

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE application of critical methods to the study of the Old Testament has brought about a change in our thinking which is properly enough described as a revolution. But there is a greater revolution to come. It will not come to the men who passed through the change wrought by the Higher Criticism. The same generation is never required to change its most cherished ideas twice. It is the men who are now passing into the pulpit, the men who have been taught the critical study of the Old Testament and have never known another, who will be called upon to return to the Old Testament, and it may be also to the New, at the demand of a new Science which the teachers of their youth may never have named in their hearing.

That new Science is Psychology. The revolution wrought by Psychology, we say, will be greater than the revolution wrought by criticism. For two reasons. Criticism affects documents: psychology touches men. Criticism is possible of application, and even of comprehension, by the few: psychology is intelligible to every one. And when it is understood it will be applied to the Bible as readily and as sweepingly by the uneducated Sunday School teacher as by the most advanced scholar.

Let the subject of study be the third chapter of Exodus. Criticism tells us whether the chapter,

or what portion of it, belongs to J, E, or P. The Sunday School teacher does not care two straws about J, E, or P. But psychology says that the Lord did not appear to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; for God was no more perceptible by the human eye in the days of Moses than He is perceptible now. It asserts that He did not call to Moses out of the midst of the bush and say 'Moses, Moses,' because God was no more audible to the ear of man then than He is audible now. The Sunday School teacher is arrested at once. If he is ignorant he is brought up all the more sharply. He cannot continue to teach the story of Moses' call as he has been accustomed to teach it. He has either to shut his mind to the things which psychology says to him, or pass through a revolution.

There is not much literature on the subject yet. We mean on the application of psychology to the Bible. And such literature as exists is mostly in magazine articles. But we must remember that magazines are likely to have far more influence with the coming generation than they had with the past. One volume, however, has been published. Its author is Mr. Jacob H. Kaplan, Ph.D. It has been published in America, where part of it had already appeared in the *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*. Its title is *Psychology of Prophecy: A Study of the*

Prophetic Mind as manifested by the Ancient Hebrew Prophets (Philadelphia: Greenstone; \$1.50 net).

Dr. Kaplan has a chapter on 'The Prophetic Call.' It is the first of a series of chapters in which he deals with 'peculiarly prophetic elements that require explanation in the Psychology of Prophecy.' The chapters which follow it deal with premonition, revelation, dream, vision, audition, ecstasy, and inspiration. The chapter on the Prophetic Call is the most momentous of them all. In the course of it the author touches the call of Moses.

But first of all, Dr. Kaplan emphasizes the fact that the Prophet of Israel was called. Leaving aside for the present the manner of the call and the explanation of it, it is patent, he says, that there was a moment in the life of the prophets, one and all, when they became conscious of a call from God to the office of prophet. He refers to Moses, to Samuel, to Amos, to Jeremiah, to Ezekiel, to Isaiah. Even Hosea, with all the perplexity of it, had no doubt whatever that he had received a call. And we have no doubt. For in spite of the wonder that it should have come from the Holy One of Israel (a call expressed in the words, 'Take unto thee the wife of whoredom, and the children of whoredom'), it was only the assurance that it did come from God that made the prophet obedient.

So psychology will not deny the fact of the prophetic call. The revolution it will work will not reduce the prophet of Israel to the level of a Greek rhetorician. It is no figure of speech, no trick of style, that makes Isaiah say, 'Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' There is nothing of which Dr. Kaplan is more sure than that psychology will not deny but rather establish such experiences in the life of Isaiah or of Moses. So far as the fact of a call is concerned, the prophets remain on that mountain-top of God's nearness which they have always occupied. They will not be brought down. Let psychology be scientifically used, and

it will be found no leveller. What it will be found to do is not to bring the prophet down to the level of common men, but to make common men consider whether they have received a call to their work in life similar to the prophetic call.

'At the age of twelve,' says Dr. Kaplan, 'I was taken from school and devoted myself to a business career in my father's business. For six years I was in that business, occasionally "turning aside to see" longingly, without the slightest hope or idea, however, that I should ever be called to a student's life. No means and no opportunity presented themselves. One cold winter evening I visited all alone the German theatre. The music made me sad. I felt oppressed, alone and miserable. All the inheritance of my ancestors was suddenly awakened into life, and in a very serious and sincere sense of the word I felt the call to the higher life. I cared not what it was, but something it had to be, something that would unveil the mysteries of the world, prepare me to be a student, a helper and a guide among people. That night I walked home several miles in deep snow and was assured—I felt certain, I was determined—that I would become a student, though the opportunity and the means for obtaining that end were as vague as are my opportunities at present for becoming King of Prussia. From that moment to this the ambition and the hope has never for a single moment left me that I would be a student, a teacher, and a helper among men.'

