

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR MARGOLIOUTH has contributed an article to *The Expositor* for July on 'Recent Exposition of the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah.' It is a collection and criticism of the answers which have lately been given to the question, 'Who is the Suffering Servant of the Lord?'

Although the title of the article is '*Recent Exposition*,' Professor Margoliouth begins with an answer which was made a long while ago. He begins with the answer of 'the Deacon Philip' to 'the Queen of Meroë's minister.' We know what the Deacon Philip's answer was. For many generations the Church was well content with it. And perhaps the Church will return to it again. But it has not been accepted recently. And so Professor Margoliouth surveys the recent exposition.

He begins with Dr. J. W. Thirtle. Now Dr. Thirtle is an anti-critical and altogether orthodox expositor, and he leaves the door open for at least the possibility that the Deacon Philip was right. But, in the first place at any rate, he holds that the Servant of the Lord was Hezekiah. For Dr. Thirtle has a great opinion of Hezekiah. As Professor Margoliouth says, 'He would give that king an importance for the poetical books of the Bible to be compared with that which a Cambridge scholar recently tried to find for Murena, in the

Odes of Horace.' Will Hezekiah do? With a delicious touch of irony Professor Margoliouth remarks, 'Since no interpretation would be suggested which was absolutely devoid of plausibility, it may be admitted that with this application the clause (53¹⁰), "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days," becomes highly significant.'

Professor Margoliouth passes to another interpretation. It is the interpretation of Professor Ernest Sellin, of Vienna. There was a time when Professor Sellin believed that the Servant of the Lord was Zerubbabel. But that was only a working hypothesis. It proved its value, he claims, in leading to the final solution of the problem. The final solution is found in Jehoiachin.

Now Jehoiachin, as Professor Margoliouth points out, 'is by no means a prominent figure on the Israelitish stage.' The compiler of the Books of Kings states that he 'did evil in the sight of the Lord,' that he put himself with his family and officers into the power of the king of Babylon, and that he remained a prisoner in Babylon for thirty-seven years, after which time he was released and given honourable treatment. What qualification had Jehoiachin for fulfilling the office of the Servant of the Lord? That he will see his seed? That the pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand? Jeremiah prophesies (22³⁰).

that he will not prosper and will be childless. But Professor Margoliouth quotes the Arab proverb, 'The eye of love hides every blemish,' and he does not seem to wonder that Professor Sellin finds Jehoiachin as satisfactory as Dr. Thirtle finds Hezekiah.

Professor Sellin believes that the king of Babylon allowed Jehoiachin to re-establish his empire. Where does he find that? He finds it in 2 Kings 25, by 'reading between the lines.' But, says Professor Margoliouth, if we were to read between the lines in this fashion very often, we should make some remarkable additions to our historical knowledge. We should, as in this case, sometimes contradict what is in the lines themselves. For there it is plainly stated that Jehoiachin remained a pensioner at the court of the king of Babylon 'all the days of his life.'

Professor Margoliouth has missed the interpretation of his fellow Arabist Mr. Weir, who holds, as we saw in a recent number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, that the Servant of the Lord is Cyrus, king of Persia. He passes next to Giesebrecht's emendation of Gressmann.

Giesebrecht and Gressmann have become persuaded that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is a hymn belonging to the Mysteries, and that it was sung by the Mystæ on the death-day of the gods. 'The mythical form,' says Giesebrecht, 'which originally lay at the basis of the idea of the Servant must have been one in which an expiatory death and resurrection are characteristic. Though we cannot actually name this figure, it must belong to the cycle of Adonis or Tammuz myths.'

But there are difficulties. Not to mention the most radical, Adonis was proverbial for his beauty, while the Servant had no form nor comeliness. Adonis is irresistibly attractive; the Servant excites nothing but aversion. The death of Adonis has no resemblance to the leading of a

lamb to the slaughter, and his burial was accompanied with pomp. Finally, there is no evidence to show that the death of Adonis was expiatory, or was ever regarded as expiatory by anybody.

