

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

IN the midst of the discursive and somewhat depressing articles in the current number of *The Hibbert Journal*, it is a relief to find one with this title: 'The Kingdom of the Little Child.'

Is it an exposition of our Lord's words about the Child and the Kingdom? That is not likely; no one who reads *The Hibbert Journal* is likely to expect that and be disappointed. It is rather an essay on the advantage of being always young. Indeed, the first part of it seems to say that if one is to be anything of an originator—what men call a genius—one must resolve, like Peter Pan, never to grow up.

Ruskin and Rousseau and Scott grew up, but how sorry they were for it. Did they not all dwell affectionately in their autobiographies, and at most disproportionate length (Scott never got beyond it), on their childhood? Dickens remained a child, and confessed how good it was, especially at Christmas. Was not Shelley a child 'in his divine carelessness, his swift obedience to instinct, his contempt for conventionality, his playfulness and Homeric laughter? Rossetti—people marvel at this prodigy of five enjoying *Hamlet*; but Rossetti never was much older. And Voltaire—but Voltaire was not the child those others were; he was that other species of

child called by the French *l'enfant terrible*. So Mr. J. W. MARRIOTT, who writes the article, reminds us: *l'enfant terrible*, he says, is the best description of the genius of Voltaire.

Did not Kingsley, however, boast that he was always a child? With childlike abandonment he exerted all his energies in whatever he was doing, whether preaching, fishing, writing, agitating, collecting plants, seeking fossils, or romping with his children under the fir-trees at Eversley. And what incident is more delightful than the story of how once, after dining with tedious and solemn persons, he threw off his clerical coat and raced a doctor in climbing a tree!

But R. L. Stevenson is the supreme instance of one who was a schoolboy all his life—a schoolboy in his sublime inconsequence, his spontaneity, his love of the dramatic and theatrical, his appetite for bloodthirsty adventure, his Bohemian carelessness and devil-may-care recklessness; above all, in his exhilarating and contagious enthusiasm. We like to think of him at the age of thirty playing with tin soldiers, and at thirty-six composing music for the tin-whistle. 'There's no sense in the grown-up business,' he said.

But, now, can Mr. MARRIOTT tell us what it is to be a child? He says he can.

First, he says, it is *to have the sense of fear*. The sense of fear, he assures us, is very intense in childhood, and whatever else it does, it certainly makes life tremendous. Every dark room contains spirits bigger and blacker than those of any goblin tale. A lonely (and sensitive) child dreams of more hells than Swedenborg, and they are more hideous than the Infernos of Virgil and Dante. As we grow older fear disappears. Or we only fear lest the air should be full of germs. And all the thrill of adventure has gone out of life.

Next, it is *to be a hero-worshipper*. This follows upon the sense of fear. If we fear giants we must worship Jack the Giant-killer. And when the hobgoblin goes, Jack is no longer a hero. As we grow up, we sadly see King Arthur and all the Round Table sail down the other side of our horizon.

Thirdly, it is *to know the joy of life*. The leaping and exulting delight in the mere fact of being alive—that, says Mr. MARRIOTT, is known only to children. Browning knew it and Walt Whitman, and all the optimists have known it from Isaiah to Shelley, and so they have all been children, and never grew up. Children like things repeated endlessly. 'Do it again; do it again,' they cry. But the grown-up is bored after the first time. And then Mr. MARRIOTT dares to quote Mr. Chesterton's daring words that God is always a child, for does He not always keep saying 'Do it again'? There is a creative word every time a bird lays an egg, every time.

There is another mark of the child. He is *bewildered at the presence of evil*. The study of a child's face on his first encounter with evil is a lesson difficult to forget.

We did not expect an exposition of the Master's words about the necessity of becoming a child before entrance into the Kingdom. And yet. The sense of fear? It is the first step always, though you may call it reverence. 'Put off

thy shoes—come now, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh.'

Hero-worship? It was the Apostles' answer always to the question, What must I do to be saved?—'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.' The belief in the hero has been the acceptance of the hero's qualities. Was there ever a hero like Jesus? And 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith'—was there ever a more uplifting self-annihilating aspiration?

The joy of life—'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.'

Bewilderment at the presence of evil—it is the never-ending wonder of the member of the Kingdom of God. Especially when the evil is in himself.

Why do we speak so much of receiving blessings from God, and why do we receive so very few blessings? The answer is easy. It is easy to both parts of the question. We speak much because we know that every good and perfect gift must come down from above. We receive so little because we do not ask, and because we do not share.

