

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

OF the wisdom of Solomon, the son of David, the world has for a long time been convinced. In our own day some doubt has been cast upon his right to all the literary work with which his name has been associated. But after the Wisdom of Solomon, the Song of Solomon, and even the Book of Ecclesiastes have been taken from him, it cannot be said that his reputation in the realm of learning and literature has seriously suffered. The world is still satisfied that both theoretically and practically, both philosophically and scientifically, Solomon was one of the wisest men that have ever lived.

But now it seems he was wiser than the world has been aware of. Professor NAVILLE believes that Solomon introduced into Israel the Hebrew tongue and the Hebrew manner of writing. He believes that to Solomon we owe that writing in which the Old Testament is written. He believes that, if it had not been for Solomon, the student of the Old Testament would have had to master the cuneiform script. And terrible as Hebrew is, with or without the points of the Masoretes, more forbidding undoubtedly would have been the arrowheads of the Babylonians.

Professor NAVILLE has written a book on *The Discovery of the Book of the Law under King Josiah* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge ;

rs. 6d.). It has always been difficult to believe that Hilkiyah, the High Priest, deliberately deceived the King when he said that he had 'found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.' It has been a sensibly felt objection to the critical conclusion to have to admit that he wrote the book and placed it there, and then pretended he had found there a writing by Moses. Professor NAVILLE sees a way of overcoming that objection. He believes that the book had actually been placed in the walls of the Temple before the days of King Josiah, and that Hilkiyah told the truth when he told Josiah that he had found it there.

For in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, in the chapter which is called 'The Chapter of the Coming Out from the Day' (that is, from the Day of this world's light to the darkness of the Netherworld), it is recorded: 'This chapter was found at Khmun (Hermopolis) on an alabaster plaque, under the feet of the Majesty of this venerable god (Thoth), in the writing of the god himself, in the time of the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Mycerinus. The royal son Hordudef found it while travelling to inspect the Temples of Egypt.' And then it is added, 'He brought it to the King as a marvel when he saw that it was something very mysterious which no one had ever seen or set eyes on before.'

Observe two things. The plaque was found under the feet of the god, that is, under his statue. And when discovered, it was brought to the monarch then on the throne as something of grave import proceeding from the god himself.

But there is another version of this famous chapter in existence. It is shorter and bears a slightly different title. And to this shorter form is attached a rubric which says, 'This chapter was found in the foundations of Ami Hunnu (in Professor NAVILLE's judgment a sanctuary of Heliopolis) by the overseer of the builders of a wall.'

Here, then, we have the deposit of a valuable writing under the statue of a god, and an abridgement of it in the wall of a temple. And when accidentally discovered it is brought to the King. The similarity of the case to that of the discovery of the Book of the Law induces Professor NAVILLE to believe that the Book of the Law had been placed in the walls of the Temple when the Temple was built, and was accidentally, or providentially, discovered by Hilkiah in the time of King Josiah. 'The Temple,' he says, 'was in the hands of a large number of workmen and masons, who were restoring such walls as were in bad condition. In the house of Yahveh, and consequently in the midst of this crowd of artisans and their overseers, was Hilkiah, the High Priest. The King sends Shaphan the Scribe to him to see to the payment of the cost of the repairs, and the High Priest at once says to him: "I have found the book of the Law." In the process of demolition the workmen must have either come upon a foundation deposit, or the book must have fallen out from a crevice, and the High Priest must have picked it up from among the rubbish.'

There is a difficulty which Professor NAVILLE does not refer to. The great chapter of the Book of the Dead was written on an alabaster plaque, or, according to a variant, 'in real lapis-lazuli,' and might be found in a good state of preservation

wherever it had been placed. But the Book of the Law would be written on parchment. How could it be preserved in the foundation of a wall? Here, however, Professor NAVILLE has the aid of Professor SAYCE, who writes an introduction to the book. Professor SAYCE tells us that it was the custom of the Egyptians, who generally used parchment or papyrus, to bury their documents, not under the foundations but in the walls of the Temple, where they would be more easily preserved and perhaps be more likely to be discovered. And the Israelites, who used the same perishable materials, would follow their example.

Now the first conclusion which Professor NAVILLE draws from this analogy is that the Book of the Law, which he takes to be the Book of Deuteronomy, was not written in the days of Josiah, by Hilkiah or any other, but had been deposited in the wall of the Temple at the time when the Temple was built, that is to say, in the days of King Solomon.