Is that a call? Is that the call of a prophet? Let us leave the question unanswered. We cannot get all our questions in a new Science answered in a day. Let us leave the question unanswered, in case too soon we dare to take a place beside Isaiah in the purification of the lip, or even beside Hosea in the clash of moral emotions. There is an earlier question and a simpler. Why can we no longer teach that the Lord spake unto Moses out of the midst of a bush?

The poetical answer is, in Mrs. Browning's words,

that 'earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God.' But we said that Moses' call is not rhetoric; and it is not poetry. It is experience. It is life. And psychology comes not to turn poetry into prose, but to tell us how it came to pass that Moses could speak of His call in such language.

Now, the first thing that psychology enables us to see is that there is an Eastern attitude to God, and there is a Western. There is an Eastern attitude. It is the attitude of immediacy. It does not recognize secondary causes. The men of the East do not need towers by which to climb to God. The Orientals who said, 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven,' were faithless to their fatherland as well as to their God. They would imitate the ways of the West. The men of the East need no tower. They clasp hands with God. Did the voice come from a teacher? from the reading of a book? did it come to them out of the silence of their own heart as they journeyed by day? or in a dream by night? When they tell the story of it, they tell it in such words as these: 'God called out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.'

That is the first thing. And it is very great. It is the first great step in that revolution which is to take place in the attitude of men's minds to the Old Testament. It is not an entirely new thing. Five-and-twenty years ago a brilliant young Scottish scholar, of the name of Peter Thomson, who was closely associated with Robertson Smith, and of whom scarcely less was expected—twenty-five years ago, Thomson contributed two articles to the *Expositor* on the indifference of Orientals to secondary causes. And the characteristic has occasionally been recognized by other scholars in the interval. But now psychology comes with the authority of Science, with the influence of a science becoming almost too rapidly popular. No longer will it be a scholar here and there calling attention to an overlooked fact in the interpretation of the

Bible. It will be worked out in many books. It will become the subject of innumerable magazine articles. Unless the new knowledge is wisely guided and well restrained there is danger that the call of Moses and of Isaiah may be taken to be nothing more than an ordinary experience of life coming to an unscientific mind and expressed in the illustrative language of the East.

That would be a revolution indeed. Think of it. The call of Isaiah which has been to countless generations of men the occasion of their first thrilling sight of themselves standing unclean in the presence of a holy God; the call of Moses which had been their first clear summons to take up the duty that lay immediately to their hand and do it—the call of Moses and the call of Isaiah resolved into Oriental hyperbole! Psychology has come, not to bring such a catastrophe to pass, but to save us from it.

It does not reduce the call of Moses to the way in which an Eastern tells us that he chose his profession. Psychology insists upon it that when a man is called of God, whether Eastern or Western, he knows that the choice has been made not by himself but by God; and that what he enters upon is properly spoken of not as a profession, but as a calling. Psychology may not deny that God is ready to call any man, to call every man. It denies that every man is called. For the second thing is that before a man is called of God he must be competent to undertake the work for which God calls him, and he must be able to hear the call.

He must be competent to undertake the work. Dr. Kaplan believes that there is a prophetic temperament and a prophetic training. He is probably right. But let us not make mistakes here. The minister need not be 'a son of the manse'; the prophet may never have entered the schools of the prophets. God's idea of temperament is larger than ours. It includes the temperament of a Jonah as well as the temperament of an Amos. And if He usually moves slowly, some-

times He acts with lightning rapidity. He does not always wait for the training of the schools. The most that we can be sure of is that in every case there is a psychological moment, and that God knows that moment. He waited forty years for Moses in Egypt, and forty years more in Midian. Then the bush burned and was not consumed. The psychological moment had arrived. *Moses turned aside to see.* When God saw that Moses had turned aside to see, He called him.

And Moses obeyed the call. That is necessary also. Did he obey it reluctantly? His reluctance does not pronounce him unfit. It was the reluctance of humility. It was due to a sense of the greatness of the calling. Moses obeyed the call, simply because he was in sympathy with God's purpose in calling him. I have seen, said Jehovah, the affliction of My people which are in Egypt. Moses had seen it too. Forty years ago he had lifted his hand to deliver them from their bondage. Forty years ago; and all the while that he kept the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law, in the desert of Midian, he had had time to think of it. We spoke of training. He had not forgotten it a single day. And now when God called he was ready. He took the rod in his hand and went down into Egypt.

