

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES has liberty here to say that he has undertaken the editorship of a weekly journal, of which the name will be *The Sunday School*. A full statement of its aim, and of the important feature attached to it, named "The Sunday School College," has been issued, and it will be sent to any of the readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, who send their name and address, and the name of the Church to which they belong, to the Editor, at Kinneff, Bervie, N.B.

The members of the Guild will now have accomplished some part of their work on either or both of the portions of Scripture chosen for study this session. We are now, therefore, prepared to receive the fruit of their study. As elsewhere indicated, the best of the papers received will be published in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, and whichever volume the writers choose out of the list which is given, will at once be sent to them by the Publishers. It will now be in our power to set apart more space to the Guild, and we trust that many of the members will send short and pointed papers. Though it is impossible that more than a small fraction of them can be printed, and though, as we have no doubt whatever, the merits of some may be missed and others chosen in their stead, still the value of merely setting down one's thoughts clearly upon paper should be recognised as great enough to secure us a goodly list every

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month. There are two things we should like to say in respect of the character of the papers that are sent. First, we greatly desire that they should be expository rather than critical; and secondly, that they seek truth more than originality—it is scarcely possible now to seek and find both. The writers' names must accompany their papers, but any request not to publish them will be observed.

Once more the Church Congress has come and gone. There were those who cried *Cui bono?* before it came, and there are those who cry *Cui bono?* still more loudly since it is past. But we do not share their pessimism. It may be that little actual contribution has been made to any of the subjects discussed, for they are always very numerous, and the time is strictly limited. But there is one thing the Congress always does, and it is a most useful, however humble, service. It tells us where we are.

The three subjects in this year's Congress that lie most directly in our way are the Basis of Authority in Religion, Christian Ethics, and the Permanent Value of the Old Testament for the Christian Church. And in each of these subjects one paper was read of so much ability and force and suggestiveness, that they alone redeem the Congress from all charge of barrenness or death. The first was by the Headmaster of Harrow

School, the Rev. J. E. C. Welldon, M.A.; the second by the Editor of the *Spectator*, Richard Holt Hutton; and the third by Professor Driver of Oxford. With Dr. Driver's concurrence, we publish the last-named paper in this month's issue.

Another volume has recently appeared on the perplexed problem of the origin and affinities of the Hittites—*The Race and the Language of the Hittites*, by Léon de Lantsheere (Brussels: Goemaere); and Professor Sayce reviews it in the *Academy*. His first sentence is: "This is one of the best books which have been written about the Hittites." And he adds: "Indeed, I do not know where else there is to be found so clear and comprehensive an account of what is known or conjectured up to the present moment concerning that interesting people of the ancient East."

Of the things which are "known," in contrast with the things which yet are only "conjectured," about the Hittites, Professor Sayce mentions their northern origin, and the early date of many of the monuments which they have left behind them. It is known also, he holds, that they were not a Semitic race, and did not speak a Semitic tongue. And, most significant of all, it is known that the authors of the Hittite monuments were really the same as the Hittites of the Old Testament, and of the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Vannic inscriptions.

But, while Professor Sayce is writing these things, M. Halévy, an archæologist and scholar of no mean reputation, is reading a paper at the Académie des Inscriptions upon two Semitic inscriptions, now in the Berlin Museum, which, in his opinion, overthrow these views of the Hittites. "The two inscriptions," says the *Academy*, "were found at Zinjirli, in Northern Syria. Though greatly worn and mutilated, M. Halévy has been able to read them. They are written in a dialect of Phœnician, closely resembling Hebrew, and but slightly influenced by Aramæan. They were

engraved by two kings of the country of Yadi, both styled Pannamu, who lived in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. The former dedicates a statue to Hadad, the supreme god of the Hittites; the latter was restored to his grandfather's throne, as a vassal, by the Assyrian army, under Tiglath-Pileser III. According to M. Halévy, these inscriptions prove conclusively that the Hittites were a Semitic race. The hieroglyphs found in many parts of Asia Minor must, therefore, be of Anatolian, not of Syrian, origin; the few that have been found at Hamath and Aleppo being only the results of a temporary conquest."

So we must wait a little longer. This problem is not yet solved.

Readers of Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus* will note with satisfaction the author's distinct assertion of his belief in the divinity of our Lord. In a brief and sympathetic note in the *British Weekly*, in reference to the issue of the second volume of this work, the statement was hazarded: "The writer is certainly not a believer in the deity of Christ." This having come under his notice, Dr. Wendt, with characteristic promptitude, replied: "I have not attacked, but defended, the authenticity of those sayings in our Gospels where Jesus proclaims His nearest and unique relation to God. Certainly, I have not explained these sayings in the traditional sense of dogmatic Christology; for I sought to understand them historically, only according to their context, and to their connection with the whole of Jesus' views. But although Jesus Himself does not expressly use the term of His 'deity,' it would be incorrect and misleading to say that, according to my interpretation of His words, Jesus Himself was 'not a believer in His deity.' Indeed, His words, when justly interpreted, state His divine character, not in a smaller, but in a higher sense—not on a feeble, but on a firmer foundation, than the traditional Christian dogmatics.

