. In the meantime let us call attention to a book which owes its existence entirely to the recent decision.

The title of the book is *The Papal Commission and the Pentateuch* (Longmans; 2s. 6d. net). It consists of two letters. One of the letters is written by Professor Charles A. Briggs of the Union Theological Seminary in New York. The other is a reply to it by Baron Friedrich von Hügel. The two writers may be said to represent the whole theological world, the one being a Protestant and the other a Roman Catholic. And they are thoroughly alive to the seriousness of the situation.

Never before, says Professor Briggs, has the Church of Rome committed itself officially to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. And he cannot understand why it should do so now. For it is easier, he says, for a Roman Catholic than for a Protestant 'to recognize that Hebrew laws and institutions were a development of a divinely guided Theocracy, rather than given all at once to Moses at the beginning of the Hebrew Commonwealth.' Why is it easier? Because the Roman Catholic recognizes a similar development in Christianity, while the Protestant must build upon the New Testament alone.

Professor Briggs is not satisfied with the composition of the Commission. There are able scholars upon it, he says, but they are not scholars of the Bible. He singles out Rector Janssen, who is its secretary. He says, 'I recall my studies of the large work of Rector Janssen, on Dogmatic Theology. I have used it, with profit and admiration, in the field of Scholastic Theology; but his treatment of the Bible is so

unscholarly, and his use of the Hebrew language shows such profound ignorance, that no serious worker could deem him competent to give an opinion in matters of Hebrew Scholarship, and his name discredits at once the report of the Commission.'

He is also distressed at the endorsement of the Pope. He has seen the Holy Father. He has been assured that such decisions, even when approved by him, have not the character of infallibility. But he knows that the name of the Pope, when given to any decision, 'carries an authority with the faithful beyond estimation.' 'Scholars,' he says, 'may continue to question it, but the Church as a body is likely to acquiesce, and even scholars are thereby perplexed and troubled.'

What Professor Briggs fears most of all is that this decision should be put in a new Syllabus. 'The Syllabus of Pius IX.,' he says, 'greatly injured the Catholic Church. It has been the fashion in recent years to apologize for it and to explain it away. If this decision were put into a new Syllabus, it would be a stumbling-rock to scholars; it would rejoice the enemies of the Church; it would reawaken Protestant polemic; it would greatly injure all irenic movements; it would make the present Pontificate a desperate failure, instead of being, as we hoped, a great reformatory influence in the Church.'

Is there nothing to be said for the decision itself? Absolutely nothing. Professor Briggs has no hesitation whatever in saying that the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is now settled, and settled in the negative. 'There are scholastic theologians,' he says, 'who still resist this result, and pious bishops and priests who are still afraid of it; and there are still many, probably the great majority of lay Christians, who care little, if at all, about it; but there are few Hebrew scholars, competent of their own knowledge to weigh the evidence, who have any doubt concerning it.'

But Professor Briggs is not satisfied with his own *ipse dixit*; he gives the evidence. And we have never seen the evidence given more convincingly.

There are four chief lines of argument. The first has to do with the language. The language of the four great documents which make up the Pentateuch is so different that they must have been composed by different writers. The difference of language extends to a very large vocabulary, so that each of the documents requires its own lexicon. And the differences are not merely differences of synonym; they are differences representing different centuries in the historical development of the Hebrew language.

The second line of argument has to do with the style. The style of the different documents of the Pentateuch demands not only different authors, but authors who lived at widely different periods of history. 'The differences in style,' says Professor Briggs, 'are not merely such as distinguish the chief dogmatic authorities of modern Rome, like Billot and Janssen, but such rather as distinguish these living writers from the mediæval schoolmen, Duns Scotus and Bonaventura.' And he believes that it would be easier to prove that Thomas Aquinas was the author of the four theological systems of these four men than to show that the four great documents of the Pentateuch had one and the same author, Moses.

The third argument lies in the historic situation. The historic situation of the several documents is different. The institutions to which they refer belong to different periods of history. They correspond to the periods which are reflected in the Historical and Prophetical Books. 'One might as well put all the Ceremonies, Usages, and Laws of the Church back into the time of Gregory the Great and attribute them all to him, as attribute the great Pentateuchal documents to Moses.'