And the second conclusion is that, inasmuch as Hilkiah the High Priest was not able to read the book, it must have been written in the Babylonian script.

Professor NAVILLE does not set up this conclusion on the single circumstance that Hilkiah was unable to read the Book of the Law. Apart from this fact, there is evidence enough for him that up to the time of Solomon no books whatever were written in Hebrew. It may be that Hebrew—something like the Hebrew of the Bible—was the spoken language of Palestine. But the spoken language is one thing, the language as written down, the literary language, is another. And Professor NAVILLE believes that Babylonian was the literary language of Palestine to the time of Solomon.

It was Solomon that introduced the Hebrew letters. Where did they come from? They came from Phœnicia. The close intimacy between

Hiram and him would naturally bring Solomon into contact with the Phœnician writing. He would at once see its superiority over cuneiform for speed if not also for beauty. And Dr. NAVILLE believes that he induced or compelled the people who wrote in Israel to lay aside the Babylonian and adopt the Phœnician manner of writing.

Some account is given in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES this month of the devotional literature which has been published within the last few weeks. Its amount is a surprise. And if there is nothing in it of everlasting worth, there are several things which signify that 'the practice of the presence of God' is an unmistakable feature of the religious life of our day.

One book, however, was omitted from that survey. It stands apart. The least in outward expectation—for it is simply a small volume of meditations on the Psalms, gathered out of the columns of a weekly newspaper—it is found to possess the inexpressible charm which at once determines the place of a book. It is not of the day.

The author of this small book is the Rev. Percy C. AINSWORTH, a Methodist minister of the gospel, who died just after he had entered on his ministry. After his death some of his sermons were published, and attracted the attention of the discerning. This also is probably a volume of sermons. But its contents have been taken from the pages of *The Methodist Times*. The title of the volume is *The Threshold Grace: Meditations in the Psalms* (Kelly; 1s. net).

'The Threshold Grace'—that is the title of the first meditation. One guesses the text at once—'The Lord shall keep thy going out and thy coming in' (Ps 121⁸)—there is no other. For it is the crossing of the threshold that makes the difference. It is the threshold-line that divides our life.

On the one side of that line a man has his 'world within the world,' the sanctuary of love, the sheltered place of peace; the scene of life's most personal sacred and exclusive obligations. On the other side lies the larger life of mankind. And life is spent in crossing that threshold-line. Life is spent in going out to the many and coming in to the few, in going out to answer the call of labour and coming in to take the right to rest.

Now the Lord will preserve both thy going out and thy coming in. For both need preservation. And He is not in when you are out, or out when you happen to be in. The division-lines in our life have nothing that corresponds to them in the love of God. When you go out to your work and labour in the morning He is there; and when you return to your rest in the evening He is there.

'The Lord shall keep thy going out.' Life has always needed that promise. There is a pledge of help for men as they fare forth to the world's work. It was much for the folk of an early time that they could be assured of this. But how much more to us. The 'going out' means more and more as age after age, as generation after generation, passes. It was a simple thing once: 'Thy going out'—the shepherd to his flock, the farmer to his field; the merchant to his merchandise. To-day men go out to face a life shadowed by vast industrial, commercial, and social problems. Life has grown complicated, involved, hard to understand, difficult to deal with.

'The Lord shall keep thy going out.' But how is a man to continue conscious of the keeping? His contact is with things. He may know that the realities are elsewhere. He may know that contact with the world warps the judgment, confuses the reckoning, narrows the outlook. It would be easy to preserve some consciousness of the keeping if one had to battle for it. But the world does not call upon a man to assert his sense of the presence of God in business. The presence of God is not denied. It is simply passed over.

The danger in the places where men toil is not that God is denied with a vociferous atheism. It is that He is ignored by an unvoiced indifference. It is not the babel of the market-place that a man has most to fear, it is its silence.

This is the danger in going out. It is not that a man shall with difficulty earn his daily bread. It is that he shall forget that man does not live by bread alone. The psalmist makes no promise that work shall be found for the day and wages for it. His promise is that in finding work and earning wages a man shall maintain a life that is nourished on the love of God; that in providing for the body he shall be enabled to grow a soul. For that is the task that makes the going out so terrible in our day.