Is this the last interpretation? It is the last but one. The last of all is a return to the first. In a work on *The Servant of God in Isaiah*, published in Freiburg in 1907, Dr. Franz Feldmann argues earnestly that the Suffering Servant of the Lord was a future Messiah. First Dr. Feldmann disposes of other theories. Especially does he give his attention to a refutation of the view which identifies the Servant with Israel, whether in whole or in part. This view, says Professor Margoliouth, is still probably supported by the most eminent names in Old Testament criticism. But the objections to it appear to him to be exceedingly strong. For the doctrine that Israel's exile was to expiate the sins of the Gentiles appears to be wholly unbiblical, whilst the pious part cannot with justice be said to have suffered *for*, but only *with*, the rest.

So Professor Margoliouth returns with Dr. Feldmann to the view which so long prevailed in Christendom, that the Suffering Servant of Jehovah is the Messiah. If it should meet with acceptance, he says, criticism would come round to the point from which it started, Philip's interpretation turning out to have been right after all. He expects that some day an archæological discovery will settle it.

In the end of his book on *Prehistoric Archaeology and the Old Testament* (T. & T. Clark; 5s. net), Dr. Dukinfield Astley publishes a paper which was read by him before the West Norfolk Clerical Society. The West Norfolk Society, we take it, is a gathering of clergymen of the Church of England of average intellect; and the paper, the work of a clergyman of the Church of England of somewhat more than average

intellect, is an answer to the question, How far do the results of the Higher Criticism affect Christian teaching?

Dr. Dukinfield Astley accepts the results of the Higher Criticism. What are the results which he accepts? The Prophets and not the Law must be the starting-point of all our study of the history of Israel. The Hexateuch must be recognized as a compilation of late date, the chief constituent elements of which have been distinguished and identified. The early parts of Genesis, down to the call of Abraham, are great religious prose poems, based upon the folk-lore which the early Israelites had inherited in common with their neighbours. The story of the patriarchal period is probably based on genuine historical tradition, but has reached us as recorded by much later generations. Much of the contents of the Book of Judges is authentic, but not all. With the Books of Samuel we enter upon real and authentic history, and this history is retold from a later and biased point of view in the Chronicles. Lastly, the whole Levitical system was a later growth, the stages of which can be traced.

Dr. Dukinfield Astley has quoted these results from an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. He accepts them as he has quoted them. He accepts them all. But he adds to them other results which, after long study, he considers to be equally assured. The Book of Job is a late production, almost certainly post-exilic; it is a drama, in which the problems of life are looked at very much as they are regarded in *Hamlet*; in fact, Job is an example of a Hebrew tragedy, as the Song of Solomon is of a pastoral comedy. The Book of Isaiah is a composite compilation of many dates, the last twenty-seven chapters being post-exilic. The Book of Psalms is the hymn-book of the second Temple; it may contain one or two Psalms by David, but his character as warrior-king described in the Books of Samuel makes it quite unlikely that he was the author of the most sublime religious poems in the

world. The Book of Daniel is not earlier than 350 B.C.

These are the results of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament. What does Dr. Astley propose that the clergymen of the Church of England should do with them? As educated men their business is to accept them. He has no hesitation in saying that. If they have time and ability to verify them, let them do so. If not, let them accept them on the overwhelming authority of the Old Testament scholarship of the day. But as clergymen they are also teachers. Does he recommend them to teach these results and to teach them openly?

He recommends them to make a distinction. There is the educated and there is the uneducated layman. The educated layman has already found them out for himself. What the clergyman has to do with him is to show him that this larger knowledge of the origin and growth of God's Word is no more opposed to the Holy Catholic Faith, and no more an excuse for infidelity, than are the results of science in the sphere of astronomy or biology.

With the uneducated layman the clergyman has something more to do. He may be a comfortable man of business caring for none of these things. He may be a labourer, slow in thought and ready to forget. And then there is the great congregation of women 'whose minds (observe that we are quoting Dr. Astley here word for word) are set for the most part on the sentimental side of religion, caring nothing for its intellectual side, knowing nothing of theology.'

