

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR CHEYNE writes to say that he does not identify the Archangel Michael with the Babylonian god Marduk, in his book entitled *Bible Problems*, upon which some notes were written last month; and he asks us to look again at p. 217 of that book. We have looked at the page again. The words are, 'Michael corresponds to Marduk,' which of course is not identification. But these words occur in the beginning of the note, which runs to more than twenty pages. And after reading the whole note over again, we have come to the conclusion that Dr. Cheyne must rewrite it, if he does not mean identification.

For, first of all, on this very page there is a footnote to the words 'Michael corresponds to Marduk.' Reference is made to Smythe-Palmer and to Bousset, who have said as much as this before Dr. Cheyne. The footnote ends with the sentence, 'One step further, and we shall get close up to the truth.' Now Dr. Cheyne has a way of telling us in one book that one step further may be made, and of making the step in the next book. But in this instance he does not seem to wait for another book.

A few pages later he says, 'To express myself more clearly, I hold it to be as good as certain that Michael is a degraded (but an honourably

degraded) deity.' Of what deity, then, is he the degradation? Of some Babylonian deity, it is clear. For on the same page Professor Cheyne proceeds, 'Who, then, is the "great prince" Michael, with whom we have identified both the "Being like a son of man" and the Messiah? He is not a Hebraized form of any one of the Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas (or Amshaspands), the six councillors and helpers of the great god Ahura Mazda (or Ormazd). He might indeed be so were it not for his connexion with the dragon-myth, which is primarily Babylonian.'

If, then, Michael is connected with the Babylonian dragon-myth, and therefore apparently the degraded form of some Babylonian divinity, of which divinity is he the degradation? Professor Cheyne says, 'The truth is that he corresponds rather to Marduk (Merodach), the son of Ea, and to Nabu (Nebo), the son of Marduk—originally perhaps identical (Zimmern)—in the genealogical system of Babylonian mythology.' Again, Professor Cheyne uses the phrase 'corresponds to,' and no doubt he uses that phrase intentionally. But here, at least, it does not seem to mean much less than identification.

And this is not the only evidence. In another place Professor Cheyne discusses the reference to

Michael in the Book of Revelation (12⁷⁻⁹). Michael is the 'antagonist and conqueror of the dragon' there. And who or what is the dragon? On this Professor Cheyne is quite explicit. 'That the seven-headed dragon (Rev 12⁹), also called the "ancient serpent" (12⁹ 20²), is no other than Tīamat, whom the god of the springtide sun—Marduk—encountered and overcame, and with whom Professor Friedrich Delitzsch long ago identified the "seven-headed serpent" of the primitive Babylonians, he [Gunkel] had no difficulty in showing.'

It is not a matter of the greatest moment whether Professor Cheyne identifies Michael with Marduk or not. It would not seriously affect our faith even if he were to prove the identification. But to us it would be a matter of grave concern if we were to misrepresent Professor Cheyne, to whom we owe so much. We did not use the word identification, but we used a word that was equivalent to that, and we seem to have had sufficient reason for it. Now, however, we know that Dr. Cheyne does not identify Michael with Marduk. We hope that he will soon write upon Michael again and tell us who he is.

Professor Cheyne's letter calls us back to his book. It contains things of greater consequence than this matter of Michael and Marduk. One of the greatest (and Dr. Cheyne makes much of it) is the discussion of the Virgin-birth of our Lord.

The Virgin-birth of our Lord—this is the great Problem in Dr. Cheyne's *Bible Problems*. The first question is, Where do we find the record of it? Dr. Cheyne says, properly in St. Matthew's Gospel only. St. Luke's Gospel now contains it also, but it did not do so originally. Dr. Cheyne thinks that Professor Schmiedel has proved that in St. Luke it is a later interpolation. The only genuine source is the prelude to St. Matthew. Where did St. Matthew obtain it?

