

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

WHAT ails the modern Jew at Saul of Tarsus? The modern educated and advanced Jew, we mean. They accept Jesus of Nazareth. Not, of course, as the Christ. But as a good Jew. As, on the whole, the best Jew they have had. And they are not a little proud of Him. But Saul of Tarsus is perhaps more of an offence to-day than ever he was.

We remember the article on Jesus of Nazareth in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. There is an article in the new volume on Saul of Tarsus. The writers are not the same, but they belong to the same school. Yet the articles are utterly different in their attitude. It is not the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. It is not, we fear, even that His love has at last compelled a long-delayed return. For in this very volume there is an article on Simon Peter. It is by the same writer as the article on Saul of Tarsus. But its tone is quite different. Peter rouses none of the fierce antagonism which Paul does. What ails the modern Jew at Saul of Tarsus?

They believe that he was the author of the separation of Christianity from Judaism. That is the offence. The very first sentence of Dr. Kohler's article is this: 'Saul of Tarsus was the actual founder of the Christian Church as opposed

to Judaism.' They believe that Jesus did not contemplate such a separation. He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He confined Himself to them, and He meant His followers to do the same. But Saul broke away from Jesus, and from all the disciples of Jesus, who knew what His purpose was and tried to fulfil it. But for Saul of Tarsus the Christian Church would never have separated itself from the Jewish Synagogue, and the Jews would have escaped the long centuries of Christian persecution. The modern Jews accept Jesus the Jewish reformer, but they reject the Apostle to the Gentiles.

How did Saul of Tarsus become the Apostle to the Gentiles? It was due, says Rabbi Kohler, to his upbringing. He was a Hellenist from the beginning. He was born of Jewish parents, but that is all we can say for him. He claims to be of the tribe of Benjamin. If the passage is genuine, says Dr. Kohler, it is a false claim, for there were no pedigrees of this kind in existence at that time. Probably it is a mere guess, due to the similarity of his name to that of the first king of Israel, who did belong to the tribe of Benjamin. He calls himself 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews.' Dr. Kohler is not quite sure what that phrase means. If it means more than that he was a Jew by birth, it is false, for everything that he did and every

word that he wrote go to show that he was entirely a Hellenist in thought and sentiment. He is familiar with the Hellenistic literature, such as the Book of Wisdom. When he quotes the Old Testament he quotes from the Greek Version, not the Hebrew. The most characteristic things in his theology, such as the groaning of the creation for liberation from the prison-house of the body, because the body is intrinsically evil, and the distinction between an earthly and a heavenly Adam, show the influence of the theosophic or gnostic lore of Alexandria. Paul separated Christianity from Judaism, says Rabbi Kohler, because, unlike Jesus, he never was a Jew at heart.

The conclusion is wonderful. How does Rabbi Kohler reach it? By the application to the writings of St. Paul of a critical method which would do credit to a van Manen. At the very beginning of the article we come upon the phrase, 'if any of the Epistles that bear his name are really his.' We afterwards see that some of them are his, or at least portions of some of them. But Dr. Kohler lays down no principles for the selection or rejection of Epistles, and we can discover none in his article. Whatever would prove Paul a good Jew, or indeed whatever would prove him good, seems to be rejected; whatever brings him into touch with the hated Hellenist, or shows him 'of a fiery temper, impulsive and impassioned in the extreme, of ever-changing moods, now exulting in boundless joy, and now sorely depressed and gloomy,'—that seems to be accepted.

St. Paul's offence is that he separated Christianity from Judaism. And the separation is the more deplorable that it was really quite needless and presumptuous. For what was its purpose? It was to admit the Gentiles to a share of the blessings which belonged to the children of Abraham. But Rabbi Kohler claims that Judaism was prepared already to admit the Gentiles to an enjoyment of its privileges, and in actual fact it was the number of proselytes that made it possible

for Paul to establish Christianity among the Gentiles in the cities which he visited. Why was Paul not content with that? Apparently because the uncircumcised proselyte remained an outsider. Paul determined that those who became converted to the Church from among the Gentiles should rank equally with its Jewish members, and that every mark of distinction between Jew and Gentile should be wiped out. This, says Rabbi Kohler, was the question at issue between the disciples of Jesus and those of Paul. 'Paul fashioned a Christ of his own, a Church of his own, and a system of belief of his own; and because there were many mythological and gnostic elements in his theology which appealed more to the non-Jew than to the Jew, he won the heathen world to his belief.'

Is Rabbi Kohler right? He says that Paul was a Hellenist and not a good Hebrew at heart. The evidence must answer that. And in the evidence there is this, that he was ready to become anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake, his kinsmen according to the flesh. He also says that Paul's sole purpose was to bring in the Gentiles into full enjoyment of the privileges of the Jews. Is Rabbi Kohler right in that? In that he is utterly wrong. Paul's purpose was to bring both Jews and Gentiles into the obedience of Christ. Rabbi Kohler has forgotten one thing. He has forgotten that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*, and that Paul had discovered that.