'It is quite possible,' says Dr. Astley, 'for the clergy and other religious teachers to be true to their honest convictions and to let the results of their knowledge—provided only that they know—permeate and leaven their teaching, both in the pulpit and out of it, in Bible class and school and private ministrations, without undermining the

simple faith of the veriest babe in Christ, and to make the teaching of the Catholic Church come home to the thoughtless and the careless and the irreligious in a way it has never done before.'

Is it possible still to believe in the external authority of the Bible? The Dean of Canterbury assures us that it is still possible. Others may believe the Bible only as they find it true; he still believes it true because it is the Bible.

The Dean of Canterbury has published an article in *The Record* on 'The Authority of Holy Scripture.' He begins with the Old Testament. And he begins with the statement that the Old Testament was an authority to Christ, and is therefore an authority to us.

The Old Testament, he says, was an authority to Christ—'an irrefragable authority, to which He Himself submitted.' Those are Dr. Wace's words. What evidence has he? He has the evidence of five distinct passages of Scripture. The first passage is, 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' The second, 'How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?' The third, 'Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.' The fourth passage is, 'These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning me.' And the fifth, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day.' What was an authority to Christ was an authority to the Apostles, and it is an authority to the Dean of Canterbury. And 'no fair interpretation can be put upon such passages as these but that our Lord treated the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which were the same in His day as we now possess, not only as being entirely trustworthy, but as being an authoritative record of God's words and God's purposes.'

But this is only the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is not the whole Christian Bible. Certainly it is a mighty thing, in these days of Criticism and the Study of Religion, to be able to set the Old Testament on a position of unassailable external authority. But what will Dr. Wace do with the New Testament, for which it is obvious that neither our Lord's words can be quoted nor His example appealed to? Dr. Wace does not hesitate. 'It is not less unquestionable that the Scriptures of the New Testament were, from the first, treated by the Church as similarly authoritative.'

This, then, is the position of the Dean of Canterbury. The Jewish Church in the time of our Lord, the Christian Church in the first two centuries, the Apostles, and our Lord Himself, treated the Scriptures, whether of the Old Testament, or of the New, or both, as historically true and divinely authoritative. 'Unless, therefore, the uniform belief of the Christian Church in early ages has been unfounded, we have in the Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testament, narratives and prophetic utterances which, though coming from human hands, have been produced under Divine control, and consequently carry Divine authority.'

Dr. Rendel Harris has published some addresses recently given at Free Church meetings, during the year in which he 'had the honour and happiness' of presiding over the Federation of the Free Churches of England and Wales. The title of the book is *Aaron's Breastplate, and Other Addresses* (Thomas Law; 2s. 6d. net).

'Aaron's Breastplate' is also the title of the first address. If the address had a text, the text is likely to have been Ex 28²⁹, 'And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.' It is just such a

passage as a popular preacher of the past generation would have revelled in. But Dr. Rendel Harris has no regard for the 'people who devote themselves to a study of Aaron's wardrobe,' or for those who 'prove the nature of the redeemed soul out of the interpretation of coats and colours, and of the bells and pomegranates that are upon the vesture's hem.' He says that he 'cannot extract much comfort or distil spiritual medicine out of these ancient Levitical accounts.' His rule in such matters is Mrs. Browning's—

People come up higher: Aaron's tribe is dispossessed.

From his study of the sanctuary and its services Dr. Rendel Harris has come away disappointed. They do not repay the time required to understand them. There is really very little to be got out of them over and above what has already been extracted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. 'Practically the only two things that I have yet carried off as legitimate Christian spoil from the raiding of these accounts are the high-priestly Breastplate and the high-priestly Benediction.' And then he tells us what these things mean to him. He takes the Breastplate first.