The writer of the prelude to St. Matthew's Gospel obtained it from the Jews. He himself was a Christian, but he was a Jewish Christian. The adoption of the myth—it is a pity to have to use the word so early—by a Christian writer marks the last stage in its career. It was already, however, a common possession of those Jews who were waiting for a Messiah.

Now the Jews did not find the idea in Isaiah. For Isaiah says nothing about a Virgin-birth. He speaks of a 'young woman' as giving birth to a child, but he makes no hint that the young woman was a virgin. Nor did the Jews obtain it from the mistranslation of the Septuagint. It is true that the Septuagint mistranslates the word, rendering the Hebrew *ha'-almah*, 'the young woman,' by *ἡ παρθένος* 'the virgin.' And Professor Harnack sees no necessity for going further for an explanation. But Dr. Cheyne does not follow Professor Harnack. He prefers to follow Professor Gunkel. And he holds that we have first of all to discover why the Septuagint made the mistranslation.

Professor Cheyne believes that the mistranslation by the Septuagint is an intended mistranslation. It is a mistranslation with a motive. And that motive was to bring the Jewish Messiah into touch with the world-wide belief in virgin-birth as the appropriate entrance of the great into this world. By the time that the Septuagint translation was made, it was an 'international' belief that Kings and Redeemers should be born of virgin mothers. The Septuagint translators adapted the language of Isaiah to the popular idea.

But where did the popular idea come from? It came from Babylonia. Other sources are possible. Dr. Cheyne discusses the claim of an Arabian source in particular, and finds something in it. He finds this in it, that the North Arabian Dusares (the local name for Tammuz or Adonis) was worshipped, both at Petra and at Elusa, as 'the only-begotten of the Lord,' and his mother

as the Virgin. He further finds that the cult of Tammuz, or Adonis, 'was practised in the reputed cave of the Nativity at Bethlehem.' And if this was the case, as he thinks it was, long before the birth of Christ, he sees a close connexion between the virgin goddess, the mother of Dusares, and the Virgin Mother of our Lord.

But the Babylonian mythology is more important than the Arabian, and it 'explains a larger amount of the Matthæan prelude.' Where are we to look for it? Not in the Babylonian tablets, though there is something of it there, but, strangely enough, in the Bible. And not in the Old Testament, but in the New. The fullest account of that Babylonian myth, which gave us the story of the Virgin-birth of our Lord, is found in the Book of Revelation.

It is the woman of Rev 12, 'clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' The mythologies of Babylonia and of Egypt tell us why she was so magnificently arrayed. 'The reason was that, according to the underlying myth, she was the queen of heaven, the mother of the sun-god.' 'If there be any doubt of this, it is at once dispelled,' says Dr. Cheyne, 'by the reference in verses 3 and 4 to the deadly foe of the woman and her son—the great red dragon.' For this dragon is none other than the monster, so specifically Babylonian, known as Tiāmat, who represents primeval chaos, and who ruled the world till the young sun-god Marduk conquered her.

But is the 'woman' of the Apocalypse called a virgin? Professor Cheyne does not deny that there are difficulties in the narrative, and this is one of them. But he draws attention to the significant fact that there is no mention of a father. He thinks it is probable that in some early Jewish versions of the Oriental myth (versions that are now lost) the mother of the child was really called a virgin. But in any case the woman clothed with the sun 'evidently repre-

sents one of those heaven goddesses (*e.g.* Istar, Isis, Artemis) who were mothers, but not originally wives—in short, virgins, in the sense in which Παρθένος was applied to the great mother-goddess of Asia Minor.'

And when we ask what that sense was, Dr. Cheyne is perfectly explicit in telling us; but we must quote his very words:—

'And what was the original meaning of the term "Virgin"? As has long since been shown, it expressed the fact that the great mythic mother-goddess was independent of the marriage-tie. In those remote times to which the cult of that goddess properly belonged, "the mother held the chief place in the clan, and all women shared a measure of free love." The goddess-mother, in fact, preceded the goddess-wife.'