"My own belief in Christ follows the authority of Jesus Himself; and I think my conception of His deity, as according to the just sense of His words, is not an incorrect one."

It would be a great gain, not for the history of Egypt only, but for the study of the Old Testament, if the dates of the ancient Egyptian dynasties could be fixed more certainly. The range of difference in the dates assigned by leading Egyptologists is at present enormous. Bœckh, for example, gives the date of the reign of the first Pharaoh, Mena, as B.C. 5702, while Bunsen brings it down so low as B.C. 3623—a difference of 2079 years. It is, in Brugsch's words, as if one should hesitate whether to fix the date of the accession of Augustus at B.C. 207, or at A.D. 1872.

Is it possible that astronomy will, after all, be the means of resolving the difficulties, and ending the confusion? Mr. G. F. Hardy believes that it has done so already. He holds that the measurements which were carried out by Piazzi Smyth upon the Great Pyramid, compared with the more recent measurements of Dr. Flinders Petrie on the trenches and other outworks, conclusively prove an astronomical knowledge and an astronomical intention on the part of the pyramid builders. So close is the correspondence of these independent measurements that, he says, "it is quite out of the question to regard it as accidental."

This astronomical intention being granted then, the date of the great Fourth Dynasty—the Pyramid-building Dynasty—may be fixed very closely indeed. "The net result is that the three reigns of Senefru, Khuffu, and Kaffra may be definitely assigned to the century 3700–3600 B.C."

Now it is remarkable that these dates correspond most closely with those already given by perhaps the most distinguished Egyptologist living, Heinrich Brugsch-Bey. He places Senefru at the end of the Third instead of at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty; but the date he gives him is 3766 B.C. And he ends the Fourth Dynasty in 3600. Following Brugsch's chronology then, we may accept it as something more than a probability that the date of the first historical king of Egypt is B.C. 4400.

Many attempts have been made to draw an intelligible meaning out of that obscure but interesting historical text, Numbers xxi. 14. The possible range of interpretation is well illustrated by the wide difference between the Authorised and Revised Versions. In the former it stands thus: "Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, What he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon;" while the latter gives us: "Wherefore it is said in the book of the Wars of the Lord,

Vaheb in Suphah,
And the valleys of Arnon"—

making the quotation part of a song or battle ode.

Quite recently, two new and notable efforts to find a satisfactory meaning have been made in the *Academy*. The first is by Mr. S. A. Binion. Catching a hint from the fact that the Septuagint gives "Zoob" for the otherwise utterly unknown word "Vaheb" of the Hebrew, Mr. Binion suggests a slightly different change. The LXX. read a Z for the V. That is all that was required to give them Zoob in the Greek for Vaheb in the Hebrew. He proposes to read an R for the V. Thus he gets Rahab instead of Vaheb. And he translates: "Wherefore it will be said in the book of the wars of the Lord, That which happened to Rahab in Supha, and that which has taken place at the brooks of Arnon." Now "Rahab" stands for Egypt; as in Isaiah xxx. 7, "For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose; therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still"—a clearer passage, by the way, than any that Mr. Binion gives for proof. And *Supha* he takes to signify the Red Sea (in Hebrew, *Yam Suph*). Hence the meaning of the quotation from the book of the wars of the Lord will be that in all future history of Israel the miracles at the Red Sea and at the brooks of Arnon will be recounted side by side as equally marvellous.

The other interpretation comes from Professor Sayce. To some critics the first and the happiest part of their task is the demolishing of their

predecessor's theory. Professor Sayce also begins that way. But he spends few words upon it: "Mr. Binion's conjecture is not likely to satisfy any one except its author." He then goes direct to "that impossible word" *Vahab*. He accepts the reading of the Septuagint, which merely changes the *V* into a *Z*, as we have seen. This gives in Hebrew "Zahab" (Greek, *Zoob*). And he translates: "Wherefore it is said in a book, The wars of Yahveh were at Zahab in Suphah, and at the brooks of Arnon." Now, we learn from Deut. i. 1 that Zahab was in Edom, not far from Suph or Suphah. And 1 Kings ix. 26 tells us that "the sea of Suph" was the Gulf of Aqaba. Consequently, one of the "wars of Yahveh" was in Edom, in the neighbourhood of the Yam Suph, or Gulf of Aqaba.

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"The war of Yahveh in this part of Edom," adds Professor Sayce, "is unrecorded in the Old Testament. We should not have heard of it at all had it not been alluded to in 'a book' in connexion with the war against the Amorites at the brooks of Arnon, of which we have an account. But it may be possible to bring it into relation with a campaign made by Ramses III. of the Twentieth Egyptian Dynasty against 'the Shasu of Mount Seir.' A discovery I was fortunate enough to make last winter has shown that the Israelites had not as yet settled in what was afterwards the territory of Judah when Ramses III. overran Southern Palestine and captured its chief cities; and it is further remarkable that he alone of Egyptian Pharaohs—so far as we know—ventured to lead an army into the fastnesses of Mount Seir. It is, therefore, by no means improbable that 'the war of the Lord' referred to in the Book of Numbers was a war waged with the Egyptian king."

