

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

---

## Notes of Recent Exposition.

IN *The Interpreter* for January there is an address which Professor GWATKIN delivered at the Vacation Term, for Biblical Study in Cambridge. Its title is 'Christ and Life.' If it had not been called an address, we should have been tempted to think that it was a sermon, and that the text was, 'I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly' (Jn 10<sup>10</sup>).

But Professor GWATKIN has a larger purpose than the exposition of a text. He has come to the conclusion that all that God has to give us is covered by the one word 'Life.' That word, therefore, and what it means, should occupy our attention—not the Incarnation and Atonement, which is the means used by God for bestowing it; not Faith, which is the hand held out to receive it; and not Love, which is its outcome. Life is the greatest thing.

Now Life comes from God, not directly from the Father, but mediately from the Son. 'As the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself, that he should give eternal life to as many as God has given him.' We are accordingly driven along two lines of research. First, What is this Life which is the supreme gift? Next, Who is this Son of God who gives it?

The easier of these two questions is the second,  
VOL. XXIII.—No. 7.—APRIL 1912.

and Professor GWATKIN begins with it. Who is Christ?

It is a very easy question 'if I speak to Christians here.' For 'we know in whom we have trusted.' We have trusted in one who claimed to be the Son of God, and spoke of God as His Father in a quite peculiar sense; who, in short, made a claim to be in the fullest sense divine. This claim runs through all the records of His life. And if we are satisfied that it is not a fraud—take time with these words—a fraud, or a delusion, or a legend (if, says Professor GWATKIN, it *can* be a legend), then we can do no less than confess in Him the eternal Son of God to whom the Father has given power over all flesh that He may give eternal life to all whom God has given Him. The first question, 'if I speak to Christians,' is easy. The second is not so easy.

The second question is, What is Life? Professor GWATKIN cannot answer it. We know the signs of life, but we do not know what life is in itself. Why do we not know? Because we cannot get behind it. We cannot view it from the outside. Still, we can say that some signs are nearer than others to the secret of it. We cannot say what that life is which reaches from the obscurest motions of the lowest plants and animals, through the rich variety of Creation, upward to ourselves,

and above us even to the living and true God. But we can say that there are three great spheres of its manifestation. There is the animal life, the life which only sees and hears, eats and drinks. There is the social life, the life of man with man. And there is the spiritual life, the life of fellowship with God.

These three forms of life we may consider separately. And yet they are not altogether separable. 'Before all things,' says Professor GWATKIN, 'let us beware of narrow and unworthy conceptions of life. That which God hath joined, let not man put asunder. The animal life, the social life, and the spiritual life form one organic whole; and though we can have the lower without the higher, we cannot have the higher without the lower. The social life is unsound if the animal life is stunted in the slums or the monasteries, and the life to God is maimed if either the social life or the animal life is counted profane. No doubt it is better to enter into life with one eye than to be cast into outer darkness; but it is better still to enter having two eyes. As the plant feeds on things without life, so the animal feeds ultimately on plant life, the social life feeds on the animal life, and the life to God feeds on the social life.'

And the three great spheres of life are inseparable not only because the one below passes always into the one above it, but also because the higher keeps continually returning to bless the lower. The social life restrains the animal life from indiscreetness or excess. The spiritual life sanctifies the social life and the animal life.

The spiritual life, says Professor GWATKIN, sanctifies the social and the animal life. It makes them holy. We speak of Nature and Society, spelling the words with capital letters, as if they had an independent existence. We say that we owe a duty to Society. But our social life is not a godless environment. It is not simply our appointed field of duty. 'The

love which sustains it is itself the outflow and the revelation of the love of God, and a revelation which rises highest precisely where it is most deeply rooted in the instincts of the animal life.'

Now when he has given us some idea of what life is, Professor GWATKIN returns to Christ. For Christ is after all the end of his effort. And he begins with Christ as the giver of life. 'I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.'