What becomes of men after death? The question will soon be up again, for it never lies asleep very long. It will be up again, for it has not yet been answered, and every generation must make an effort to answer it. It will be up again to trouble us, but not in the very form in which it troubled the generation to which Samuel Cox wrote and Farrar preached, for every time that it comes up it leaves some things settled, and moves a little nearer the answer. When it comes up next, it is the opinion of Professor Deussen of

Kiel that it will come as a definite choice between three competing solutions, annihilation, eternal retribution, and transmigration. And before it goes to sleep again, Professor Deussen believes that the choice may fall upon transmigration.

Messrs. T. & T. Clark have published an English translation of Deussen's *Philosophy of the Upanishads* (8vo, 10s. 6d.). It is a volume of extraordinary ability. For Professor Deussen is easily first in this study at the present day. And the translation, which is made by Professor Geden of the Wesleyan College in Richmond, is faithful to the original without compelling the English tongue to clothe itself in the idiom of Germany. It is such an introduction to the study of the Religion and Philosophy of India as English readers have long been seeking. Indeed, just when the suggestion of an English translation was made to Professor Deussen, he received from India a wonderful request from natives who could read no German that his 'Upanishads' might be translated into English. They wanted it because to every Indian Brahman to-day the Upanishads are what the New Testament is to the Christian. And for that reason we want it also.

Well, what becomes of men after death? It is in the fourth part of the system of the Upanishads that the question is raised, since the fourth part deals with 'Eschatology, or the Doctrine of Transmigration and Emancipation, including the Way thither.' If the question is of interest to us, it is of even more interest to the Indian. For it leads to that doctrine which in Indian thought is the most original and influential, which has held the foremost place from Upanishad times till now, and which still exercises the greatest practical influence, the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. Man is like a plant. He springs up, develops, and returns to the earth. But as the seed of the plant survives, so also at death man's works remain and bring forth a new existence. As every seed brings forth a plant after its own kind, so every new

existence is in exact correspondence with the character of the life that preceded it.

'In Jaipur,' says Professor Deussen, 'I met in December 1892 an old Pandit almost naked, who approached me groping his way. They told me that he was totally blind. Not knowing that he had been blind from birth, I sympathized with him, and asked by what unfortunate accident he had lost his sight. Immediately, and without showing any sign whatever of bitterness, the answer was ready to his lips, "by some crime committed in a former birth."'

We are reminded at once of the man blind from his birth whom Jesus and His disciples saw as they passed by (Jn 9<sup>2</sup>). We are reminded of the question which the disciples put to Jesus, Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? If they had asked the man himself, what answer would he have given? It is possible that he would have blamed his parents. For the Jews were familiar with the fact that the Lord their God was a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. It is possible that he would have blamed himself. For belief in the pre-existence of souls had already found its way into popular Judaism. But if he had been an Indian it is certain that he would have blamed himself and himself alone, and 'without bitterness.'

Why did the blind man in Jaipur show no sign whatever of bitterness? Because he believed that for being born blind he was himself entirely to blame. He believed that the life which he was then living, with all its sufferings, was the inevitable consequence of the actions of a former life. The belief, says Professor Deussen, has a double advantage. It affords a real consolation for the miseries of existence, and it is a powerful incentive to right conduct. On the occurrence of every affliction the sufferer asks serenely, what crime have I committed in a former birth? And he immediately adds, I will sin no more lest I bring

upon myself grievous suffering in a life to come.

It has a double advantage. But is it true? No, says Professor Deussen, it is not true. Yet, as an answer to the question, What becomes of men after death? he claims that transmigration is nearer the truth than any other answer that has been given. He claims that it is nearer than annihilation, and nearer than eternal retribution in heaven and hell.

It is nearer than annihilation. For, says Professor Deussen, annihilation is in conflict, not only with a man's self-love, but also with the innate certainty that his being is not subject to dissolution. And it is nearer than eternal retribution. For the belief that eternal reward or punishment follows upon an existence so brief and liable to error as this is, an existence so exposed to all the accidents of upbringing and environment, appears to Dr. Deussen to be condemned at once by the unparalleled disproportion in which cause and effect would stand to one another.

Why, then, is transmigration not true? It is not true simply because no answer can be true. Properly speaking, says Professor Deussen, the question, what becomes of us after death, is inadmissible. No one can give us the full and correct answer, and if any one could, we should be quite unable to understand it. For it would presuppose an intuition of things apart from space, time, and causality, to which, as forms of perception, our knowledge is for ever limited. Transmigration is not the full and correct answer. But if we determine to do violence to truth and to conceive in terms of space that which is without space, the timeless in terms of time, the causeless from the point of view of causality, then to the question, what becomes of us after death, Dr. Deussen would say that the answer is transmigration.

