

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE book of the Bible which is under the hottest fire at present is the book of Sirach. It is Professor Margoliouth that has done that. Not that Professor Margoliouth has any dislike to the book which we obstinately call Ecclesiasticus. What he has done he has done out of a sense of respect, if not even reverence, for Ben-Sira. But when it was discovered that a leaf of the Hebrew Ecclesiasticus was hidden in the bundle of MS. which Mrs. Gibson bought of a casual dealer in Palestine, and when it was immediately afterwards discovered that nine more leaves of the same MS., starting just where Mrs. Gibson's leaf left off, had been brought by Professor Sayce from the rubbish-chamber of the synagogue in Cairo, it could not but appear that Professor Margoliouth, in denying the genuineness of these leaves, was flying in the face of Providence. And so he has been answered almost as if he had attacked the book itself. Nor has he given quarter in replying.

We have had some share in the controversy, and it is not over yet. The contributions made to the present issue by Mr. Selbie, Professor König, Dr. Schechter, and Dr. Nestle will be read with interest. We have also in type a full review by Professor König of the more recently discovered fragments of the same and another Hebrew manuscript. But those who find the subject of special interest may be directed further to the pages of

the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, the *Critical Review*, and the *Journal of Theological Studies*,—all for the current quarter.

In the *Jewish Quarterly Review* the Rev. G. Margoliouth, M.A. (who does not agree with his relative and namesake that the Hebrew is spurious), publishes the Hebrew text of two more leaves. These leaves, he says, were acquired by the British Museum in 1898, and exactly supply two missing portions in Schechter and Taylor's new publication. Accordingly, he tells us that we now possess in Hebrew the following portions of the book: 3⁶–7²⁹, 11³⁴–16²⁶, 30¹¹–33³, 35⁹–38²⁷, and 39¹⁶–51³⁰.

Is it possible to get behind the Greek of our Gospels? Is it possible to come yet closer to the words of Christ? Mr. Burkitt believes it is. For the language spoken by Christ was not Greek but Syriac. It was the Syriac or Aramaic spoken in Palestine in His day. Now, the Aramaic of Palestine differed from the Aramaic of the Euphrates valley hardly more than the Lowland Scots differs from standard English. Well, there is a considerable early Christian literature that has come down to us from the Euphrates valley. Mr. Burkitt gives an account of it in his little book, *Early Christianity outside the Roman Empire*. And he believes that the study of that literature sometimes carries us behind the Gospels in Greek.

Thus our Greek Gospels give the name of Christ as *Christos*. The Latins merely transliterated that word, and we have followed their example. But in Syriac 'Christ' is *Mēshîhâ*, which is not only closer to the Hebrew 'Messiah' than the Greek *Christos*, but is, no doubt, the very word which was used in the Saviour's hearing. 'In the accusation of Lk 23² ("saying that He is Christ a King"), the term used,' says Mr. Burkitt, 'is *Malkâ Mēshîhâ*, the very same phrase, syllable for syllable, that we so often meet with in Jewish literature, and usually translate by "King Messiah."'

But it is more surprising and instructive, adds Mr. Burkitt, to find that 'salvation' is identified in the Syriac usage with 'life.' The Greek *sōtēr*, 'saviour,' is *Maḥyânâ*, that is, 'life-giver.' And 'to be saved' is in Syriac 'to live.' Now this is not due to poverty of language. If the Syriac had wished to express salvation as deliverance or rescue, it could have done so, for there are several words in Syriac meaning to 'deliver' or 'protect,' or 'be safe and sound.' 'May we not, therefore, believe that this identification of "salvation" and "life" is the genuine Aramaic usage, and that the Greek Gospels have in this instance introduced a distinction which was not made by Christ and His Aramaic-speaking disciples?'

The first volume of Dr. Cheyne's *Encyclopædia Biblica* has been sent us for review. It is the first of four volumes, in outward appearance remarkably like a volume of Messrs. T. & T. Clark's new *Dictionary of the Bible*. But it contains 281 fewer pages than the first volume of that Dictionary and 298 fewer than the second, and only runs to the end of D. There are no articles on the English Versions and no Biblical Theology, and yet, unless the remaining volumes are made larger than this one, the whole work is likely to demand five volumes instead of four.