Professor Cheyne is not irreverent. He protests against the thought that there is irreverence in such an explanation of the Virgin-birth of Jesus. 'Reverence,' he says, 'is a fundamental requirement in the historical student of religion.' Professor Cheyne is not irreverent.

Nor does Professor Cheyne claim that the Babylonian mythology explains everything in the prelude of St. Matthew's Gospel. 'Let me,' he says, 'hasten to add that, though the prelude to the First Gospel does appear to contain mythic elements, it is equally clear that the Christians, even more than their Jewish predecessors, treated the borrowed material very freely; in the spirit of those words of St. Paul, "all things are yours."'

The woman arrayed with the sun, though she is still preserved in the Apocalypse, becomes in St. Matthew a lowly Jewish maiden. The functions of her Son, though in the Apocalypse they are still the destruction of the chaos-monster, become the internal as well as external salvation of His people. The royal capital of the Redeemer is changed from Babylon to Jerusalem. And the dragon, with jaws wide open to devour, becomes Herod,

'seeking the young Child' in Bethlehem 'to destroy Him.'

Mr. Harold M. Wiener, M.A., LL.B., of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law, has published a volume of *Studies in Biblical Law* (Nutt, 3s. 6d. net). The volume is handsome. The situation is hopeful. And we are not disappointed.

Professor A. B. Davidson once remarked that nothing had ever cost him more trouble than the writing of the article for the *Dictionary of the Bible* on COVENANTS. It is on Covenants that Mr. Wiener makes an original contribution in his book. He has discovered that in the Mosaic legislation there are two kinds of Covenants. There are Pillar-Covenants and Token-Covenants, and the difference between them is important.

The first Pillar-Covenant of which Mr. Wiener finds any record is the covenant which was made between Jacob and Laban (Gn 31⁴⁴⁻⁵⁴). But the first Token-Covenant is much earlier. It is the covenant which God made with Noah (Gn 9⁸⁻¹⁷). Now there must be two parties to every covenant, else how can it be a covenant? But the two parties may bind themselves equally; or only one of them may bind himself and the other simply acquiesce. The difference is very great. This is the difference between the Pillar-Covenant and the Token-Covenant.

When Laban and Jacob made their covenant at Galeed, they bound themselves equally to maintain it. 'This heap,' said Laban, 'is witness between me and thee this day. This heap be witness,' he repeated, 'and the pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm.' And Jacob also 'swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.'

There were two parties also to the covenant which God made with Noah, but only one of

them bound himself to keep it. Noah, observes Mr. Wiener, is silent throughout. His consent is never signified by word or conduct. The obligation is a purely unilateral obligation. God makes a covenant with Noah and binds Himself to keep it, setting His bow in the cloud as the token of it. No duty at all is laid upon Noah.

What is the value of the distinction? Mr. Wiener does not make that very clear. He seems to think that we have not much to do with that. But he holds that the distinction at least carries us back into a very primitive state of society. It is a state of society in which men make their bargains by pillars and by tokens, and not on written documents. Now Mr. Wiener is quite convinced that Moses could have drawn out a written deed with the best lawyer in London. For writing was common, and he was one of the scholars of his day. But Moses writes the history of a time when writing was not common; a time when men could not have signed their own names; a time when, if a bargain was to be made at all, it must be made with a pillar or a token.

So the pillar is the legal deed, the only deed that can yet be drawn up. And is it not sufficient? 'Behold,' says Joshua, when he is making a pillar-covenant with the Israelites, 'Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke unto us.' *It hath heard*, he said. The lawyer's deed cannot do more than that.

Have we to face the task of translating the Bible again? Is the Revised Version never going to take hold of the people? It is useless for scholars to use it in the study, to praise it in the periodical press. The people must read it, and demand to have it read in the pulpit. What progress is it making? Is there any evidence that it will be the people's Bible yet?

One thing at least the Revised Version has done

for us. It has removed the deep-seated prejudice against new versions. If the Bible has to be translated again, the new translators will be given a freer hand, and they will find better favour. It is too much to say that the Revised Version was killed by Dean Burgon. But there will never be another Dean Burgon.