Under the title of *Psyche's Task*, a title calculated at least to awaken curiosity, Professor J. G. Frazer has published 'A Discourse concerning the Influence of Superstition on the Growth of Institutions' (Macmillan; 2s. 6d. net).

Superstition has been called to the bar of judgment, and Professor Frazer appears as its advocate. It is not a bad thing? It is bad, he says, irretrievably bad. He says it is 'a hoary-headed offender.' The sentence of death must be passed upon it. He appears as its advocate, but he appears at night. 'At Athens cases of murder were tried before the Areopagus by night, and it is by night that I have spoken in defence of this

power of darkness. But it grows late, and with my sinister client I must vanish before the cocks crow and the morning breaks gray in the east.'

Now this is not the first time that an advocate has appeared to plead the cause of a client upon whom, if he had been judge, he would have pronounced the sentence of death. He has appeared as the advocate because he was well paid for it. But no mercenary motive affects Dr. Frazer. If he comes forward as the advocate of superstition, it is simply, but singularly enough, because he believes that in this world there are times and circumstances in which the bad may be better than the good. Superstition is bad. It is the lie of which religion is the truth. And it is all a lie. Nevertheless in the history of the world and throughout great spaces of its history, superstition has been the mainstay of that respect for Government, for Private Property, for Marriage, and for Human Life which is necessary to their well-being.

Now, Government, Private Property, Marriage, and Human Life are good things. Some regard for them is essential to the very existence of civil society. By strengthening them, superstition has rendered a great service to humanity. And Dr. Frazer comes forward, not to whitewash the character of superstition, not even to plead for a remission of the death-sentence—for he holds that the death-sentence is overdue—but to plead that the despatch may be without indignity. For in God's hands even superstition has been the instrument of great good in the world.

Take Government. And take the Melanesians. Among the Melanesians the government belonged to the Chief, and all security for good order rested upon the awe which invested his person. The person of the chief was sacred. It was hedged in by a magic circle of tabu. It might not even be touched. What gave the person of the chief this sacredness? It was the superstitious belief that he was in correspondence with the Unseen,

and that to approach so near to his person as to touch him was to incur the wrath of those unseen powers who watched over him.

The superstition was sometimes grosser than that. Among the Maoris the chief was believed to be a living god. He himself believed it. 'Think not,' said Te Heu Heu, the great Taupo chief and priest, shortly before he was swallowed up by a landslip, 'think not,' he said to a European missionary, 'that I am a man, that my origin is of the earth. I come from the heavens. My ancestors are all there. They are gods and I shall return to them.'

So sacred was the person of a Maori chief that it was not lawful to touch him even to save his life. 'A chief,' says Dr. Frazer, 'has been seen at the point of suffocation and in great agony with a fish bone sticking in his throat, and yet not one of his people, who were lamenting around him, dared to touch or even approach him, for it would have been as much as their own life was worth to do so. A missionary, who was passing, came to the rescue and saved the chief's life by extracting the bone. As soon as the rescued man recovered the power of speech, which he did not do for half an hour, the first use he made of it was to demand that the surgical instruments with which the bone had been extracted should be given to him as compensation for the injury done him by drawing his sacred blood and touching his sacred head.'

Now all this is superstition. And superstition is bad. But persuade these people that their chief is as other men are, and his power vanishes. With his power vanish law and order. In Fiji, says Mr. Basil Thomson, the first blow at the power of the chiefs was struck unconsciously by the missionaries. Neither they nor the chiefs themselves realized how closely the government of the Fijians was bound up with their religion.

It is an interesting situation. How do men

regard it? The passing adventurer looks at it, perhaps he interviews the chief, who sulks in his tent,—for the passing traveller is not to be accused of receiving superficial impressions,—and then he comes home and demands that the Maoris be left alone. What have the missionaries done? They have driven the unclean spirit out of a man, out of many men. That is not denied. The men are there as evidence. They are clothed and in their right mind. But what of the respect for law and order, and especially for private property? The Gergesenes prayed Jesus to depart out of their coasts, and He departed. For He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But His command to His followers now is not to depart.

Messrs. George Bell & Sons are the publishers in this country of a manual of *Ethics* (8s. 6d. net), which has been written by two American scholars, Professor John Dewey of Columbia University, and Professor James H. Tufts of the University of Chicago. It has been, we think, for some time the deliberate intention of American scholars of the highest reputation, to break down those stiff walls of partition which have so long separated the study of Ethics from the study of Religion. In this volume the walls are laid even with the ground. We do not know that we are passing from one room to the other. Religion and Ethics live together in a single airy chamber, to the great advantage and enlightenment of both.