The first thing we are asked to notice is the association of the book with the *Encyclopædia*

Britannica. The one name has suggested the other. The editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was also the author of the idea of which this book is the result, though it is admitted that this is not just the inevitable result of his idea. But at the same time we are warned against supposing that the two books occupy the same critical position. The Old Testament articles in this volume are written from the standpoint which, it is assumed, Professor Robertson Smith would have occupied now had he been alive. In actual fact their standpoint is that of Professor Cheyne. And while it is open to doubt whether Robertson Smith, had he been alive, would have occupied exactly Professor Cheyne's present position, it is quite true that the critical attitude of the two books is very different. In short, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and the *Encyclopædia Biblica* are associated only in name. If this book is right regarding the Bible, it is time we had a new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

The second thing we have to notice is the advanced critical attitude of this book. 'The sympathies of the editors,' we are told, 'are upon the whole with what is commonly known as "advanced" criticism.' The editors are Professor Cheyne and Dr. Sutherland Black, and its position, as we have said, is that of the former. Dr. Cheyne writes a very large number of the Old Testament articles. It has been computed that his initials are found at the end of seventy articles in the letter A alone, and no doubt he has a share in the numerous unsigned articles.

Now it is scarcely possible to speak too highly of Professor Cheyne's ability and industry. The amount of original work he produces is a surprise under any circumstances; in the circumstances under which he is compelled to produce it the marvel is almost sublime. But is it right that a dictionary of the Bible should reflect a single man's mind or be attached to a single man's position? Let the man move, and where is the dictionary? Professor Cheyne is as likely to

move as any man living. He never hesitates to move. He never hesitates to say that he has moved. He is ready to warn his readers not to follow the latest edition of his books until they have ascertained that he is not at work on a later. It is possible that on some points Old Testament scholarship will, ten years hence, have moved forward to Professor Cheyne's present position. But where will Professor Cheyne be then? Besides, it is not what a single scholar thinks now that we desire in a Bible dictionary, nor yet what scholars generally may think ten years hence. What we desire is the consent of the very best scholarship at the present time. Let the future be looked after by a new book or a new edition.

When we come to the New Testament articles we find that that is just what the editors themselves recommend. If it is true, and it appears to be true, that the miraculous is to be ruled out of court, the critical attitude towards the New Testament is also sufficiently advanced. But the editors do not seem to think so. 'Unfortunately,' they say, 'the literary and historical criticism of the New Testament is by no means so far advanced as that of the Old Testament.' Accordingly, they give us just what they have on the New Testament, and bid us wait for better.

Now we doubt if the criticism of the New Testament is so far behind that of the Old. We doubt if it is farther from finality. We even venture to say that if either of the editors had been specially a New Testament scholar that statement would not have been made. But if that is their own opinion, one wonders why they have given us New Testament criticism at all. Their very purpose is to reflect advanced criticism. It is because advanced criticism has not elsewhere been properly reflected that they have undertaken their work. But they refer, it appears, to the Old Testament. Why then did they not produce a dictionary of the Old Testament alone? There they are at home. There their work is original and confident. There they have gathered together a great quantity of

critical material, sifted it, and made it accessible. Why did they not have the courage of their preface, and leaving New Testament criticism till it was more advanced, give us an advanced dictionary of the Old Testament?

But the greatest surprise remains. There is no Biblical Theology. Principal Fairbairn has said that a Bible dictionary without Biblical Theology is the play of Hamlet without Hamlet. Why is there none? The reason given is that the literary and historical criticism of the New Testament is not so far advanced as that of the Old. But how does that interfere with the theology of the Old Testament? In every dictionary and in every book the Old Testament theology is now kept separate from the New. If the editors found a New Testament criticism and a New Testament theology both impossible, clearly they should have left both alone and spent themselves upon the Old Testament, giving us a dictionary that was up to date both critically and theologically.

No doubt their poor opinion of New Testament criticism is the explanation of the ecclesiastical articles. These articles are considered to be in flat contradiction to the principles announced in the preface. But the editors were probably not interested in them. If the time has not come for writing on the New Testament as a whole, it has not come for writing articles on the Church Government in it.