Arrest that word 'abundantly.' It is not spiritual life only that He came to give. It is not on 'the religious' only that He pours the love which flows from His life. He came that we might have life in all its range. 'He was not like some who have even boasted that they care for nothing but immortal souls.' In a far deeper sense than Roman ever dreamed, nothing that is human can be foreign to the incarnate Lord. He fed the multitude, and did not forget to command that something be given to the child to eat. To the sick, and even to the dead, He restored the bounding joy of life. But it was never a formal gift. It was the natural outflow of His own loving spirit of life.

And just as He restored the animal life or increased its fulness, so He entered the social sphere and added to its joy—till they dared to call Him a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. In loving sympathy His soul went forth to meet the father's distress, the widow's grief, the sister's sorrow, and in meeting transfigured them with joy of heaven. His gift was always a gift of life—the loving outflow of life in Himself, the occasion of love in them.

And just as it was with animal and social life, so was it with spiritual life. For here also there was a sickness unto death, even death itself, for 'she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' and He came to give life eternal and to give even it abundantly. This, at least, the disciples did not misunderstand. They were marvellously dull of hearing, but one thing they held to: 'Thou

hast the words *of* eternal life.' They could not have said unhesitatingly how this conviction had come to them. But it is evident even to us that it had not come from His teaching alone, though they spoke of His 'words.' It came from Himself, as all that was best and most enduring came to them.

Who, then, is this? Who is this that gives life to all that lives, and gives it in the bounding joy of abundance? Who is this that comes to give life to the dead, and gives it—animal life to the body, social life to the community, spiritual life to the soul?

Now we have already noticed that the original source of life is the Father. From Him the Son receives it. 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' But the gift is timeless. You cannot say that at such a time in the eternity of the past the Father had life and the Son had it not. For life is itself the result of love, and love is the outflow and expression of the Divine nature. As soon as the Father has life in Himself, He loves, and that love is the bearer of life to the Son. From which it follows—watch its reasonableness and check its logic—from which it follows, says Professor GWATKIN, that there is a community of nature between the Persons of the Deity, that the Persons of the Trinity are therefore not such individuals as we seem ourselves to be, and that, last of all, 'if the Trinity is a mystery, it is at least true to reason, which Unitarianism and Tritheism are not.'

We have mounted up to the Triune God. Let us come down again to the things of earth. And let us notice this first, that whatever God's purpose for the earth may be, He will carry that purpose out. Has He not the will to do this? Has He not the power? Then He is not God. The obstacle is sin. Well, sin must 'in one way or another and in the end' be removed.

And we even see how it is to be removed.

'God so loved the world.' Of course He did. For life outflows in love. And then? Then love always issues in life. 'I came that they may have life,' which is just as if He had said, 'I came to love them.' Love issues in life. In proportion as God loves the world, the world will have life. Now He loves the world even to the death of His only-begotten Son. Therefore the world will have life in abundance.

The reasoning is the reasoning of Professor GWATKIN. Is there a fallacy in it? The only fallacy that ever can enter into such reasoning is faithlessness. 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst.' And He answers, 'I can, I will, be thou filled with life abundantly.'

The only fallacy, we say, is faithlessness. But we must have something to put our faith in. We cannot put our faith in the power of God, or in the will of God, or in God's power and will combined, as long as God is outside of us. The love that issues in life must come into touch with us. The Father could not have given to the Son to have life if He had been less than a Son. And the Son cannot give life to the men that are in the world until He becomes Himself a man.

So the confession of Christ's *deity*, in the fullest Athanasian sense, says Professor GWATKIN, is not enough. He does not think it is quite fair to the unbeliever to assert the deity of Christ, and say He is the Saviour of men because He is the Son of God. And he does not think it is wise for our own sake.

It is not fair to the unbeliever. For when the unbeliever asks how a man, any man, can have the universal and eternal value which we attribute to Christ, it is not enough, it is not even quite fair, to answer, Because He was also the Son of God. He is then entitled to ask whether it was the Son of God or the man Christ Jesus who brought us life abundantly. And if now we say

it was the Son of God, we are simply calling in the power of His deity to help when we think His humanity insufficient. And that, says Professor GWATKIN, is to offer Him the twelve legions of angels which He would not ask, or even to make Him accept the worship of Satan which He rejected.