'And thy coming in.' We go out to face the battle; we come in to claim the rest. Why does the psalmist add 'and thy coming in'? 'Sometimes,' says Mr. AINSWORTH, 'there is a problem and a pain waiting for a man across his own threshold. Many a man can more easily look upon the difficulties and perils of the outer world than he can come in and look into the pained face of his little child. If we cannot face alone the hostilities on one side of our threshold, we cannot face alone the intimacies on the other side of it. After all, life is whole and continuous. Whatever the changes in the setting of life, there is no respite from living. And that means, there is no leisure from duty, no rest from the service of obedience, no cessation in the working of all those forces by means of which, or in spite of which, life is ever being fashioned and fulfilled.'

Now in all this we have not once been invited to make a mystical interpretation of the text. We have not once been encouraged to refuse to go out and come in. If the world, if the insistence of things as against realities, is recognized, not once is the suggestion made that the victory will be found in retreat. But if Mr. AINSWORTH is not mystical, he is imaginative. After the literal

application of the promise to the workshop and the home, he passes to the deeper application of it to our outward and inward lives.

'Thy going out'—that is our life as it is manifest to others, as it has points of contact with the world about us. We must go out. We must take up some attitude toward all other life. We must add our word to the long human story and our touch to the fashioning of the world. We need the pledge of divine help in that life of ours in which, for their good or ill, others must have a place and a part.

'And thy coming in'—that is the uninvaded place where our own thoughts dwell. 'Did we say uninvaded? Not so. In that inner room of life there sits Regret with her pale face, and Shame with dust on her forehead, and Memory with tears in her eyes. It is a pitiable thing sometimes, this our coming in. More than one man has consumed his life in a flame of activity because he could not abide the coming in. But, "The Lord shall keep thy coming in"—that means help for every lonely, impotent, inward hour of life.'

In the city of Ephesus there is to-day a square tower, standing on a slight elevation, to which the attention of the traveller is particularly directed by his guide. That, says the guide, fluently and impressively, is 'the prison of St. Paul.'

The prison of St. Paul? In Ephesus? The traveller, well read in the history of the Apostle to the Gentiles, knows that Scripture has nothing to say about an imprisonment of St. Paul in Ephesus. He dismisses the matter from his mind as a baseless local tradition.

But the tradition sometimes refuses to be dismissed. How did the tradition arise? Just because it is not mentioned in the New Testament there is the difficulty of accounting for it. If an imprisonment in Ephesus had been referred to,

sure enough a prison would have been found. Had the early Church neglected it, the modern guide fraternity would have rectified the neglect.

Certainly that square tower and that slight elevation never were the site or the walls of a city prison. But that only increases the difficulty. If the prison which the guide points to had had the appearance of a prison, just as the 'Skull Hill' at Jerusalem has some resemblance to a skull, the tradition could be accounted for. There the prison is: there St. Paul was imprisoned. But the prison is not there. Why does the guide to the antiquities in Ephesus say 'the prison of St. Paul'?

The tradition is found in the Acts of Paul and Thecla. It is therefore not an invention of yesterday. Now Sir William RAMSAY tells us that in the Acts of Paul and Thecla the local details are as a rule historically accurate. Is it possible, then, that St. Paul *was* imprisoned in Ephesus?

There are other items which look like evidence. In the sixteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle salutes 'Andronicus and Junius, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners.' Now there are excellent scholars who hold that that chapter was sent to Ephesus, not to Rome. If it was so, it is highly probable that the Apostle is referring to an imprisonment in Ephesus which these two men rejoiced in along with him. And if not in Ephesus, where were they in imprisonment with him?

In the same chapter St. Paul salutes Prisca and Aquila, 'who for my life laid down their own necks.' When? Where? They had been with him during the whole period of his three years' stay in Ephesus; where else were they with him, and where was this act of heroic self-denial in their power?

Once more. In the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul mentions Aristarchus, calling him, 'my

fellow-prisoner.' Now in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, that chapter in which is described the uprising under Demetrius the silversmith and the riotous meeting in the theatre at Ephesus, it is stated that the mob 'caught' Gaius and Aristarchus, who are spoken of as 'men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel.' Is it likely that the Aristarchus of the Epistle to the Colossians is *not* the Aristarchus of the Book of Acts? But if they are one and the same, where were he and St. Paul fellow-prisoners if not in Ephesus?