If the Bible has to be translated again, who is to translate it? The whole world must translate it. Was even the Revised Version too catholic for its day? Was the ferocity of the opposition to the Revised Version when it appeared due to the breadth of the Committee? If the Committee had been narrower, would the translation have pleased better? It is not too catholic for our day. The Bible belongs to no party and to no country. An English translation must be made by men who know the three languages of Hebrew, Greek, and English.

Hebrew, Greek, and English—we have to rest upon each word. What a change has come over them even since the Revised Version was made. To know Hebrew now is to know what Mr. Johns knows, as well as all that Davidson knew. To know Greek is to know what Dr. Moulton knows, and what Professor Ramsay knows, as well as all that Hort and Westcott knew. To know English is to know what Dr. Sanday knows of the flexibility of the English language to-day, as well as all that Aldis Wright knows of what it has been in the past.

But in the meantime let us be translating wherever we find a passage requiring it. For there is no commentary on the Bible that can compare with a good translation. In reviewing Dr. Kent's *Beginnings of Hebrew History* in the *Inquirer*, Professor Addis of Manchester College, Oxford, comes upon the prayer of Balaam—that most pathetic and unanswered prayer: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his.' Dr. Kent is content with the traditional translation. But every reader of the story feels that it is most abrupt and inconsequential.

'Who can count the dust of Jacob,' says Balaam, 'or number the myriads of Israel?' And then: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his' (Nu 23¹⁰). What has the death of the righteous to do with the teeming population of Israel? Professor Addis proposes a very simple correction. It is abundantly justified by the text as it stands, and by the common usage of the Hebrew tongue. He translates: 'Let me die the death of the upright, and let my posterity be like his.'

Balaam saw the mighty battalions of the upright—that is, of the Israelites—moving on to victory. Oh that he and his race could live on in a future like theirs! It is a thought, says Dr. Addis, of corporate immortality, that immortality which dominated the Hebrew long before the belief in personal immortality had arisen, long before there had arisen even the desire for it.

In Mr. Johns' *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts, and Letters*, that book which has given so promising a start to the 'Library of Ancient Inscriptions,' there is more matter for the interpretation of the early books of the Bible than in any commentary that has been issued for many a day,—apart, perhaps, from a Gunkel or a Driver. And sometimes the interpretation is quite direct.

Take Joram's inquiry of Jehu. 'Is it peace, Jehu?' We thought he meant to ask if Jehu came with peaceful or warlike intention. Mr. Johns shows that he did not mean that. The phrase has a much wider meaning than that. It is a phrase with a history. And Joram used it as it had come down to him from the past.

The early Babylonian letters usually open with the formula, 'To A. say: Thus saith B.' It is a very ancient formula. It probably goes back to the time when the message was delivered verbally. There is in the full phrase a certain politeness dear to the Babylonians, who retained the

formula to a late period. The Assyrians never used it. They were content with the more business-like introduction, 'To A. thus B.' But the Babylonians even added something to their polite phrase occasionally. In letters that were more polite than ordinary they added good wishes for the recipient. Now in these good wishes the word *šulmu* plays a great part. *Šulmu* means peace. But soon the word lost its special meaning and took upon it the more general sense of well-being. *Šulmu iāši* literally means 'it is peace with me,' but in the polite letters of the Babylonians it was understood to signify 'I am well.'

And this was the meaning of Joram's question to Jehu. He did not rudely and madly demand of Jehu if he had come for peace or war. He politely inquired if all was well. Jehu's answer was rude enough. Playing on the double meaning of the word, 'What peace,' he said, 'so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?'

In one of the lectures on Inspiration of which he has lately concluded the delivery, the Dean of Westminster touched upon St. Matthew's reference to Jeremiah in Mt 27⁹⁻¹⁰. There Jeremiah is named as the prophet who prophesied of the thirty pieces of silver—'the price of him that was priced'—which were given for the potter's field. Dr. Armitage Robinson mentioned this as a mistake in St. Matthew's Gospel, that prophecy being contained in the Book of Zechariah.