On the other hand, we cannot say that our salvation is the work of a man, of any man however exalted, separate and, as they say, 'unique.' What is our answer to the unbeliever? It is that Jesus, while a common son of man like other men, was also the Son of man, more nearly related to all men than they are to one another. And this, says Professor GWATKIN, is also the teaching of the Gospel.

And so, it is not wise for our own sake to say that the life we are offered is offered by the Son of God. That it is not offered by an ordinary or even the most extraordinary man who is still no more than one of ourselves, we know. It is wise, and it is the only wisdom, to say that He who, because He was the Creator, must from the beginning have had something human in Him, became man, taking upon Him the nature of man; that as man He might, through the love that sent Him to the cross, release the life that was in Him, and make it ours.

Almost at the same time as the Cambridge University Press has issued a new and scholarly edition of *George Fox's Journal*, Messrs. Macmillan have published the first volume of a 'History of the Society of Friends.' It is the first volume in this respect that its title is *The Beginnings of Quakerism*. But it is part of a great scheme which was conceived by the late John Wilhelm ROWNTREE. That scheme was to write the whole history of Quakerism fully, and not for Quakers only, but for all men, not with apologetic interest, but 'abreast of the requirements of modern research,' and thus to make it known 'as a great experiment in spiritual religion.'

Mr. ROWNTREE delivered some lectures on the rise of Quakerism in Yorkshire, which were issued in his volume of *Essays and Addresses*, and then he died. But the scheme did not die with him. First Dr. Rufus M. JONES published two volumes entitled *Studies in Mystical Religion* and *The Quakers in the American Colonies*. And now Mr. W. C. BRAITHWAITE, B.A., LL.B., President of the Woodbrooke Settlement, near Birmingham, has gone back to the beginning and written the History of Quakerism from its first small beginnings in the year 1647 to the end of the year 1660.

Mr. BRAITHWAITE has been chosen for this work. We do not mean by a committee of Quakers, but by God. The execution of the work makes that manifest. It is not Mr. BRAITHWAITE'S OWN work, however, that we propose to speak about. To this volume an Introduction has been contributed by Professor Rufus M. JONES. It is an Introduction that is intended not to introduce the volume to our notice, but to introduce to our notice Quakerism 'as a great experiment in spiritual religion.' Quakerism, Dr. JONES seems to admit, is not Christianity solely and wholly, but it is 'a type of Christianity.' And as a type of Christianity it is, he says, deeply *mystical* and also deeply *prophetical*.

It is deeply mystical. But what is Mysticism? Mysticism, says Dr. JONES, 'is a type of religion as rich and many-sided as life itself—it is, in fact, life itself at its highest inward unity and its most consummate attainment of Reality.' The definition is worth remembering. It is worth remembering on account of the high claim it makes for Mysticism. For if Mysticism is all this, there seems to be little left for any other type of religion. Dr. JONES is convinced that Mysticism is all this.

The mistake, he says, which writers about Mysticism make is to treat it as if it were but one among many theoretical systems of religious thought, to reduce it to a metaphysic, and to

leave the impression on the mind of the reader that it is either the *negative path* which the intellect takes to find God, or an equally empty ecstasy in which the intellect is utterly quiescent. But true mysticism is neither passive, nor negative, nor theoretical. It is a type of religion 'in which all the deep-lying powers of the personal life come into positive exercise and function,' so that there results an experience, not merely emotional, not merely intellectual, not merely volitional, through which the soul finds itself in a love-relation with the Living God.

The term 'mystical,' then, is properly used for any type of religion which insists upon 'an immediate inward revelation of God within the sphere of personal experience.' The person who has this experience, who, in Dr. JONES' language, 'has found within the deeps of himself the bubbling streams from the Eternal Fountain of Life,' has no more use for sacred Book or historic Church. To use the words of Professor JONES again, he 'no longer feels compelled to go back to the pools of tradition or the stagnant wells of authority for his supplies.' He may maintain perfectly normal relations with things visible, or he may have ecstasies—that will depend upon his own psychical constitution—but whether his life is normal or abnormal in outward manifestation, his experience of God is immediate and sufficient.