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Under the title of "The New Ethical Movement in France," the Rev. Robert Latta, M.A., of St. Andrews, contributes an important article to the November issue of *Guild Life and Work*. Since

1830, he says, there have been two great literary movements in France—the Romantic and the Naturalistic. But now there is being born a third. "The Romantic movement may almost be said to have been lost in the Franco-German War, and out of the bitterness of defeat and humiliation there sprang the sad hopeless Naturalism that has reigned in France for twenty years, and is even yet, perhaps, dominant on the whole. It is essentially negative in all its ways, cynically careless about morality, and hopeless of spiritual progress, content to paint cleverly the darkest side of 'what is,' and laughing at the idea that anything 'ought to be.' But 'the generation born of the siege,' as a recent writer calls it, is awaking to hope and work, and seems likely to reject in scorn the weak despair of its fathers. Some of the most promising young writers of the day are protesting earnestly against the current views and methods, and their influence is evident even in the recent writings of the Naturalists themselves."

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Of these younger writers, Mr. Latta specially names M. Paul Desjardins. Within the last few months, M. Desjardins has published a little volume under the title of "Present Duty" (*Le Devoir Present*. Paris: A. Colin et Cie). It has been much discussed in Paris. For, as Mr. Latta most truly says, "there has always been in France a very close connexion between literature and life. Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo were not mere writers. They were all more or less politicians—national prophets. Ideas among the French rapidly take form, and are expressed in public acts. Playwrights can rouse excitement as easily as politicians, and a new literary movement in the theatres may split the people into bitterly contending factions. A new way of writing poetry and novels very often brings with it a new attitude towards everything in life—a new morality as well as a new fashion in hats and coats. The idea takes possession of men, and is wrought out to its extremest practical consequences. Partly to this may be due the interest which, a year or

two ago, Paris felt in M. Paul Bourget's *Le Disciple*, a book in which, with wonderfully subtle analysis, there is written the story of a young man who applies literally and rigidly in practice the principles of a negative philosopher, and who, in consequence, is guilty of a dreadful crime. This quick interchange of ideas and practice gives to French literary movements a strong ethical interest."

Now in this little work on "Present Duty," M. Desjardins says that the question which most sharply divides men at present is not a speculative question, or a question of religious doctrine, such as that of the divinity of Christ, but a question regarding the foundations of morality. "Are slavery to animal instincts, selfishness, lying, absolutely evil, or are they merely 'bad form'—things deprecated just now, perhaps, but which, when they have been made pretty and graceful, may after a time smile upon us, satisfy us, give us a type of life equivalent to that of the sages and the saints, since there is really nothing to show that the one is worth more than the other? Are justice and love certainly good, an absolute law and a safe haven; or are they probably illusions, possibly vanities? Have we a destiny, an ideal, a duty; or do we busy ourselves without a reason and without an aim for the amusement of some malicious demiurge, according to the absurd caprice of great Pan? That is the question which divides men."

So M. Desjardins puts it. One would venture to say that the answer must be near at hand. Not so in France. That is but one view. There is another. And between these two views there must be war to the teeth—"the strife of the Negatives with the Positives," as M. Edouard Rod expresses it, "of those whose tendency is destructive with those whose tendency is constructive." And meanwhile, by the count of heads in literary France, "the Noes have it," as M. Desjardins admits. If not in words, certainly in life, the majority is on the negative side of the

question; and it includes such names as Renan [surely one gone to the other side now, M. Desjardins?], Leconte de Lisle, Edmond Scherer, Zola, and Taine. And one has only to open one's eyes in Paris to see the extent to which a negative influence prevails. "The life of society, from the highest to the lowest, is one continuous pursuit of pleasant sensations. The various social ranks differ only according to the quality of the sensations they seek. The less educated are content with drinking and lust; the better educated are intellectual epicures and mystics. Even honourable men are degraded, almost unconsciously, by contact with the corruption that surrounds them."

Alongside of this, however, there is an intense sadness, a dreary feeling of weakness and of the vanity of things. People, says Mr. Latta, must inevitably come to see that the selfish, self-seeking way of life is a *cul-de-sac*, that there is "no road this way," and that if we would continue to live and move, we must turn back.

Surely "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." If these young and hopeful writers in France to-day would but go more fairly out into the open! But they fight against terrible odds when they stand by the mere idea of duty. They do not, it is true, reject religion; they even claim the sympathy and assistance of all men of religious profession and life. But they will have nothing to do with religious doctrine. Their one word is "Duty." It is a great word, certainly. But how much more powerful for good, how much more able to cleanse the stuffed bosom of France of that perilous stuff which weighs upon her heart to-day, if it were moved and inspired by faith in God! And it will be so. For France, like England, "is looking with interest and hope towards Africa, and to the far-off lands of gloom, realising that she has a work to do there, and dimly feeling that out of the darkest places the new dawn must come."