Thus there are two ways in which the value of the book seems to be impaired. In the Old Testament the editors have too rigidly made it reflect one man's opinions, in the New they have too carelessly let it represent any man's opinions. But it is probable that no serious harm will be done by either weakness. It is plainly written for scholars. They alone will be able to use it, they may be trusted to use it without harm. And scholars will certainly find it useful. We confess that the New Testament articles seem to us of less account even than the preface prepares us for. But the Old

Testament, so far as it is handled at all, is handled not only freely but skilfully. Dr. Cheyne is very bold; if he had been a little bolder and insisted on giving us a dictionary of the Old Testament alone, including its theology as well as its criticism, his book would have been welcomed beyond all others he has ever had to do with.

It is a pleasure to welcome the *Journal of Theological Studies*, the new quarterly, edited by Mr. C. H. Turner, with the assistance of Dr. Emery Barnes, and intended to reflect the studies in theology of the English universities. Its character we may not perhaps determine from the first number. But if we may, then it is to be at least as ecclesiastical as biblical. We trust it will not be more so. For, deeply as the Church of England is exercised in our day with questions ecclesiastical, the rest of the world is not exercised thereby, and never will be exercised thereby, as it is with biblical questions. And, besides, it is the glory of the universities to be ever correcting the one-sidedness of the Church, to be ever recalling her to those things which are the first principles of the oracles of God.

The first biblical article in this number stands fourth in order. It is a criticism by the Rev. J. A. Cross of Lightfoot's article in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* and Headlam's article in the new *Dictionary* on the Acts of the Apostles. Mr. Cross is an accomplished and uncompromising critic. His estimate of the historical value of the Acts is lower than that of either Lightfoot or Headlam, and he touches on some of its difficult places.

Mr. Cross holds that the earliest tradition in the Church was to the effect that our Lord's disciples left Jerusalem immediately after the Resurrection. This is the tradition followed by the Synoptics and the recently discovered fragment of the Gospel of St. Peter. But the writer of the Acts follows a wholly different tradition. According to him the disciples remained in Jerusalem throughout

the forty days that lay between the Passover at which Christ was crucified and Pentecost. 'It is impossible,' says Mr. Cross, 'to deny the existence of this contradiction.' And he does not think that either Lightfoot or Headlam has grappled with it.

The next 'serious contradiction' which Mr. Cross discovers is between the Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians. It turns, of course, upon St. Paul's visits to Jerusalem. Mr. Cross states the case briefly and clearly. 'According to the Acts, St. Paul returned from Damascus to Jerusalem soon after his conversion. At Jerusalem he was introduced to the apostles by Barnabas, and "was with them, going in and going out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord," until he was compelled to depart by the threatening attitude of the Grecian Jews (Ac 9¹⁹⁻³¹). After this we read of two official visits to Jerusalem—first, when he was sent with Barnabas from the Church at Antioch to carry relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judæa (Ac 11²⁷⁻³⁰ 12²⁵); and, secondly, when he and Barnabas were again sent from the same Church to the Council of Jerusalem (Ac 15¹⁻³¹). A later passage in the Acts puts in St. Paul's mouth the declaration that on his conversion he "declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance" (Ac 26²⁰).'

Now this representation of the apostle's movements differs materially, says Mr. Cross, from that which is contained in Galatians 1 and 2. There it is stated that St. Paul did not return to Jerusalem until three years after his conversion, having in the meantime gone to Arabia; that when he did go to Jerusalem he went only to visit Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days, seeing no other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother; and that then and afterwards he was unknown by face to the Churches of Judæa, being known to them only by report as a convert to Christianity. Then fourteen years later he went up to Jerusalem

'by revelation,' and laid before them the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, 'but privately before them who were of repute.'

Mr. Cross does not find either Bishop Lightfoot or Mr. Headlam quite satisfactory as he reads their explanation of this apparent discord. Lightfoot believes that the 'days' which St. Paul spent, according to the Acts, in Damascus might cover the three years mentioned in Galatians, since the expression is 'certain days' (*ἡμέρας τινάς*, Ac 9¹⁹), or 'many days' (*ἡμέραι ἱκαναί*, Ac 9²³). But Mr. Cross thinks that unlikely. Mr. Headlam is on safer ground, he considers, when he says that 'the obvious impression created by the narrative [in Acts] is that the writer did not know of the Arabian journey, nor of the length of time that had elapsed before the Jerusalem visit,' and that 'the two narratives give a somewhat different impression.' But even Mr. Headlam fails to satisfy Mr. Cross. Neither here nor elsewhere has he succeeded in removing Mr. Cross' objections to the historical accuracy of the writer of the Acts.

