

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

MESSRS. WILLIAMS & NORGATE have published the first number of *The Hibbert Journal*.

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With the first number there is issued a manifesto, signed by both editors. Its opening sentence is, 'The differences of opinion existing in regard to matters religious, theological, and philosophical are recognized by the editors of *The Hibbert Journal* in the spirit in which any natural phenomena would be regarded.' And the last sentence of the first paragraph is, 'Among extant varieties of religious thought, none is selected by us as the type to which the rest should conform.'

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What does that mean? The first sentence means that the editors invite all the followers of all the creeds, and all the followers of none, to come and fight their battles in the pages of *The Hibbert Journal*. 'No attempt,' says a later paragraph, 'will here be made to select the views of concordant minds. Rather will controversy be welcomed.' But the last sentence? Does it mean, as Mrs. Besant would say, that one religion is as good as another—and better, for its own country and tribe? Or when they say, 'Among extant varieties of religious thought,' do they mean Christian thought? They do not tell, and we cannot say.

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Nevertheless, we are not left to surmise that the  
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editors have no creed; we are not left in ignorance as to what it is. Their creed consists of three propositions. The first is that the Goal of thought is One; the second, that thought, striving to reach the Goal, must for ever move; the third, that the movement by which the many approach the One is furthered by the conflict of opinion. So we think it must mean Christianity after all. For it was Christ who said, 'I and the Father are One'; it was Christ who said, 'I came that they might have life'; and it was Christ who also said, 'I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword.'

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The contents are varied. The first article is doctrinal, the second philosophical, the third scientific, the fourth literary, the fifth exegetical, the sixth textual, and the seventh cosmological.

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Professor Percy Gardner has the first place, with the weakest article. This is probably not intentional (as if the contents were meant to rise to a climax with Dr. Horton's 'Catastrophes and the Moral Order'); for, if weak, it is well written. Yet it cannot be simply because it is well written that this honour is conferred upon it, the literary grace of Dr. Stopford Brooke's article on Matthew Arnold being still greater. Perhaps it stands first because it seems fundamental—'The Basis of Christian Doctrine' is its title. But that is just where its weakness lies. In the very beginning

Dr. Gardner removes the true basis of Christian doctrine, and that too by so airy a sentence as: 'The history contained in the Gospels is certainly largely mixed with mythology.' And after that, though the article is surprisingly 'orthodox,' Christian doctrine never finds a resting-place.

The Principal of the University of Birmingham states 'the Outstanding Controversy between Science and Faith.' He says it is the efficacy of prayer. For there is no controversy with Science on the existence of God, the controversy now is upon His government. 'Is the world controlled by a living Person, accessible to prayer, influenced by love, able and willing to foresee, to intervene, to guide, and wistfully to lead without compulsion spirits in some sort akin to Himself? Or is the world a self-generated, self-controlling machine, complete and fully organized for movement, either up or down, for progress or degeneration, according to the chances of heredity and the influence of environment?' That controversy, says Sir Oliver Lodge, is not yet settled, but he clearly thinks that faith and prayer will win.

Enough. It is a good first number, somewhat advanced perhaps, in spite of the editors' determination to have nothing to do with 'advanced' thought and to give themselves wholly to thought 'which advances,' but not enough to startle us or dismay.

A series of volumes entitled 'Handbooks for the Clergy' are under issue by Messrs. Longman. One of the series has been written by the new Dean of Westminster. It is called *The Study of the Gospels*.

The series seems to say that the Clergy are not very well educated, even in the Gospels. Dean Armitage Robinson is elementary, as all his fellows have been. He silently assumes that about the study of the Gospels the clergy know nothing at all, just as Professor Swete assumed that they knew nothing about the study of the Fathers, and

Canon Mason that they knew nothing about the Ministry of Conversion. But it is always possible to be at once very elementary and very profound, like the Gospels themselves. It is possible, although it is not easy. And Dean Armitage Robinson has succeeded in making the clergy think.