There is an article in the *Hibbert Journal* for the

current quarter by Principal Iverach, of Aberdeen, with the title 'Christ and Cæsar.'

Dr. Iverach holds that never yet has it been satisfactorily explained why Christianity was persistently persecuted by the Roman emperors, while all other religions were left alone. It was not that the Christians were wealthy, like the Jews in the Middle Ages, for they were not. It was not that they were bad citizens, for they were not. It was not that they neglected the worship of the gods, for the Jews did the same. It was not even that they refused to worship the emperor, for the Jews also acknowledged only the one living and true God. The offence was one of salvation. There was a conflict of rival saviours. The Christians were persecuted because they rejected the Saviour Cæsar and accepted the Saviour Christ.

For the Roman emperor was a Saviour to his people. This was the light in which the best of the emperors desired always to be regarded. And the best emperors were the worst persecutors: This was the light in which his people did actually regard the emperor, especially the people of those Eastern provinces in which the Christians were most numerous. He had come to save them, not from their sins, but from their oppressors. They were not so much troubled about sin; they were greatly troubled about taxation. Before the emperor came they were ruled by provincial governors, who sought these distant provincial governments mainly in order to repair their fortunes, wasted by the luxuriance and extravagance of Rome. When the Empire was established, many of these provinces were taken over by the emperor himself, and were ruled by officers who were directly responsible to him alone. Formerly they had been plundered, racked by extortion, ruined through greed and rapine. Now they were ruled justly; and if ever an unjust deed was done, the victim knew that he had always an appeal to Cæsar. The emperor was great and good. First they welcomed, and then they worshipped him, as Saviour.

All, except the Christians. Perhaps the Jews could not call the emperor God any more than the Christians. That did not so much matter. They could hail him as Saviour. The Christians could not do that. If they had one God, the Lord, they had also one Saviour, Jesus Christ. And if there was any difference, it was easier for them to call Cæsar God than to call him Saviour.

It was a conflict between rival Saviours. How different was their theory of salvation. How different were the Saviours themselves. But the emperors could not see the difference. They were determined that above all other things they should be hailed as Saviour wherever they went. It was the one unmistakable test of loyalty which they looked for. And the Christians could not meet it. And so, while all other religions escaped, the grim order was ever anew sent forth, 'The Christians to the lions.'

Dr. Moulton has published the first volume of his *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, containing the Prolegomena (T. & T. Clark; 8vo, 8s. net). Let us take a note of the date. In all future work on the New Testament it will be referred to as the close of one epoch of New Testament study and the opening of another.

As recently as 1895 Dr. Moulton defined the language of the New Testament as '*Hebraic Greek, Colloquial Greek, and Late Greek.*' He is compelled now to make a change in that definition. For Hebraic he substitutes *common*. And he says: 'The disappearance of that word *Hebraic* from its prominent place in our delineation of New Testament language marks a change in our conceptions of the subject, nothing less than revolutionary. Nor is it a revolution in theory alone. It touches exegesis at innumerable points. It demands large modifications in our very best grammars, and an overhauling of our best and most trusted commentaries.'

What has brought about the change? It is the

discovery of Greek papyri. Let it rather be said it is their study. For the discovery of Greek papyri is nothing new. What is new is their scientific study and its application to the language of the New Testament. 'They were studied,' says Dr. Moulton, 'by a young investigator of genius, at that time known only by one small treatise on the Pauline formula *In Christ*, which to those who read it now shows abundantly the powers that were to achieve such splendid pioneer work within three or four years.' The young investigator of genius was called Deissmann.

Deissmann's *Bibelstudien* appeared in 1895, his *Neue Bibelstudien* in 1897. An authorized translation of the two volumes together, incorporating Deissmann's own most recent changes and additions, appeared in English, with the title of *Bible Studies*, in 1901. Hitherto the Greek of the New Testament had stood by itself. It differed from classical Greek. It differed from Hellenistic Greek, that is to say, from the language of men like Plutarch and Arrian, who followed the classical period. So it received a name of its own. It was called Hebraic or Judaic, or most frequently Biblical Greek. For it was supposed to be largely due to translation from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, or else to writers who wrote in Greek but thought in Hebrew. Some spoke of it fondly as the 'language of the Holy Ghost,' and were pleased to think that it had never been profaned by common use.

There is no Biblical Greek now. Deissmann has shown that the language of the New Testament is simply the Greek language as it was spoken in the first century. As it was spoken, not as it was written. The language of Plutarch and of Arrian is first-century Greek as it was written by men who had the classical writers as their models and made much account of style. In the papyri men had no time to purify their style by the canons of Attic taste, or they had no inclination. They wrote as they spoke. In the New Testament also the writers for the most part were men of the common people

with a message to deliver, and they had neither time nor inclination to imitate the ancient authors.