Mr. Cross is followed by the Rev. R. B. Rackham with an article on the other side. Not that Mr. Rackham deliberately answers Mr. Cross, or deals with his difficulties. But he argues for an early date for the Book of Acts. He argues for an earlier date than either Bishop Lightfoot or Mr. Headlam have seen their way to claim. 'And if he makes good his argument, our attitude towards many of the questions raised about the Acts will, as he justly says, be radically altered.'

Lightfoot was persuaded that the Book of Acts was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. For it is certain that it was written after St. Luke's Gospel. Now in St. Luke's Gospel there are expressions which seem to show that the destruction of Jerusalem was a thing accomplished. They occur in Christ's prophecy of the end. Jerusalem is compassed with armies (a phrase not found in the other gospels), who cast a bank about it,

level it with the ground, slay its inhabitants with the sword, or carry them captive, and tread it under foot. That minute description of the siege is held by many to prove that it was written after the event. But if the Acts of the Apostles was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, it was written some years after. For it clearly belongs to a period of rest. Now there was no such period after 70 A.D., after 64 A.D., indeed, when Nero's persecution began, till about 80 A.D. Accordingly, Bishop Lightfoot was persuaded that A.D. 80 was the date of the composition of the Acts.

Mr. Headlam is less confident. But both he and Professor Ramsay, together with the great majority of New Testament scholars, accept 80 A.D. or thereby as the most probable date. Mr. Rackham's date is just twenty years earlier, and great as the difference is, that is the only other date for which strong arguments can be urged. For if the Acts was finished before the destruction of Jerusalem, it was finished before the second trial of the apostle, it was finished just when it appears to be finished at the end of his second year's imprisonment, and Mr. Rackham's arguments are very strong indeed.

But first of all what about the discourse of the end? There is no doubt that St. Luke's account of it is more circumstantial than St. Matthew's or St. Mark's. But Mr. Rackham believes that there is no need to call in the aid of prophecy to prove an early date. The expressions used by St. Luke are quite general. They describe the ordinary features of the capture of a city. They can all be paralleled from the Old Testament. Westcott and Hort actually print two of them in quotation type. Moreover, no detail is given which would be specially characteristic of the final fall of Jerusalem. There is no prophecy of the presence of Titus, the obstinate resistance, the internecine strife within the city, the famine and its attendant horrors, the burning of the temple, or the fate of the rebel leaders. There is therefore nothing to hinder a man from examining the Acts itself to

see what it says about its date. The question is between 60 A.D. and 80 A.D.

Mr. Rackham begins with the most serious difficulty which surrounds the later date. It is the silence of the Acts as to St. Paul's martyrdom. St. Luke is an artist. He has an artist's conception as well as an artist's hand. Both the Gospel and the Acts are built after a definite plan. They also correspond with one another, part answering to part throughout. In both there is an Introduction or Preparation; then an outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and then the active Ministry. The ministry is concluded by a Passion, which is early anticipated, and is narrated at great length; and the Passion is followed by a Resurrection or Deliverance.

In all this the Acts corresponds with the Gospel. But it falls itself into two parts,—the Acts of St. Peter (i.–xii.), and the Acts of St. Paul (xiii.–xxviii.)—and each part is modelled upon the same idea. Thus—

	St. Peter.	St. Paul.
Preparation	i.	xii.
Manifestation of the Spirit	ii. 1-13	xiii. 1-4.
Work	ii. 14-xi. 26	xiii. 4-xix. 20.
Passion and Deliverance	xii.	xix. 21-xxviii.

At the end of the first part we have (together with the actual martyrdom of St. James) St. Peter's imminent death and deliverance. At the end of the second, St. Paul's actual death is wanting. But the Passion that went before is fully described—the bondage at Jerusalem, the delivery to the Gentiles, and the 'going down to the deep' (like Jonah) in the shipwreck.