How should the Gospels be studied? The Dean of Westminster begins with their date and authorship. But he does not recommend his readers to begin in that way. He deliberately advises them not to begin in that way—at least if they have serious doubt about their date and authorship. He says, 'I should not ask a man who had serious doubts of the truth of Christianity—to enter upon a literary inquiry as to the date and authorship of the Gospels. I should say: Leave that untouched for the present. Read the books themselves, wholly irrespective of when or by whom they were written, or even of their accuracy in detail. Take the picture of Christ as drawn by the vigorous hand which wrote our Second Gospel. Read it as a whole; let the story grow upon you; watch that powerful sympathetic original Character; ask how the simple unliterary author came by this story, if it was not that the story was a direct transcript from the life. If a new Power was then manifested in the world, revealing a new ideal of human goodness, saving men everywhere and only refusing to save himself, must you not yearn to welcome the belief that this Power was not finally vanquished by death; but still lives to save men to the uttermost?'

Dean Armitage Robinson himself, however, begins with the date and authorship of the Gospels. He cannot do otherwise. And he begins with St. Luke. For he has no doubt that the Third Gospel and the Acts are of one authorship, that indeed they form two parts of one work, which the author intended to complete with the issue of a third. Now at a certain point in one of these parts this author begins to use

the pronoun 'we.' That pronoun leads us to a date. For it means that he who wrote the Third Gospel and the Acts was a companion in travel of St. Paul, whose history he carries down to the year 63. That he does not carry it farther was due, Dean Robinson thinks, to his intention to write another book. There was a certain length, you see, that was considered proper for a book in those days, and the book of the Acts had reached it. The rest of the history must be told in another. And so it is not to be assumed that the whole work was finished by the year 63, or even before the year 70. Dean Armitage Robinson is inclined to put the date of the Gospel according to St. Luke 'shortly after 70.'

Now he who wrote the Third Gospel made use of the Second. Therefore the Second Gospel was already written when St. Luke began his work. And it is practically certain that it was written by St. Mark. For 'it is exceedingly probable that St. Peter could not write or preach, even if he could speak at all, in any language but his mother tongue, the Aramaic of Galilee, a local dialect akin to Hebrew.' And the tradition which not only gives this Gospel the title, 'According to St. Mark,' but also says that St. Mark was the interpreter of St. Peter, has every probability in its favour. The date is probably the year 65.

Seventy A.D. for St. Luke, 65 A.D. for St. Mark—these dates are practically certain. It is otherwise with St. Matthew. 'I do not know a harder question,' says Dean Armitage Robinson, 'in the whole of New Testament criticism than the date of the First Gospel.' There are things internal that are sure enough, as this, that 'St. Matthew' used St. Mark and did not use St. Luke. There are also things external that are at least quite likely, that St. Matthew had something to do with the writing of a Gospel. But they do not carry us far. And at last Dean Armitage Robinson ends with a verdict of *non liquet*: 'I do not feel that I am entitled at present to express a definite

opinion on this difficult question, and therefore I must content myself with leaving the authorship and date alike uncertain.'

The opening article in the *Expositor* for October is by Professor Swete of Cambridge. It is simply the exposition of the last five verses of St. Matthew's Gospel. It was read 'to a gathering of past and present members of the Cambridge Clergy Training School,' held at Westcott House, July 7-9, 1902. It is well worth its place in the *Expositor*.

At the end of the article, Professor Swete explains why he chose such a passage for such a gathering. It was a gathering of clergy, of ministers of the Word, of English parish priests,—what had they to do with this passage? Does it not contain the marching orders of the missionary? It does. Dr. Swete rejoices to find that it is the great incentive to missionary work. 'The immense field it opens ("all the nations"), the vast reaches of time it contemplates ("unto the consummation of the age"), the responsibility it lays on all Christian people ("go and make disciples"), the infinite resources upon which it permits them to draw ("all authority")—such a combination of motives to missionary and evangelistic work is unparalleled.'

And yet Professor Swete deliberately chose this passage for those who stay at home. For he could remember none more stimulating to a body of men who are engaged in pastoral work. It contains the missionary's marching orders—that happily is recognized on all hands. But it also contains the commission of the pastor and teacher. For He who said, 'Go ye therefore and make disciples,' said also, 'teaching them to observe.' And behind the teacher also there is the authority, and with him there is the presence, of the victorious Christ, 'until the end of our brief share of "all the days" which span the interval between the Advents.'

The first thing that confronts an expositor of the last five verses of St. Matthew's Gospel is the situation they imply. It is Galilee. It is a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had appointed them. But the Ascension did not take place in Galilee. And St. Luke never mentions Galilee either in the end of his Gospel or in the beginning of his Acts.