The strongest evidence is the last. It is the evidence from Biblical Theology. Says Professor Briggs, 'I have been many years Professor of Biblical Theology. I have made an inductive study of all the Hebrew terms of Theology for the Lexicon, and of all the theological conceptions for my Lectures. If there is such a thing as a history of doctrine in the Church, there was a history of doctrine in Israel. The literature reflects that historical development, and may be ranged historically in accordance with it. The document that we name *E* goes in general with the Ephraimitic prophets Amos and Hosea; the document *J* with the early prophets of Judah; *D*, Deuteronomy, is nearest to Jeremiah; and *P* to Ezekiel and the Chronicles. This cannot be denied, but must be weighed and explained by those who insist upon the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.'

Now it is held by some of our correspondents that the Biblical Commission has not denied all this, or any of it. It is held by them that its recent report goes no further than to leave the way open, denying nothing, and affirming nothing. But this is not the mind of the majority of those who have written to us, and it is not the mind of Dr. Briggs.

Dr. Briggs recognizes that the recent Report of the Biblical Commission is worded in such a way as to seem to say no more than that the post-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is not yet proved. But it does say very much more than that. It does not say that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch with his own hand. On the contrary, it suggests the hypothesis that he 'entrusted the writing of it to some other person or persons.' But it is this very concession that, in Professor Briggs' judgment, settles the question so far as the authority of the Biblical Commission and the signature of the Pope can settle it. For the same sentence goes on to say that the person or persons referred to 'faithfully rendered Moses' meaning, wrote nothing contrary to his will, and omitted nothing'; and that 'the work thus formed,

approved by Moses as the principal and inspired author, was made public under his name.' Professor Briggs is not concerned about Moses' penmanship. He is concerned about the age of the different documents which compose the Pentateuch. He does not believe that any of them could have been made public under the name of Moses. To believe that they all belong to the age of Moses is to show that 'the Biblical Commission have evidently learned nothing from the splendid work of Biblical scholarship during the past century.'

What has Baron von Hügel to say in reply? Baron von Hügel is even more severe upon the Biblical Commission than Professor Briggs, though he does not intend to be.

He does not intend to be so severe. He endeavours to relieve the Report of some of the weight of authority which Professor Briggs attaches to it. 'I cannot but note,' he says, 'that though the Commission's Answer *has* received the Papal sanction, and hence that its proposals should be criticized only under the pressure of serious necessity and only by men thoroughly conversant with the complex critical problems directly concerned, it is not put forward as a Dogmatic Decision, but, apparently, as a simple Direction and Appeal from scholars to scholars.'

This, we may remark by the way, is not the opinion of most of those of our correspondents who have referred to it. Their opinion is that the Report is not intended for scholars, but for the direction of the people. One of them in particular draws out the distinction between the Church as a teacher and the Church as a pastor. He admits that the members of the Commission have no special knowledge of the Bible, and he seems to say that they were chosen for that very reason. For its decisions were not meant to appeal to scholars, but to serve for the care and the guidance of the souls of the people. But we may have to return to this again.

In the meantime it is enough to notice that, in the judgment of Baron von Hügel, the concession of the Commissioners, that Moses may have used an amanuensis, is no concession at all. He says that it is unworkable. Even supposing that the great documents of the Pentateuch could be taken as not post-Mosaic, it is unworkable. For where, he asks, is the man, orthodox Christian, Rabbinical Jew, or correct Muhammadan, who would accept such an authorship of the Pentateuch as this? The tradition is not that Moses dictated to Joshua, but that God dictated to Moses; not that Joshua was inspired by Moses, but that Moses was inspired by God.

But the Pentateuch cannot be taken as not post-Mosaic. On that Baron von Hügel is as emphatic as Professor Briggs, and his illustration is even more emphatic. 'We might as well conceive,' he says, 'in English Constitutional History, the Anglo-Saxon King Alfred, who died in 901 A.D., commissioning the drafter of Magna Charta under the Norman King John in 1215 A.D., the writer of the Articles of Reform under the Plantagenet King Edward II. in 1310 A.D., the Lord Chancellor More under the Tudor King Henry VIII. (More died in 1535 A.D.), and the drafter of the Petition of Rights under the Stuart King Charles I. in 1628 A.D., to draw up certain laws and histories for him, which he, King Alfred, would then revise and issue under his own name.'