Mrs. Lewis of Cambridge at once pointed out in the *Times* that 'according to the testimony of at least three witnesses (the Sinaitic Syriac Palimpsest of the Gospels and the Latin Codices Vercellensis and Veronensis, all of them being of high antiquity) St. Matthew did not mention the name Jeremiah in this place. He simply wrote: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet," either in Aramaic or in Greek. An early copyist of his Gospel, who had already

transcribed a similar phrase in 2¹⁷, added the word "Jeremiah" by mistake, little thinking that his word would be perpetuated until the end of the nineteenth century, and quoted in the twentieth by one of the greatest of living New Testament critics.'

Dr. Armitage Robinson replied to that letter. He referred to the words of St. Augustine on the subject. In his book *On the Harmony of the Evangelists*, St. Augustine argues that it is more probable that the name of Jeremiah was omitted from the manuscripts which do not contain it than inserted into those which do. The Dean of Westminster describes St. Augustine's statement as 'an excellent piece of criticism,' and asks if it can be bettered. In textual criticism the more difficult reading is preferred to the easier, and in this instance, he adds, the more difficult reading is supported by overwhelming evidence.

In another letter Mrs. Lewis points out that it is not quantity of evidence that tells but quality. 'When Greek manuscripts are quoted, it is surely important to bear in mind that the oldest extant ones are copies made not earlier than the fourth century; while the Sinai Palimpsest, the Latin Codex Vercellensis, and the Codex Veronensis are, all three, translations from Greek manuscripts of a much earlier period, probably of the second century.' As for St. Augustine, he is 'certainly a very high authority'; but he did not know Greek, and had probably never examined for himself either a Greek manuscript or a Syriac version. Mrs. Lewis's argument is that the case is not proven, and she thinks that St. Matthew should have the benefit of the doubt.

At this point Dr. C. H. Waller appears. The citation, says Dr. Waller, is right as it stands. The book called Zechariah consists of two portions. The portion in which this prophecy is found was 'undoubtedly' written by Jeremiah.

But the Dean of Westminster has the last word. He has just published his lectures—*Some Thoughts*

on *Inspiration* (Longmans; 6d.). He remains unconvinced and impenitent. 'It is better, with Origen and Augustine, to admit the difficulty; and then we may try to learn its lesson.'

What is a Broad Churchman? The High Churchman and the Low Churchman are fairly well defined to the ordinary eye. How does the Broad Churchman differ from both? Dr. Hastings Rashdall answers the question. At the first annual meeting of the Churchmen's Union, on the 6th October 1899, Dr. Rashdall preached a sermon on 'The Broad Church Party.' It is a great sermon, and Dr. Rashdall has done well to publish it now in his new and highly significant volume entitled *Christus in Ecclesia*. In that sermon, with clearness of vision and fearlessness of phrase, Dr. Rashdall answers the question, What is a Broad Churchman?

Dr. Rashdall does not put us off with what a Broad Churchman is not. He tells us what he is. He tells us that to the mind of a Broad Churchman there are three great essentials of the Christian Religion. Belief in a personal God is one. Belief in a personal immortality is another. And belief in a unique and paramount revelation of God in the historic Christ is the third.

Do not the High Churchman and the Low Churchman believe all that? No doubt they do. But would they use the words 'unique and paramount'? In mentioning the revelation in Christ, Dr. Rashdall says that the Broad Churchman does not limit the idea of revelation to the Old and New Testaments. Would the High Churchman and the Low Churchman say that? But Dr. Rashdall has not shown us what the Broad Churchman is yet.