Now, if St. Paul's martyrdom had occurred before St. Luke wrote, Mr. Rackham cannot understand how he could have omitted that last and most obvious parallel to the Passion in the Gospels. In short, it destroys the plan. Then the great detail of the last chapters is unintelligible. Written down soon after the event, the narrative

of the voyage to Rome is natural. It is unnatural if some two and twenty years intervened with their far more momentous events—the trial or trials, the condemnation, and the death. The history of the Passion was not crowned with death, because death had not taken place. St. Luke appears to have thought that it was not to take place as martyrdom. St. Peter passes out of the history with a miraculous deliverance. St. Luke's 'air of optimistic confidence' points to the supposition that in St. Paul's case also he regarded deliverance as the end.

But there is a greater difficulty. If St. Luke wrote after the martyrdom of St. Paul, it is difficult to explain why he did not mention it. It is far more difficult to explain why he made not the least allusion to it. If that event had been known to him and in his mind when he wrote, how could he have ended optimistically, we may ask; but we must much more seriously ask how he could have withheld his pen from the remotest reference to it. He was an artist. But it is never claimed that he was so consummate an artist as that. No doubt an air of sorrowful presentiment hangs over the last journey to Jerusalem. But a presentiment of what? Always of bonds and imprisonments; and always at Jerusalem. If St. Luke knew that the imprisonment at Jerusalem was but the first step to a martyrdom at Rome, would the goal of his presentiment or the nature of it have been what it is?

The same reasoning goes to show that the Acts was written before the end of St. Paul's first Roman imprisonment. For if he had stood before Nero, when St. Luke wrote, how much more effective would that have been as the fulfilment of the prophecy that he should bear 'the Name before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel' (Ac 9¹⁵) than his oration before a mere procurator like Festus and a petty king like Agrippa II. And if St. Paul had already been successful in his appeal and been set free, how much clearer would that have been as a vindica-

tion of the apostle's innocence than the declaration of Festus and Agrippa that they found no fault in the man.

When Mr. Rackham next urges against the late date of the Acts the fidelity of its pictures of the early Church in Jerusalem, it is not so easy to follow him. It is true that the picture is minute and apparently faithful in its minuteness. It is true that the conditions described passed early away. But it is easy to turn the edge of the argument by supposing that St. Luke got hold of documents. No doubt the documentary theory has its own difficulties. But it is a theory that cannot be ruled out of court. And as long as it is possible, it is an answer to this argument.

But Mr. Rackham's arguments are not done. The main motive of the Acts is stated in the preface. It was to continue the record of 'what Jesus began to do and teach.' That motive is never lost sight of. But there were subsidiary motives in the writer's mind. And one of these undoubtedly was the desire to write an *apologia* for Christianity to the Roman authorities. Now that purpose is excellently secured by the Acts before 64 A.D. Individual Roman governors had declared the Christians innocent; the final appeal was made to Rome. At Rome and in the imperial court Jewish influence was strong. Something was wanted on the Christian side to counteract that influence. St. Luke's narrative of facts was the strongest appeal possible. Here was even a reason for his hurrying forward its composition and publication. But in the year 64 all was altered. Nero's persecution began; Christianity was a forbidden religion. There was war between

the Christian and the Roman Empire. Henceforth St. Luke's *apologia* was worthless.

Again, though the Acts is no 'tendency-writing,' in Baur and Zeller's phrase, one of its minor motives is undoubtedly to demonstrate that within the borders of Christianity Jew and Gentile were alike at home. But in A.D. 80 no such demonstration was needed. The Gentile had been admitted long ago. He was the predominant partner. The temple had passed away, and the distinctions between Hebrew, Jew, Hellenist, Greek, and Gentile were merged in the simple division between Jew and Christian, and their very meaning was being forgotten.

And now Mr. Rackham closes in upon Mr. Cross. Between the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul there are 'some *apparent* discrepancies.' Mr. Rackham believes they are apparent not real. The Acts and Epistles can be fitted in. But it is clear that the Acts was written by a man who had not read the Epistles. The letters were written, but they were the private property of the Churches to which they had been sent. St. Luke knew the facts which they contain, but not the letters themselves. He does not contradict their facts, therefore; but neither does he avoid the appearance of contradiction. They write from within, he writes from without. His is the official report of what had transpired and been made public; theirs is the secret personal history, poured out of the apostle's heart to his apostate children. 'The position of the Acts,' says Mr. Rackham, 'would be very much that of a history of the Tractarian movement written before the publication of Newman's *Apologia* and the letters of Pusey and Keble.'