There is a chapter on the Hebrew Moral Development. It is no surprise that Religion and Ethics are found enlightening one another in that chapter. But it is significant that in a scientific manual of Ethics such a chapter should be found. And it is yet more significant that there is no hesitation whatever in showing that the influence which Religion had upon Ethics in ancient Israel was the determining factor in the separation of that nation from all the other nations of the world, and the means by which the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed should all the

families of the earth be blessed, has actually and undeniably been fulfilled.

The point of departure is the Covenant. What is it that to a savage makes an act right or wrong? It is custom. The tribe does this, or forbids that to be done. Their fathers did it, or did it not. The power to enforce the laws of custom will likely belong to the chief. But even the chief does not make them. He is himself as much under their authority as any man. Now custom may have been originally the result of experience. It may have been found that an occasional period of abstinence was necessary for the health of the community, and that certain rites of initiation, with their amazing severity, helped the young men and women to endure hardness. But custom prevents growth. Under new circumstances, some forms of abstinence may become hurtful to the health. Initiation may become wanton cruelty. But to the protest of the missionary the answer is a helpless *non possumus*. Our fathers did it. To the end of time we must do as our fathers have done.

When Moses came down into Egypt he found the Israelites in the grip of custom. But he carried in his hand a Covenant. It was a thing of religion. There was a God in it, and the name of a God. What religion the Israelites in Egypt were professing as they went out to the brickfields in the morning, or what influence it had upon their moral life, we cannot tell. But when Moses came down into Egypt with the Covenant in his hand, we know that from that moment those Hebrew slaves occupied the first rank among all the nations of the world, both in religion and in morality. It was the Covenant that did it.

The Covenant did its work gradually, no doubt. It did not make this stiffnecked, flesh-lusting, slave-hearted people, the most religious or the most moral people in the world all at once. 'Forty years long' is the bitter reproach of their long-

suffering leader. But when Moses came down into Egypt with the Covenant; when they agreed to let the customs of their fathers go and accept Jehovah as their God by a mutual understanding and engagement, they took that step which in time placed them visibly in front of all other peoples, civilized and uncivilized; until at last, in the fulness of time, out of a little town of theirs, a byword of insignificance, there came the highest we know in Religion and in Ethics, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

For the Covenant was an engagement made between two persons. From the moment that an Israelite accepted it he decided whether an action was right or wrong, not by comparing it with the customs of his fathers, but by referring it to the personal will of Jehovah. 'I am the Lord thy God—thou shalt not.' And when the Israelite had time to reflect upon it, he found that everything must be referred to the personal will of God, to whom he stood personally responsible. Not the ritual of worship only, but also his treatment of his fellows. And with the generalization of a great religious genius, a genius begotten of the Covenant, he said all religion is comprehended in this one word—thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and soul, and strength and mind; and in this other word is all morality comprehended—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

It was not all at once. At first Jehovah was Lord of Hosts. He led the army of the Israelites in war and gave the victory. If He was jealous of the interference of other gods with His people, He seemed willing to confine Himself to Israel and leave other nations to serve their own gods. And the conditions of the Covenant were extremely simple. If the Israelites kept the commandments of Jehovah, and especially the commandment to have no other gods before Him, then He undertook to give them victory over their enemies and abundant outward prosperity, every man sitting under his own vine and under his own fig-tree

in a land that flowed with milk and honey. As yet no question was raised whether His commandments were right or wrong. It was enough that they were His commandments.

But now we see the greatness of the Covenant. It was a free engagement on either side. Nothing is more striking than the way in which Joshua emphasizes this and insists upon the people recognizing it. 'Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, *choose you this day whom you will serve*. . . . And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that *Ye have chosen you the Lord to serve him*. And they said, We are witnesses' (Jos 24¹⁵⁻²²).

Now, to conceive of the relation between God and people as due to voluntary choice is to introduce a powerful agency towards making morality conscious. The Israelite has exercised his own will in the choice of Jehovah to be his God; he will certainly take the further step, and examine Jehovah's commands to see whether he is to obey them because they are the commands of Jehovah, or because they are true and right. This is the point at which the Israelites depart from the nations round them.

For the Babylonians had their god also, and obeyed his commands. But they never were able to say, 'The judgments of our God are true and righteous altogether'; they never got beyond saying they are the judgments of our god. And so when calamity fell upon a Babylonian he accepted it as punishment for sin. He might not be able to tell what sin he had been guilty of. The fact that he suffered was evidence that his god was angry with him. And he felt his guilt, one is compelled to see, as keenly as any Israelite. The penitential psalms of the Babylonians express the deepest

conviction of sin and the utmost desire to please the Babylonian god. But the Babylonian psalmist is often in the utmost perplexity as to the nature of his sin. He feels remorse, though he does not know that he has done wrong. And the possible failure to repeat a formula aright is as heinous an offence as manslaughter.