Professor Swete believes that there were two traditions in the Apostolic Church. St. Luke follows the one; St. Matthew (who depends upon St. Mark) the other. According to the tradition which is preserved by St. Luke, the apostles continued at Jerusalem, and the appearances in the Holy City and its neighbourhood culminated at the end of forty days in the final vision of the Ascension. According to St. Matthew, the appearances at Jerusalem were limited to Easter Day, when the scene shifts to Galilee, and the narrative leaves us.

If these two traditions are irreconcilable, Professor Swete would prefer to follow St. Matthew. For St. Matthew is St. Mark, and while St. Luke's trustworthiness is above suspicion, his opportunities were scarcely equal to those of St. Peter's interpreter. But they are not irreconcilable. 'In the present state of our knowledge,' says Professor Swete, 'it is reasonable to regard the two accounts as complementary and not mutually exclusive.'

But why did our Lord lead the Eleven back to Galilee when He proposed to ascend from the Mount of Olives? To fulfil prophecy? Well, there were prophecies. There was the prophecy of the night before the Passion (Mt 26<sup>32</sup>), 'After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee'; and there is the prophecy of the morning of the resurrection, the prophecy of the angel at the tomb (28<sup>7</sup>), 'He goeth before you into Galilee.' But that would be a reason for *St. Matthew's* sending them into Galilee, not for the Lord's leading them thither. Dr. Swete believes that He

led them into Galilee, because nowhere but in Galilee could a great concourse be gathered together to be witnesses with the apostles of His resurrection, and to receive His last instructions to the Church.

For Dr. Swete believes that such an assembly was held, and that it is identical with the meeting recorded by St. Paul (1 Co 15<sup>6</sup>). He draws a picture of it. 'The day for the meeting (for a day had doubtless been fixed) has come, and the Eleven are at the appointed place, in Galilee, and on the line of the hills indicated,'—'unto the mountain' our versions have it. But the mountain (*τὸ ὄρος*) is not necessarily a particular isolated hill, such as Tabor or Hattin; rather it is the hill country, probably on the western shore of the lake, which had been the principal scene of Christ's preaching and prayer, and was in proximity to the towns which He had evangelized.

'There the Eleven have now taken their stand, and with them there is an eager crowd of Galileans who have left their farms or their merchandise at the call of the Master. How long they waited we do not know; but at length the form of a man was seen crossing the hills and coming towards them, and we can hear the exclamation passing from mouth to mouth, "It is the Lord." At once the assembly prostrated itself.' Professor Swete takes notice of the word. They prostrated themselves (*προσεκύνησαν*), they fell on their faces; they did not fall on their knees only (*ἐγονυπέτησαν*). And yet Dr. Swete counts it less than an act of worship. The majority of the Galilean disciples could not have been ready yet for the worship of Jesus as Divine. But it was at least an acknowledgment of the claims of One who had proved His supernatural character by overcoming death.

They worshipped—but some doubted. What did they doubt? That He had risen? Dr. Swete cannot believe it. The very word used by St. Matthew shows that they did not doubt that. He

does not speak of the doubt of unbelief (*ἠπίστωσαν*); he speaks of the doubt of uncertainty (*ἐδίσταναν*). What they doubted was not whether the Christ was risen, but whether the form they saw in the distance was indeed that of the risen Christ.

He did not keep them long in doubt. He came near and spoke to them. And they doubted no longer. There was ever something in the form of the risen Christ which made men doubt, but always the voice drove doubt away. One word to the Magdalene, 'Mary.' To the Emmaus disciples, the blessing as He brake the bread. To the multitude on the hills of Galilee the wonderful words, 'All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth.'

Into the exposition we do not follow Professor Swete. The article is intelligible and accessible. Noting only that it is Deissmann's *Bible Studies* and Dalman's *Words of Jesus* that he chiefly refers to for the freshness of his thoughts, we pass to the question of the genuineness of the baptismal formula.