Well, the Quakers are mystics. 'It was through experiences of this first-hand type that the Quaker movement was initiated, and all the primitive leaders of it—"the First Publishers of Truth," as they were called—were recipients of experiences which convinced them that God revealed Himself directly, and immediately within themselves.' What does Fox say? 'When all my hopes in men,' he says, 'were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, O then, I heard a voice which said, There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition; and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy. *I knew experimentally* that Jesus Christ

enlightens, gives grace, and faith, and power. *I now knew God by revelation*, as He who hath the key did open.'

That is the first thing. Quakerism is a mystical religion. The other thing is that Quakerism is a prophetic religion. That is to say, the early Quakers believed that the Spirit of God was poured out upon them, as it had been of old; that they were called to be prophets to their age, and that the language of Old and New Testament prophecy and apocalypse was actually fulfilled in their experiences.

Did they foretell the future? Professor JONES declines to answer. He does not think the question is worth answering. For prophecy in its true meaning has nothing to do with 'magical foretelling.' The prophets were conscious that they were selected by God to speak *for* Him, and utter His will and purpose to their age. And with this conviction the public ministry and the biographies of the early Quakers are saturated. 'Their testimonies,' says Dr. JONES, 'are breathlessly daring; but there can, I think, be little doubt that they sincerely believed that they had a right to apply the most exalted Scripture language to their own inward events.' And he is in as little doubt that this prophetic and apocalyptic element vastly helped to produce the mental and emotional atmosphere of the movement, and added much to its fervour and conquering power.

Mr. Claude C. MONTEFIORE is a man of a most provoking personality. In some he induces no other feeling than untempered dislike; in others no other emotion than unmixed admiration. But no one who comes in contact with him, even in his books, can be indifferent. His latest book is an apparently inoffensive handbook of instruction for the use of parents and teachers, entitled *Outlines of Liberal Judaism* (Macmillan; 2s. 6d. net). It will be the occasion of a new outburst of adoration and ill-will.

Mr. MONTEFIORE is the exponent of Liberal Judaism. He is commonly called its founder. But that is an English and very insular mistake, which Mr. MONTEFIORE himself has denied till he is weary. He is not its founder. But he is *the* exponent of it. There is no other man who seems to have the same sense of responsibility for propagating this faith. There is assuredly no man who has a more triumphant command of the English language.

What is Liberal Judaism? It is criticism of the Old Testament and appreciation of the New. Now it is bitter enough to Conservative Jews to be told that the Law did not come by Moses; it is more bitter, even altogether intolerable, to be told that Jewish children should be allowed to read the New Testament as well as the Old.

Is Liberal Judaism simply Liberal Christianity, then? Is Mr. MONTEFIORE a follower of Christ? By no means. He tells us that one of his friends has recently spoken of him as the most Jewish Jew in the world. But Mr. MONTEFIORE and Liberal Judaism will not live in vain. They have lowered, if they have not taken away, that middle wall of partition which separates Jew and Christian from one another, first by simply getting Jews to look at the difference between them, and then especially by getting them to look at Jesus.

In this very book Mr. MONTEFIORE once more invites his brethren to examine the differences between Judaism and Christianity. We also may do well to examine them.

But first of all Mr. MONTEFIORE touches on their agreements. Christianity sprang out of Judaism. 'Not only were its founder and its earliest apostles Jews, but it has retained much of the religion out of which it sprang.' Both religions are monotheistic, 'though each regards its own monotheism as purer, better, and truer than the monotheism of the other.' Both hold that the one and only God is good and righteous

and loving; both hold that He has relations with man; both hold that He *cares*. Both Jews and Christians hold that man was created in the divine image, that God influences man and 'inspires' him. Both can speak of the holy and divine Spirit within the soul of man. Both believe that man can commune with God. Both believe in prayer.