The Rev. Arthur W. ROBINSON, D.D., has written a book called *The Voice of Joy and Health* (Cassell; 3s. 6d.). For he believes that the Christian life ought to be full of good, and the two chief blessings of life he can think of are joy and health. Now in that book he has to consider this most undeniable and yet most staggering fact that the children of men pass through life with the very minimum of joy and health, and he has discovered that the reasons are these two—they do not ask, and they do not share.

They do not ask. Yet it is a law that God's blessings must be sought. If we want them, we must ask Him for them. No principle, says Dr.

ROBINSON, is more plainly laid down for us in the Bible. And he quotes some of the passages: 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance' (Ps 2<sup>8</sup>). 'I will do it . . . yet for this will I be inquired of to do it for them' (Ezk 36<sup>36f.</sup>). 'If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him' (Mt 7<sup>11</sup>). 'If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldest have asked, and he would have given' (Jn 4<sup>10</sup>). 'Ask, and ye shall receive' (Jn 16<sup>24</sup>). 'Ye have not, because ye ask not' (Ja 4<sup>2</sup>).

Why must we ask? Dr. ROBINSON gives two reasons. The first is, that this is part of the law of labour under which we live. Nothing can be done without effort—somebody's effort. Nothing can be done for us permanently without our own effort. And the other is, that this is part of the law of liberty under which we are placed. 'The best things are not forced upon us. In one of His lessons on the subject of prayer, our Lord points to a difference between the action of the forces of good and of evil. The evil spirit is rude and inconsiderate. It intrudes unbidden. When it has been expelled, it insists upon returning with violence the moment it sees a chance. The heavenly Father cannot act thus. He is most willing to "give the Holy Spirit," but it must be "to them that ask him"' (Lk 11<sup>13</sup>).

But not only must we ask God's blessings, we must also share them. Dr. ROBINSON does not know any greater fallacy than the idea that when a thing has to be divided the more persons there are to receive a share the less there will be for each. He thinks we are growing out of that fallacy. It still possesses the popular mind, but even in the popular mind he thinks doubts are beginning to make themselves felt as to 'the possibility of applying such crude arithmetic to the problems of vital experience.' Even where material gains are concerned, he believes there is a growing suspicion that things lose nearly all their value

and charm when we use them selfishly, when we try to wall them off, and keep them to ourselves alone. Some day we shall all agree that the real worth of anything is to be measured by the extent to which we can enjoy it with others.

But it is when we pass up to the higher levels of experience that the working of this law becomes most clearly manifested. And with its manifestation there appears 'the most far-reaching change that has occurred in our time.' What is that? It is the discovery of society. After three centuries of increasing individualism we are come at last to a belief in the possibilities of corporate life. Of course we have known, or at least we have said, that Union is Strength. What we now know, or at least have begun to know, is the far more fertile truth that Unity is Life.

'In consideration of Akhnaton's peculiar ability and originality there seems considerable likelihood that he is the author of this gem of the Psalter.' What gem of the Psalter? The 104th Psalm. And who is Akhnaton? One of the Pharaohs of Egypt.

The words occur in a book entitled *The Life and Times of Akhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt*, written by Mr. Arthur E. P. WEIGALL, Chief Inspector of the Department of Antiquities, Upper Egypt (Blackwood). Having assisted at the discovery of Akhnaton's mummy in 1907, Mr. WEIGALL was led to investigate the history of this Egyptian ruler. He found it to be one of the most remarkable histories in the world, and Akhnaton to be one of the most remarkable men.

Professor BREASTED in his *History of Egypt* calls Akhnaton 'the first individual in human history.' Mr. WEIGALL understands that to mean that he is the first historical figure whose personality is known to us. He himself adds that Akhnaton 'may be ranked in degree of time, and perhaps also in degree of genius, as the world's first

idealist, and he says that in all ancient Oriental research there never has been, and probably never will be, brought before us a subject of such intellectual interest as this Pharaoh's religious revolution, which marks the first point in the study of advanced human thought.

Akhnaton belongs to the eighteenth dynasty of Egyptian kings. That dynasty took possession of the throne of the Pharaohs in the year 1580 B.C. The founder of the dynasty was Aahmes I. Its greatest warrior was Thothmes III., who raised the prestige of Egypt to a point never before attained and never again. Thothmes III. was the great-grandfather of Akhnaton.