Nor are these all the indications yet. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (written from Ephesus) the Apostle refers to 'many adversaries' (16⁹); and more definitely says that he fought with wild beasts in Ephesus (15³²). In the second Epistle (18^{ff.}) he speaks of 'our affliction which befell us in Asia . . . that we despaired even of life. . . . We . . . have had the sentence of death within ourselves . . . (but) God delivered (*ἐπιβίωσατο*, 'rescued') us out of so great a death,'—which seems to point to an imprisonment and deliverance from it. Finally, in the same letter (11²³), he says that he has been very often in prison; and that was before he had been in prison either in Cæsarea or in Rome.

Now Professor Benjamin W. ROBINSON, of the Chicago Theological Seminary, who has sent an article on this subject to *The Journal of Biblical Literature* for the present year (Part II.), believes that if we can accept an Ephesian imprisonment we shall have a far better place for the writing of 'the Epistles of the Captivity' than we have in Rome.

It would especially be better, he thinks, for the writing of the Epistle to Philemon, and the story of Onesimus told in that Epistle. The question is, Where would Onesimus be likely to flee to, when he left his master at Colossæ? The answer will be, 'As far as he could go.' But that might not be very far. JÜLICHER says that Cæsarea is out of the question. Is not Rome almost equally out of the

question? Certainly take everything into account. Take into account the fact that all roads led to Rome, as all roads lead now to London. But take into account also the fact that Onesimus was not 'a bona fide traveller' but a runaway slave; that from Colossæ he had a week's journey through the interior of Asia Minor before he could reach the coast; and that then he had the long journey, whether by sea or by land, to Rome. And after he got to Rome and found the Apostle there, how could the Apostle promise to send him back? Where would he find the money for it? But Ephesus was the nearest great city. He could reach it on foot. And he would be almost as safe in the capital of the Province as he would be in the capital of the Empire.

Now notice that when St. Paul writes to Philemon asking him to take back Onesimus,

he adds, 'Get ready the guest-room, for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you,' Get ready the guest-room in Colossæ for a prisoner about to be released in Rome? Besides, St. Paul himself tells us that as soon as he is released in Rome it is his intention to make a journey to Spain.

But if the letter to Philemon looks as if it must have been written from a prison in Ephesus, the letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians (granted their genuineness) must have been written in Ephesus also. For who believes now that 'the Epistle to the Ephesians' was written to the Ephesians; or at least to the Ephesians alone? The opening sentence is enough to raise a serious difficulty—'Having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is in you.' Having heard—he who had spent three years among the Christians in Ephesus!

Christianity as Doctrine and as Dynamic.

BY THE REV. HENRY W. CLARK.

THE distinction between Christianity as doctrine and Christianity as dynamic is a very real one, and yet one that is too frequently ignored. It is a distinction really fundamental to any right ordering of religious thought and of theological discussion; and yet a great many controversies in the theological field fail, for want of an appreciation of it, to get anywhere near the heart of things. It should be said, also, that both the more conservative and the more progressive theological disputants frequently manifest the same want of appreciation of the point. It is quite true that what is commonly called 'progressive' theology makes an emphatic protest against regarding Christianity as a body of beliefs which the intellect must bring itself to accept; but the protest, as made, implies no stronger hold on the part of those who make it than on the part of those against whom it is directed upon the idea of *dynamic* Christianity; for the protest is generally directed towards particular doctrines, or towards what is considered excess of doctrine, or towards the idea that the

assent of the intellect can make a truly religious life. The progressive protest, as will presently be seen, really leaves Christianity as much a matter of doctrine as it finds it—of doctrine less in quantity, certainly, but of doctrine all the same. And the more conservative thinkers, those who are bent upon saving for faith some of the Christian doctrines which the 'progressives' impugn, equally miss the distinction alluded to—and thereby, let it be added, deprive themselves of one of the strongest weapons that would serve their cause. For the best way to save the cardinal doctrines of Christianity (and this is the main point which the present paper is designed to make clear) is to realize that Christianity is *not* primarily doctrine, but dynamic, and to realize, also, precisely what sort of dynamic it brings. An appreciation of Christianity's dynamic brings one back again to an appreciation of the importance of certain doctrines which are found to be, not mere intellectual theses or subjects of intellectual speculation, but formulations as to the nature and