The question is a simple alternative. Did Jesus say, 'Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost?' Or did the Evangelist put into the Lord's mouth words which by his own time had come to be connected with the administration of baptism, and which sufficiently represented Christ's general teaching? Says Dr. Swete—his words are well weighed and worth quoting: 'The second view receives much support from modern scholars, but I trust that we shall hesitate before we accept it. The words as they stand are consistent with the majesty of the whole scene. Nor can I see the least improbability that they were actually spoken by the Lord on this occasion. It was one of vast importance to the Church, when she received from her Head her age-long commission. What more likely than that the Lord would have seized this opportunity of gathering up in the fewest words the substance of all His earlier teaching

concerning God, and connecting it for ever with the sacrament of initiation into the Christian brotherhood? Indeed, is it not almost certain that some such form of words was actually used by Christ before He left the earth? Is it possible on any other hypothesis to explain the frequent occurrence of trinitarian language in Christian writings of the apostolic age and the steady and growing trinitarian belief of the early Church?'

Moreover, there the words stand. The document in which they are found is 'as old as the eighth decade of the first century.' If the original formula of baptism is 'into the name of Jesus Christ,' whence came the sudden change of front which led to the substitution of a trinitarian form? 'Questions such as these,' says Professor Swete, 'call for an answer before we set aside the plain and undoubted witness of so early a document as the First Gospel.'

'Who then is this?' They asked the question when they saw that the wind and the sea obeyed Him.

For there was nothing that could have surprised them more than that. Familiarity does not always breed contempt. The fishermen on the sea of Galilee were very familiar with the movements of the wind and the sea, but they never lost their dread of them.

⊙ for a soft and gentle wind!

I heard a fair one cry;

But give to me the snoring breeze

And white waves heaving high,

is the song of the English sailor. But physical fear and religious awe made such a song impossible to the boatmen of the Galilean lake.

So when they saw that the wind and the sea obeyed Him, they were like to fall in as great a dread of Him as they were of the wind and the sea. 'They feared exceedingly (*ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν*), and said one to another, Who then is this?'

But the commonplace asserted itself. There were those who knew Him. They knew Him to be the son of the carpenter. In spite of the wind and the sea, they knew Him. They knew that He was one of themselves. And they said, 'Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters are they not all with us?' He is ours, they said; He is one of us. That was the first answer to the question, 'Who then is this?'

But the second answer came. 'This is my beloved Son' (Mt 17<sup>5</sup>). He is not yours, said the Father Almighty, He is mine.

Men are troubled still that the wind and the sea should obey Him. His influence, which ought to have ended long ago, is not yet even on the wane. The leading article in a daily newspaper said, not very long ago, that Matthew Arnold had undoubtedly been a great religious force in his day, but not so great as the Nazarene Jesus. No, not so great. For the wind and the sea obeyed the Nazarene Jesus, and they obey Him still. These miracles of the Gospels that take so much explaining, this persistent spiritual influence that connects itself with a risen, reigning Redeemer, they compel men still to ask the question, 'Who then is this?' But the miracles must be explained away, and the spiritual influence must be detached from the fancy of a risen Christ, for He is only one of ourselves.

Then God the Father comes and says, 'He is not yours: He is not yours at all if you think He is only yours. This is my beloved Son.' Neither evolution nor the commonplace can account for Him. He is the carpenter's son, but that is neither the beginning nor the end of Him. And it is of no use calling Him the carpenter's son if it is not recognized that He is the Father's beloved Son.

So this second answer to the question, 'Who

then is this?' was not made to those who said He was the carpenter's son. It was made to those who said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' They who said that He was the carpenter's son, when they found that the wind and the sea obeyed Him, went back and walked no more with Him. When He said in the synagogue at Nazareth, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,' they who knew that He was the carpenter's son took Him up to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, to cast Him down headlong.

But there were those who found that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. They could reconcile the two no more than the others. Wiser than the others, however, they held by the highest that they knew. It was as certain that the wind and the sea obeyed Him as that He was the carpenter's son. And when they could not reconcile the two, they wisely held by the greatest. So it was to them that the second answer came.

And it came to them just in order that they might see how the two were to be reconciled. The multitude said He was the carpenter's son. 'But whom say ye that I am?' They answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' *From that time* Jesus began to show them that He must suffer many things and be killed. They knew that He was the Father's beloved Son; they must not forget that He is also the son of the carpenter. And the difficulty came back upon them in keener pain than ever—the difficulty of understanding how He could be both.

So while He prayed—prayed surely that they might know how He could be the Son of the living God and yet suffer many things, prayed that they might know that though He was rich yet for their sakes He became poor—the fashion of His countenance was altered; He *was* the beloved Son of the Father and yet it was of *the decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem* that Moses and Elijah spoke.