The student of Aaron's Breastplate is confronted by a serious difficulty on the very threshold of his study. There seem to be two accounts of what Dr. Rendel Harris calls Aaron's jewellery. Dr. Rendel Harris is not sure if there are two accounts or not. But besides the account of the Breastplate, with its twelve precious stones, each containing the name of one of the tribes of Israel, there is also a description of two inscribed plates of onyx stone for the high priest's shoulders, each containing the names of six of the tribes. And this seems to many to be a different account of the Breastplate itself. It is a modern difficulty. There are expositors living who have not felt it.

Dr. Maclaren, of Manchester, has not felt it. In his volume of sermons entitled *The Beatitudes*, Dr. Maclaren has a sermon upon 'The Names on Aaron's Breastplate.' 'The breastplate,' he says,

'was composed of folded cloth, in which were lodged twelve precious stones, in four rows of three, each stone containing the name of one of the tribes. It was held in position by the ephod, which consisted of another piece of cloth with a back and front part, which were united into one on the shoulders. On each shoulder it was clasped by an onyx stone, bearing the name of six of the tribes. Thus twice, on the shoulders the seat of power and on the heart the organ of thought and of love, Aaron, entering into the presence of the Most High, bore "the names of the tribes for a memorial continually."'

Dr. Maclaren does not see the difficulty of the two narratives. Dr. Rendel Harris sees it, and passes on. It does look, he says, as if the account of the stones on the shoulder were a duplicate of the account of the stones on the breast. He leaves the question to the critics. But the difficulty is strong enough to make him set aside the shoulder stones and stick to the Breastplate. And yet, even before he has set the shoulder stones aside, he is at one with Dr. Maclaren when recognizing the combination of power and love—the power on the shoulder, the love on the heart. And we can make the two ideas meet, he says, in one. We have simply to equate the sentences, 'He shall carry the lambs in his bosom' and 'He layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing.'

What is it that attracts him to the Breastplate? It is that the stones are separate there, that each separately carries the name of one of the tribes of Israel. The high priest 'took them with him into the place of secret grace and secret glory, and when he drew near under the wings of the Shekinah the mysterious light of the sanctuary fell upon his breastplate, and every separate gem began to glow as if it had been a living soul. Thus he stood before the Lord, and began his devotion in the form—"Behold, I and the children which God hath given me."'

'Behold, I and the children which God hath

given me.' Dr. Rendel Harris bids us notice the passage in passing. It has a New Testament as well as an Old Testament remembrance. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (2¹⁸) it is quoted of the coming of Christ into the world. As He comes into the world He says, 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.' He means that both he that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one. So is it with the high priest and the tribes of Israel. When he comes into the sanctuary he comes with the breastplate on. He cannot come without it. He and they whose names are written upon the breastplate, as they stand together before the Shekinah, are all of one. 'It is a commonplace in the region of love, however difficult it may be in the district of dogma.'

So when the high priest entered the Holy Place he carried with him 'the body corporate of Israel.' The whole family was there, the whole family as understood in that day. Since then, says Dr. Rendel Harris, the praying soul has become more imperial; Judaism was too short a bed for the Pax Evangelica to stretch itself in. But from his own point of view Aaron's prayer was comprehensive; it took in all the people. It included the tribe of Dan, although the Antichrist was to come from thence; it did not forget little Benjamin. His prayer was the Psalmist's 'Peace upon Israel,' and St. Paul only bettered it by extending the connotation of Israel, 'Peace be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.'

He carried all the tribes of Israel with him. That is the first thing. He carried his own tribe among them. That is the next. 'The Book of Family Prayer was bound up in the volume of the Common Prayer.' We must stay at home, says Dr. Rendel Harris, as well as go to church. We must have prayer at home. And he quotes some sentences out of an old family Prayer Book. 'Lord, I beseech Thee to have mercy upon my son, for he is horribly bedevilled.' That is one sentence. Here is another. 'My little daughter

is even now at the point of death; come and lay thy hand on her, and she shall live.' And here is another. 'My mother-in-law is sick of a fever.'