‘I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance’ (Lk 15<sup>7</sup>). In his comment on this passage Dr. Plummer bids us note the confidence with which Jesus speaks of what takes place in heaven. It is well worth noting. He does not often tell us what takes place in heaven. But we see that He could tell us more if He would. For whatever He tells us He always tells with confidence.

What does He tell us about heaven? He tells us that the will of the Father is done in heaven; that they neither marry nor are given in marriage there; that the angels of the little ones always behold the Father’s face; and now, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

It is information about heaven in every case. We did not know these things about heaven. We never could have known them if He had not told us. It is interesting and sometimes startling information. But the most amazing thing that He has told us about heaven is this, that there is joy there over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Is it good then to be a sinner? ‘O felix culpa!’ cried Augustine. Was Augustine right? Is it not good at least *to have been* a sinner? Is it not better, if we may parody the late laureate’s language, to have sinned and repented than never to have sinned at all? Does our Lord mean that?

He does not mean that. We say nothing in judgment of Augustine; but if our Lord had meant that, He would have condemned Himself, and

made God a liar. Let us understand what our Lord means.

The words arose out of an occasion. When He came to earth He found the people sharply separated into two classes, the righteous and the sinners. The righteous were right, right for earth, and right for heaven; the sinners were lost irretrievably. He began to work among the sinners. For He was a physician, and, as He said, ‘They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.’ But the righteous were offended. The sinners were not worth it. Besides, it would do them no good. ‘This people that knoweth not the law is accursed.’ More than that, He was joining together that which God had separated, the ceremonially clean with the unclean. ‘Now,’ says Luke, ‘all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him for to hear him; and both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.’

It was an occasion of the utmost consequence. For this was just what He had come to do, and they were challenging His conduct. He reasoned with them. And He told them three parables on end. Is it not the only occasion upon which He spoke three parables for one purpose? Did He ever speak even two on any other occasion? The point of each of the parables is exactly the same. You do it yourselves, He said, and the angels do it in heaven.

He said that they did it themselves. ‘What man of you having an hundred sheep?’ ‘Or what woman having ten pieces of silver?’ A hundred sheep, and one of them is lost. Why, when you find it, you make more ado about that sheep than about the ninety and nine that were not lost. It is not its value. Every one of the ninety and nine is just as valuable. It is the fact that it was lost. ‘What man of you doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.'

What man of you? Or what woman? Some one has made the discovery somewhere that the ten pieces of silver are the woman's bridal necklace, or something of that sort, and to lose one of them is to lose her place in her husband's regard. But it is not necessary, and it is not the point. She has lost one of them, that is the point. And that lost coin costs her more thought than all the rest, simply because it is lost; and gives her more joy when it is recovered, simply because it is recovered. You do it yourselves, He said; and they could not but feel the force of His argument.

And the angels do it in heaven. It is a wonderful revelation of the ways of the angels in heaven. And, no doubt, the angels' ways are the ways also of the redeemed. Clearly there is no more monotony in heaven than there is upon the earth. White robes and palms and the everlasting song? No doubt; but there is also knowledge of what is doing upon earth, and an interest in it. And now and again a great shout breaks through the monotonous joy of heaven, as it breaks through the monotonous misery of earth, when one sinner repenteth.

What is the cause of it? Is it because the sinner was lost? No, that is the cause of the anguish. That is the cause of the going after him and the seeking. And there is no joy in the seeking. Felix culpa? Listen for a moment: 'Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' And listen again: 'My God, my God,

why hast thou forsaken me?' No, no; there is no joy in the seeking. Man's sin is never anything but evil.

Joy comes at last. And it is 'more joy.' But the joy is not greater on account of the loss. The monotony of joy is broken in upon by a shout. But the joy is not in proportion to the agony that went before it. If the even way of the angels' joy in heaven is broken by a shout of joy over one sinner that repenteth, it is not because that even way was already broken by the discovery that one was lost, and by the thought of the dark night which the Redeemer had to pass through. That may be our way, but it is not the angels' way. For to God and the angels loss is only evil and agony, and there is nothing to make up for it.

It is 'more joy' in comparison with the joy over the righteous that need no repentance. Who are they? They are standing in the presence of Jesus at the moment. They have just been murmuring that He received sinners. They listen to Him as now He paints their picture in the character of the elder brother. They see themselves jealous over the joy of the Father. They hear themselves saying, 'This thy son, which hath devoured thy living with harlots.' There is no joy in the presence of the angels of God over them, for they also are sinners, but without the repentance.

So if there is joy in heaven, the even joy of daily familiarity, it is not joy over the ninety and nine which went not astray; it is joy over those who had formerly gone astray, but now were restored and reckoned among the Redeemed. And if the even joy of heaven is broken by a shout, it is because another has been added to their number.