The business of the Broad Churchman, he tells us, is to search for the truth. That is the difference at last between him and all other Churchmen. There is in the Church of England 'a spirit which

condemns inquiry, which closes its ears to the results of sober thinking and historical investigation, which makes the most tremendous assertions, pronounces the most comprehensive anathemas, erects the most exclusive barriers against fellow-Christians, upon the basis of the most flimsy and unexamined assumptions; which makes it a point of professional honour to be too busy to read (that is, to read anything except the party newspaper); which is ever ready to denounce as disloyal to his Church and to his cloth anyone whom study or reflection may have compelled to question some article of the fashionable shibboleth.' That spirit belongs to the High Churchman and to the Low Churchman. It does not belong to the Broad Churchman.

Is this mere Broad Church arrogance? Dr. Rashdall saves himself from the charge. 'I make no accusation,' he says, 'against any one party in the Church as a whole; immense reservations would be necessary in applying such remarks even to sections.' But there is such a spirit abroad in the Church. And Dr. Rashdall's point is that the Broad Churchman, if he is a genuine Broad Churchman, has neither part nor lot in it.

So the Broad Churchman has a mission to his fellow-Churchmen. He has a mission to the Low Churchmen or Evangelicals. He agrees with the Evangelicals 'in regarding the person and teaching of our Lord as the basis of all Christian thought and practice.' His mission is to 'free this Evangelical principle from its association with narrow theories about Christ's work, and a highly technical psychology of religious emotion.' He agrees with the Evangelicals, further, 'in placing the Bible at the head of our religious authorities.' But he insists that 'the Bible to which we appeal shall be the Bible studied and understood; the Bible in the light of criticism, of science, of history; the Bible placed in its true relation to the history of other religions; the Bible studied as a whole, with due sense of proportion, of the proper relation of its parts to one another, and

particularly with a due sense of the subordination of the Old Testament to the New.'

The Broad Churchman has a mission to the High Church party also. He agrees with the High Churchman in appealing to the Church instead of to the Bible. For the appeal to the Church, which is a living and progressive society, carries with it 'a recognition of the principle of growth, of development, of a perpetual inspiration, not limited to the first century or the fourth.' His mission to the High Churchman is, therefore, mainly one of encouragement. Let him carry his principle out. Let him emancipate the truth to which High Church teaching owes its great spiritual triumphs, from the too narrow intellectual envelope by which its growth has been fettered.

Dr. Rashdall's hope is in Bishop Gore. In the life of Frances Power Cobbe there occurs the bitter lament that 'somewhere between the years 1874 and 1878 there was a turn in the tide of men's thoughts (due, I think, to the paramount influence and insolence which physical science then assumed), which has postponed any decisive "broad" movement for years beyond my possible span of life.' In this sermon Dr. Rashdall also says, 'We are constantly being told that the Broad Church has disappeared.' But, issuing the sermon in the end of 1904, he adds a footnote: 'This was said more frequently in 1899 than now.' Yet his hope even now seems to be in detaching the leaders and scholars of the High Church party from its unintellectual residuum, rather than in the Broad Church party itself. His hope is in Bishop Gore.

The note which follows was not suggested by the last, though it may seem so. It was found quite accidentally in the middle of the current number of the *London Quarterly Review*. It is the difference between Church and Dissent.

The *London Quarterly Review* is now, beginning

with January, edited by Professor W. T. Davison. Professor Davison's first number is a strong one; and, as we say, right in the middle of it there is an article by Professor J. H. Moulton of Manchester on 'A Cambridge Oriental Scholar.' The scholar is the late Professor Cowell. The article is a review of Professor Cowell's *Life and Letters*. It is in a letter which Professor Cowell wrote home from India that we find a statement of the difference between Church and Dissent.

But first, about Professor Cowell himself in India. When he married his wife (with whom came that ambition with which Nature, says Dr. Moulton, omitted to endow himself) and was carried off from business to University, there was some thought of his taking orders. But he did not take orders. He did his work in Calcutta better as professor than he could have done as missionary. Young men began to come to his house on Sunday afternoons to be taught the truths of Christianity. The effect was profound. That class is remembered still, after more than forty years. 'It is a vivid illustration,' says Dr. Moulton, 'of the influence which can be exerted by an English civil servant in India, in the all too rare cases where the representative of the imperial race holds with fervour the faith in the light of which England's greatness has grown up.'