At this time Thebes was the capital of Egypt; and the god Amon, originally merely the tribal god of that city had been raised to the dignity of State god of the country. In earlier times the State god had been Ra (or Ra-Horakhti). Ra was originally the deity of Heliopolis, a city not far from the modern Cairo. And at the time that the priests of Amon desired to give their own god the supremacy, Ra, the Sun-god, was so generally worshipped as supreme that they found it advisable to identify the two gods under the double name of Amon-Ra. But Amon was not a sun-god. He was probably, like other gods, only a deified chieftain of the prehistoric period. The true sun-god was Ra. As the rising and the setting sun—that is to say, the sun near the horizon—he was called Ra-Horakhti. At dawn he was called Khepera. And at sunset he took the name of Atum, a name derived from the Syrian Adon, which means 'Lord.' This name Atum, otherwise Aton, is to be kept in mind. It is the second half of the name of Akhnaton.

The great Thothmes III. was succeeded by Amonhotep II., and Amonhotep II. by Thothmes IV., both of whom maintained the conquests won by Thothmes III. in Asia. When Thothmes IV. came to the throne he found the priests at Heliopolis chafing against the growing power of the

priests of Thebes and the god Amon, and striving to restore the ancient prestige of their own god Ra. Thothmes, there is reason to believe, supported them; but the Theban priesthood proved too powerful. Amon, under the name of Amon-Ra, became firmly established as the great god of the land. And when Akhnaton came to the throne he had been so long and so widely recognized as the State god that his supremacy seemed beyond the possibility of challenge. Yet his supremacy was challenged and his powerful priesthood defied; and that in favour of a god of foreign origin and quite indefinite characteristics. The challenge came from a lad of seventeen or eighteen years of age whose name was Akhnaton.

In this book Mr. WEIGALL shows to what heights of ideal thought, and to what profundities of religious and moral philosophy, this boy, in the years of his early manhood, attained; and it but enhances our respect for his abilities when he reached maturity, if we find in his early training all manner of shortcomings. The beautiful doctrines of the religion with which this Pharaoh's name is identified were productions of his later days; and until he was at least seventeen years of age neither his exalted monotheism nor any of his future principles were really apparent. Some time after the eighth year of his reign one finds that he had evolved a religion so pure that one must compare it with Christianity in order to discover its faults; and yet this superb theology was in no sense derived from his education.

The struggle, as has been said, was between Amon and Aton. The god Aton, the Adonis of Asia Minor, was no doubt a foreign god, and was chosen for that very reason to be the supreme name in the religion which Akhnaton founded. For it was not a god that he wanted, but a divine principle or power above all gods. And this name with its less familiar associations could be better adapted to that purpose than the name of any of the local gods of Egypt. No doubt also he was influenced in his choice of name by the fact that

his mother Tiy, a woman of strong force of character; as well as his wife Nefertiti, to whom he was tenderly attached, were of Syrian extraction. But the fact that the god was a foreigner made it the more difficult for Akhnaton to substitute a new worship identified with his name for the ancient and Egyptian worship of the god Amon.

If the struggle was not of long duration, it was extremely bitter while it lasted. Akhnaton was compelled to change the residence of the Court. With that, and the change of his own name, for he had originally been called Amonhotep, the breach was complete. Henceforth he could develop his religion at will, watched only at a distance by the baffled but still powerful and revengeful body of priests in Thebes.

Originally Aton (or 'the Aton,' for the word is simply 'Lord,' and may be used with or without the article) was the actual sun's disk. But now Akhnaton—he was nineteen or twenty when he founded his new city and religion—called the object of his worship 'Heat-which-is-in-Aton,' and drew the eyes of his followers to a force far more intangible and distant than the dazzling orb of the sun itself. Akhnaton's conception of God, as we now begin to observe it, was as the power which created the sun, the energy which penetrated to this earth in the sun's heat and caused all things to grow. At the present day the scientist will tell you that God is the ultimate source of life, that where natural explanation fails there God is to be found: He is, in a word, the author of energy, the primal motive-power of all known things. Akhnaton, centuries upon centuries before the birth of the scientist, defined God in just this manner. In an age when men believed, as some do still, that a deity was but an exaggerated creature of this earth, having a form built on material lines, this youthful Pharaoh proclaimed God to be the formless essence, the intelligent germ, the loving force, which permeated time and space.

'The Aton,' says Mr. WEIGALL, 'is God as we

conceive Him. There is no quality attributed by the king to the Aton which we do not attribute to our God. Like a flash of blinding light in the night-time the Aton stands out for a moment amidst the black Egyptian darkness, and disappears once more,—the first signal to this world of the future religion of the West. No man whose mind is free from prejudice will fail to see a far closer resemblance to the teaching of Christ in the religion of Akhnaton than in that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The faith of the patriarchs is the lineal ancestor of the Christian faith; but the creed of Akhnaton is its isolated prototype. One might believe that Almighty God had for a moment revealed Himself to Egypt, and had been more clearly, though more momentarily, interpreted there than ever He was in Syria or Palestine before the time of Christ.'