Nor is that all. The Old Testament is the Bible of the Jew; it is also a dearly loved and well-read part of the Bible of the Christian. 'Christian admiration for the religious and moral ideals of the prophets, for the spiritual fervour and beauty of the Psalter, is not less than Jewish admiration (and sometimes rests, to our shame, may I add, upon a more intimate and familiar knowledge).' Moreover—and Mr. MONTEFIORE presses this matter, though he knows it is unacceptable—Jews have been and are being greatly influenced by Christian ideals and a Christian atmosphere.

But there are differences. And first, Christians believe in Incarnation, Jews do not. The dogma of the Incarnation has taken many forms, says Mr. MONTEFIORE, and has been interpreted in different ways. He does not suppose that the interpretation of it by a Liberal Christian to-day is the interpretation of it by even the greatest minds of the fourth and the fifth century. But he says, and he says it 'with assurance and authority,' that to no existing form of the dogma of the Incarnation can Judaism—whether Orthodox or Liberal—be anything but opposed.

Why? Mr. MONTEFIORE proceeds to tell us why. It is not because Judaism puts God on one side and man on the other, with no bridge between them. It is because man is imperfect, and God is perfect. It is because man is finite and errs, while God is infinite and faultless. It is because 'there never has been, and there never can be, a man who was perfectly good and perfectly wise.'

So the objection is, after all, not to the Incarnation; it is to the sinless perfection of Jesus.

The next difference is that Jews do not believe in atonement and mediation. The Jew does not need a mediator. God is very near. Mr. MONTEFIORE quotes (they are the words of a Christian!):

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet;

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

And he does not need atonement. The only atonement he needs is the atonement 'wrought by human repentance and the divine forgiveness,' or, as he otherwise puts it, 'by God's grace and help upon the one hand, by human remorse and effort upon the other.'

Is that all? Is there not yet another difference? Does not the Jew believe in justification by works, the Christian in justification by faith? No. Mr. MONTEFIORE gives up that difference. He doubts if the Christian has done justice to works; he is quite sure that the Jew has not done justice to faith. He is well aware that a Christian writer said, 'Faith without works is dead.' He himself sees that a man's faith is 'the core of his character.' And he says frankly, 'We need both faith, and works.' 'I cannot help believing that this old point of difference between Judaism and Christianity may gradually be done away with. Each will recognize that the fuller truth lies in a combination of doctrines hitherto thought opposed and alien to each other.'

## Some Thoughts suggested by the Comparative Study of Religion.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. J. A. SELBIE, D.D., ABERDEEN.

THE present paper is by one who makes no claim to speak as an expert on either the History or the Science of Religions; it makes no attempt to construct a Philosophy of Religion or any theory of its evolution. All I propose is simply to record the impressions that have been made on my mind by the contact into which I have had to come, on paper, if not in the flesh, with religions of all kinds, from the lowest and simplest to the highest and most complex. The thoughts I am to set before you are not the outcome of systematic study of classified religions, as one may study groups of animals or of plants or minerals in a museum; nor do they represent a theory formed beforehand and applied to the various religions that have come under my view; they are the product slowly, almost unconsciously, evolved from the constantly changing kaleidoscopic process that unfolds itself every day to the eyes of one who has to read and

to examine carefully the articles contributed to the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* now in course of publication, under the editorship of Dr. Hastings.

I. The first great fact that grows increasingly clear to me daily is that *man is a religious being*. The old question whether there are tribes of atheists has nowadays become a merely 'academic discussion.' For my own part I do not believe that any sufficient evidence has yet been adduced to prove that any people on earth has been discovered that is wholly destitute of religion, using that term in the wide sense of belief in the existence of some power or powers mightier than man himself, whose favour it is desired to gain, whose wrath it is sought to deprecate. All the great authorities—men like Max Müller, Jevons, Tiele, Tylor, Waitz, and Gerland—are at one on this point. Supposed examples to the contrary effect have been abandoned, in view of fuller information. Thus, Howitt came to abandon the view he once held as to the aborigines of Australia being without

<sup>1</sup> Abridged from an address delivered to the Theological Society of the Aberdeen United Free Church College, on 17th November 1911.