Well, one of those days he wrote a letter to his mother, and this is what he said: 'You would have been a little startled at a letter I wrote to a Babu lately, whom I have helped, in a recent correspondence, in settling some Unitarian difficulties. He wanted to know the differences between Church and Dissent. I told him they belonged to the region of *feeling*, not *conscience*. Those who by temperament admired antiquity and system, and held by the aristocratic part of our constitution, would always prefer the Church; while the lovers of change and reform and the democratic principle would, as a rule, prefer Dissent. To my mind, any hymn-book or missionary history is a convincing proof that the Spirit's influ-

ence is diffused on *each*. The catholic hymns of the whole body are contributed by members of every denomination.'

That is what the word 'catholic' means, is it not? But before leaving Professor Cowell and Dr. Moulton, let us add this additional paragraph: 'Your letter interested me very much, but I shall write no "great book" now. Our life is shaped for us, and one must trust in the guiding hand. I have not the originality which makes a man produce "great books": my work is influencing others and setting them to work. Besides, there

is another point which I must not forget. A happy married life does not help one in literary success. You will remember Bacon's phrase (from Cicero) about Ulysses: "Qui vetulam suam prae-tulit immortalitati." I am quite content that that line should be the verdict of my life, so long as one can honestly feel that "he has served his generation by the will of God" before he "falls on sleep." It seems to me, as I survey the past, that only men of great original genius, and especially *poets*, have any chance of achieving immortality. All other writers only become "*peat*," as Carlyle says—sooner or later.'

The Method of the Christ.

BY THE REV. CANON T. H. BINDLEY, D.D., PRINCIPAL OF CODRINGTON COLLEGE, BARBADOS.

THE modern traveller who visits the Eastern side of the Dead Sea, on the borders of Moab, is shown a waste of ruins standing starkly bold and clear against the sky, high on four thousand feet above the Dead Sea level. The neighbourhood is gloomy, with black basaltic rocks, and seems smitten with that curse which has ever hung like some dark and oppressive pall over the region of the Cities of the Plain.

Here, in the time of our Lord, Herod Antipas occupied a strong fortress castle known to the Greeks as Machaerus, and into one of the dungeons beneath it he had thrust the Baptist, whose unfaltering denunciation of the tetrarch's sins is commemorated in the words of that collect which was composed for his Festival by the English Prayer Book revisers in 1549—he 'constantly spoke the truth and boldly rebuked vice.'

We may picture to ourselves the hitherto dauntless hero, in the weariness of his cell brooding and pondering over certain splendid passages in his all too short career. It had been his to point out to his followers 'the Lamb of God who bears away the sin of the world'; his to utter burning words of scathing rebuke to the Pharisees who flocked to the Jordan's bank to see the new Prophet; his to give practical advice to various groups of startled inquirers, who propounded the ever new and ever old query, 'What, then, shall we do?'; his to

receive, on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, the MESSIAH Himself, and with Him descend into the flowing stream, while the heavens opened above, and the FATHER'S voice pealed forth designating the Baptized One as His own beloved SON. These and other incidents John must have continually thought over; and from time to time tidings reached him, brought by disciples who occasionally broke the monotony of his days, tidings of wondrous miracles and cures wrought by Him whom he had baptized; and he would begin to wonder and ponder still more deeply on the past. He would feel very keenly that time was slipping by. Had not the message committed to himself been the proclamation of a Kingdom nigh at hand? Was there not a general expectation that the Kingdom of God would immediately appear? Was not the whole nation groaning for a speedy Deliverer? Had not the Great Teacher Himself taken up the Baptist's own cry, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'? Was there not something unreasonable in this long delay of month after month before the definite setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth was brought about? Where were the loud advance and majestic mustering of adherents such as must surely herald the Advent of the Ransomer of Israel? Surely THE CHRIST should take more definite steps to assert His claim and to