Amon and the old gods of Egypt were, for the most part, but deified mortals, endued with monstrous, though limited, powers, and still having around them traditions of aggrandized human deeds. Others had their origin in natural phenomena: the wind, the Nile, the starry heavens, and the like. All were terrific or revengeful, if so they had a mind to be, and all were able to be moved by human emotions. But to Akhnaton, although he had absolutely no precedent upon which to launch his thoughts, God was the intangible and yet ever-present Father of mankind, made manifest in sunshine. The youthful high-priest called upon his subjects to search for their God, not in the confusion of battle or behind the smoke of human sacrifices, but amidst the flowers and the trees, amidst the wild duck and the fishes. Like a greater than he, Akhnaton taught his disciples to address their maker as their 'Father which art in Heaven.' The Aton was the joy which caused the young sheep 'to dance upon their legs,' and the birds 'to flutter in their marshes.' He was the god of the simple pleasures of life; and although Akhnaton himself was indeed a man of sorrows, plenteously acquainted with grief, happiness was the watchword which he gave to his followers.

The Aton was 'the Lord of Love.' He was the tender nurse who 'creates the man-child in woman, and soothes him that he may not weep'; whose love, to use an Egyptian phrase of exquisite tenderness, 'makes the hands to faint.' His beams were 'beauteous with love' as they fell upon His people and upon His city, 'very rich in love.' 'Thy love is great and large,' says one of Akhnaton's psalms. 'Thou fillest the two lands of Egypt with Thy love'; and another passage runs: 'Thy rays encompass the lands. . . . Thou bindest them with Thy love.'

And now it is time that we had returned to the 104th Psalm. In the tombs of rich persons who had lived and died previous to the time of Akhnaton, a large portion of the walls had been covered with religious inscriptions; and when at first the nobles of the new City were planning their sepulchres they must have been at a loss to know what to substitute for these forbidden formulæ. Soon, however, it became the custom to write there short extracts from the hymns which were sung in the temples of the Aton. In a few cases these inscriptions supply us with a definite psalm which, although short, seems to be complete. In one tomb—that of Ay—however, there is a copy of a much more elaborate hymn.

It is this hymn that Mr. WEIGALL offers as the original of Psalm 104. That Akhnaton himself was the author of it there is no reason to doubt. Mr. WEIGALL sets portions of it and of the Psalm in parallel columns.

## AKHNATON'S HYMN.

The world is in darkness like the dead. Every lion cometh forth from his den; all serpents sting. Darkness reigns.

## PSALM CIV.

Thou makest the darkness and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey; they seek their meat from God.

## AKHNATON'S HYMN.

When Thou risest in the horizon . . . the darkness is banished. . . . Then in all the world they do their work.

All trees and plants flourish, . . . the birds flutter in their marshes. . . . All sheep dance upon their feet.

The ships sail up-stream and down-stream alike. . . . The fish in the river leap up before Thee; and Thy rays are in the midst of the great sea.

How manifold are all Thy works! . . . Thou didst create the earth according to Thy desire,—men, all cattle, . . . all that are upon the earth. . . .

Thou hast set a Nile in heaven that it may fall for them, making floods upon the mountains . . . and watering their fields. The Nile in heaven is for the service of the strangers, and for the cattle of every land.

Thou makest the seasons. . . . Thou hast made the distant heaven in order to rise therein, . . . dawning, shining afar off, and returning.

The world is in Thy hand, even as Thou hast made them. When Thou hast risen they live; when Thou settest they die. . . . By Thee man liveth.

## PSALM CIV.

The sun riseth, they get them away, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening.

The trees of the Lord are full of sap, . . . wherein the birds make their nests. . . . The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats.

Yonder is the sea, great and wide, wherein are . . . both small and great beasts. There go the ships. . . .

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy creatures.

He watereth the hills from above: the earth is filled with the fruit of Thy works. He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men.

He appointed the moon for certain seasons, and the sun knoweth his going down.

These wait all upon Thee . . . When Thou givest them [food] they gather it; and when Thou openest Thy hand they are filled with good. When Thou hidest Thy face they are troubled: when Thou takest away their breath they die.

Now even so conservative a critic as KIRKPATRICK holds that the 104th Psalm, if it was composed by a Hebrew, could not have been composed earlier than the Exile. Akhnaton lived and died before the time of the Exodus.