'The righteous shall live by faith' (Gal 3¹¹). There have been four great religious movements in the world with which this text has had to do. Each of the movements is associated with a great name. The first is associated with the name of Abraham, of whom and his movement we have spoken already. The second is associated with the name of St. Paul.

St. Paul, like Abraham, made two great discoveries in his life. He discovered that there is a Gospel, and he discovered that the Gospel is for all.

He discovered that there is a gospel. What is a gospel? A gospel is the good news that sinners may be saved. The Jews said that only the righteous could be saved. Properly speaking, no doubt, all the children of Abraham could be saved. They were saved already, indeed, simply by being children of Abraham. But that was little more than a theory. It was to be used only to serve an occasion. Even as a theory it was exploded by John the Baptist. 'Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.'

The Jews did not altogether enjoy John the Baptist's exposure of their theory. It looked as if he were cutting the ground from beneath the feet of all the children of Abraham. But, after all, it was only a theory. In practice they held that none but the righteous children of Abraham were saved. 'Except a man be not only circumcised, but keep the whole law'—that was the theory they applied in practice. And as for those who did not keep the whole law, their formula for them was short and summary—'This people that knoweth not the law is cursed.'

St. Paul discovered that there is salvation for sinners. It was Christ that led him to the discovery. When Christ began His work in Palestine He found the children of Abraham sharply divided into two classes—the righteous and the sinners. He betook Himself to the sinners. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. And when the righteous remonstrated, He said, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

Christ betook Himself to the sinners in order to give them salvation. What is salvation? It is first of all forgiveness of sins. 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee: Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven.' So He spoke, bestowing the forgiveness of sins on this hand and on that, the moment He recognized the least spark of faith to be forgiven.

But salvation is more than the forgiveness of sins, it is also the joy of fellowship. It is—what shall we call it? What does He call it Himself? He calls it Paradise. ‘To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.’ Salvation is the whole reward which they obtain who believe with Abraham that God is, and that He is a rewarder. St. Paul discovered from Jesus that God is ready to become a rewarder even to the unthankful and to the evil.

That was his first discovery. It was a great discovery to make. We may think light of it, familiarity with the language of it breeding contempt in us for the fact. But it was a great discovery. It is the greatest discovery that a man can ever make on earth.

The other discovery that St. Paul made was that the gospel is for all. It is the discovery that we most associate with the name of St. Paul. For it cost him most to make it, and it cost him most to hold by it.

Was this a great discovery? It seems to us to be no discovery at all. If there is a gospel for sinners, there is a gospel for sinners of the Gentiles as well as for sinners of the Jews. Nothing seems to us more evident than that. But it was not at all evident to the Jews of St. Paul’s day. They might discover that there was a gospel, but it could be a gospel for the Jews only. For the promise was to Abraham and to his seed. If the Gentiles were to be saved, they must first become Jews. And it cost St. Paul immeasurable toil and incredible suffering to get the Jews, even those who discovered that there is a gospel,

to believe that the gospel is also for the Gentiles.

It is worth asking here if we ourselves have made this discovery. We have discovered that there is a gospel. Have we discovered also that the gospel is for everybody? St. Paul made both discoveries practically at once. He made them on the road to Damascus. And when he told the story afterwards, it was the second discovery that he emphasized, recalling the words, ‘I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.’ ‘Whereupon,’ he said, as he told the story to Agrippa, ‘whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.’ We have seen the vision. Have we been obedient to it?

These, then, were St. Paul’s two discoveries; the first, that there is salvation for the sinners of the sons of Abraham; the second, that there is salvation for the sinners of all mankind. For salvation is of faith. It is the gospel of the grace of God. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith: as it is written, ‘But the righteous shall live by faith.’

Two things have thus been gained by the world. The first thing is that God is a rewarder. That was gained through Abraham. The second is that the reward is open to everybody. That was gained through St. Paul. They are the things that matter. The one makes Religion, the other Christianity. And they will never again be lost. For the gifts of God are without repentance.