First, the Israel of God. Next, the family. Last of all, the high priest himself. No, not last, but first of all. 'He offered up sacrifice *first for himself*, and then for the errors of the people.' But Dr. Rendel Harris is not quite sure that we need encouragement to pray for ourselves. If we pray at all, he is not quite sure that we do not pray for ourselves too exclusively. He remembers the poor woman in the Gospel who prayed for herself in praying for her daughter. Indeed, she prayed for herself and her daughter in quite a confusing way, 'Lord,' she said, 'have mercy on me, my daughter. . . .' Dr. Rendel Harris would have our own stone upon our own breastplate, but he would not have us monopolize all the stones that are there.

Where are the twelve tribes now? They have become the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. For the high priest has become 'the High Priest of our confession.' And when Dr. Rendel Harris turns to the breastplate of Christ he observes again that there are those that are near and those that are afar off. Within the number of the twelve there is an inner circle of three or four. Then there is an outer circle beyond the twelve, 'betrayed sometimes by a stray expression like "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (which makes a fresh row of beautiful stones on the breastplate, with a pearl in the middle, a turquoise on the left, and a crystal on the right).' And then the disclosure is made of an infinitely wider constituency of love and service, as when the Master says, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them that shall believe through their word.' Of Christ's intercession Dr. Rendel Harris says that it was a capacious breastplate upon a universal heart. The length and the breadth of it are not on the same scale as Aaron's.

As the last thing of all, Dr. Rendel Harris

reminds the individual believer of his own priestly breastplate. He recalls the breastplate of St. Paul. 'My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved'—that is the old tribal prayer. 'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father . . . of whom every family in heaven and earth is named'—that is the new family prayer. He prayed also for himself. And he not only prayed for himself, but he also begged his friends to pray for him—'pray for me that I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.'

But when Dr. Rendel Harris touches upon the believer's own breastplate, he enters a region where

it is scarcely possible to follow him for fear. 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.' Now the words may be used in another sense. These children are not now simply ours by consanguinity. They are ours by right of conquest. They are ours because of what they have cost us. 'Here is one that I carry about—a shy, changeable, mysterious jewel. It is an opal. I picked it up in crossing a certain arid stretch of wilderness, in a solitary place of its own and mine.' 'And here is another akin to it—a pearl. I plunged for it: it was hidden away under the forbidding shells of hostility and misunderstanding.'

The Self-Consciousness of Jesus and the Servant of the Lord.

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IV.

The Servant in the Gospels.

LET us attempt to trace the further influence of the prophecy of the Servant on the career of Jesus. On the very threshold of His ministry, when He first appears publicly before His fellow-townsmen at Nazareth, He adopts (Lk 4^{17ff.}) as His programme the remarkable words of Is 61¹⁻², 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed (ἐχρίσεν) me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn. And he began to say unto them, to-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.' We are well aware that these words do not belong to the Songs of the Servant, but to a passage which is regarded by many scholars as lying outside the limits of Deutero-Isaiah. And yet investigators so unbiassed as Cheyne and Driver believe that it is the Servant who here speaks. But even if the opposite conclusion be

held that it is the prophet himself rather than the Servant, it makes little difference for our purpose, as in any case he 'speaks with the conscience of the whole function and aim of the prophetic order' (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 436). We agree, however, with Cheyne when he says that 'but for the absence of the title "the servant," no one could fail to be struck by the appropriateness of vv. 1-3 (especially) to the personal Servant of Jehovah' (*Prophecies of Isaiah*, ii. p. 93). In any case it is probable that at the time when our Lord used the words, they were regarded as of a piece with 42¹⁻⁷, with which they have so much thought and even language in common, and that passage of course refers to the Servant. Jesus, therefore, describes His own mission in terms of the ancient prophecy. And that His procedure is in no sense accidental, or merely the employment of an apt illustration, is evident from His answer to the Baptist's uncompromising question (Mt 11³): 'Art thou He that should come, or are we to look for another?' Jesus bids the men tell their master the things which