This is the position of the three friends of Job. And here, it is possible, we have a way of determining the date of the Book of Job, a date so amazingly disputed by experts. The book is written at a time and under circumstances which made it, as we should now say, a burning question whether calamity is evidence of guilt. If, then, as is now so generally held, the Israelites learned most of their Babylonianism in the Exile, the Book of Job would belong to that or a closely subsequent period. For the Babylonians had no doubt whatever that calamity spelt sin. Job's three friends, excellent men, a Temanite, a Shuhite, and a Naamathite, cannot admit a doubt of it. But Job is an Israelite. His is the Covenant. He cannot feel remorse for sins which he has not committed, and he refuses to repent of them.

As God liveth who hath taken away my right,
And the Almighty who hath vexed my soul;
Surely my lips shall not speak unrighteousness.
Till I die, I will not put away mine integrity from me.
My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go (27¹⁻⁶).

What is the solution? The solution is that the Covenant between Jehovah and Israel is not a mere material bargain, so much prosperity for so much observance. On the one hand, the service of God is not confined to outward acts. On the other hand, God's love for man (which never fails to respond to man's love for God, and even anticipates it) expresses itself not entirely in warding off outward calamity, but in causing everything to work together for good to them that love Him.

Nor was this the highest reach to which the Covenant engagement attained. The one admirable element in the primitive notion of tribal custom was the sense of common interest which it sent

through every member of the tribe. The Covenant takes up that element into itself and transfigures it. Perhaps the average Israelite was all his life content with a covenant of give and take; so much religious service for so much outward prosperity. Perhaps a few thinkers reached independently the higher conception of a prosperity that included the loss of all things, and of a service that expressed itself best in a broken spirit and a contrite heart. But only a religious genius (forgive the modern word) like Isaiah, could reach the sublimity of an innocent man taking upon him the calamities of other men, and even (marvel of marvels) actually carrying their sin. But that also was due to the Covenant. It was a natural, and with God to guide, an inevitable outcome of the engagement into which Israel entered with Jehovah, that day they said 'We are witnesses.'

Is there a still greater thing that can come out of it? Not on the part of Israel. Israel has exhausted the possibilities of the Covenant on the human side when it has found a man of whom it can say, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' But on the part of God there is. St. Paul puts it into words, 'God made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us.' To be sin—it is not that. Isaiah discovered that. Who knew no sin—it is that. Even Job who held fast by his integrity, in face of the calamity which had swept over his house, never claimed to be, or hoped to find in this world, one who knew no sin. God found Him. God sent Him to give His life a ransom for many. In His unspeakable gift God made known what had been His purpose when He made a Covenant with Israel, and said, 'I will be your God.'

The Tests of Life.¹

BY PRINCIPAL THE REV. J. IVERACH, D.D., ABERDEEN.

THE Kerr Lectures have won for themselves a position second to none, among the lectures of our country. From the first lecture by Dr. Orr down to the latest by Mr. Law, the Kerr Lectures have reached a high level, and have taken their place among the books which must be read by students. The former series were philosophical or theological, or dealt with subjects on the borderland of both. Mr. Law has made a new departure. He has made a book of Scripture the subject of his lectures, and as he has treated it, he has made a wise choice. From whatever point of view we regard these lectures they are admirable. If the reader desires an exegetical study of the First Epistle of St. John, Mr. Law gives him in the exegetical notes at the end of the volume a series of studies in which the wealth of modern learning is exhausted, and the exact meaning of words and phrases is set forth with a fulness and vividness

which leaves nothing to be desired. Does the student desire to know what can be said regarding topics belonging to Introduction proper, then his desire is amply gratified in the chapters given to that discussion. Authorship, date, readers, and so on are discussed with ample learning, historical knowledge, and critical judgment. Is he interested in theology? in the elucidation of special ideas peculiar to, characteristic of the Epistle? or in the concatenation of these ideas, then the main part of the volume is given to the satisfaction of that desire.

There are other features of interest in this admirable volume. There is the wide learning which has taken note of all the relevant literature which has clustered around this Epistle, throughout the ages. There is no parade of learning, no ostentation in the reference to books, but a student can see behind every paragraph the wide reading and the anxious pondering of a man who has resolved to leave nothing unransacked which could help him in his arduous task. Best of all the author has not allowed the material

¹ *The Tests of Life*. A Study of the First Epistle of St. John. Being the Kerr Lecture for 1909. By the Rev. Robert Law, B.D., Minister of Lauriston Place Church, Edinburgh. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 7s. 6d. net.