

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for January will contain Part I. of *Rothe's Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John*.

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We know no preacher who owes a deeper grudge to the printing-press than Mr. Hugh Price Hughes. Few men are more fascinating than Mr. Hughes in the pulpit. But his sermons, as they appear fortnightly in the *Methodist Times*, having undergone the printing process, have somehow had the fervour and the charm squeezed out of them, and the residue is very ordinary providing. Even when the best of them are gathered into a volume, as in the case of *Social Christianity*, they are disappointing. They are short, they are practical, and they are commonplace.

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That is the rule, and we have just fallen in with the exception. The text is after Mr. Hughes' own heart: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John xiii. 34); and he handles it with much freedom, while he gathers round it quite a wealth of appropriate illustration. Thus: "St. Matthew tells us that in the Sermon on the Mount, the Great Master commanded us to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. v. 48). That seems impossible. But when we turn to the corresponding passage in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke, and the thirty-sixth verse, we read, not 'Be ye perfect,' but 'Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful'. And so we learn that we are to be perfect, not in wisdom or in power, but in

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love, and in love especially, as it manifests itself to the unthankful and the unworthy in the form of mercy. We are to be God-like—that is, Christ-like—in the matter of love. We are to love one another as Christ loves us."

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Mr. Hughes asks in what sense this was a *new* commandment. The quotation just made shows how he answers the question. Its newness he finds explained in the words, "Even as I have loved you". But he holds that these words do not express the measure of the love, but the kind of it. It was not new because a new standard of intensity was offered; it was new because a new kind of love was held up for imitation. There were different kinds of love in the world already—love of instinct, of gratitude, of merit, and of complacency. But a new love came in with Jesus Christ—love for love's sake, unselfish, disinterested, *absolute*. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye be perfect in love as I have been perfect and unselfish in loving you."

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This is a fine fresh idea; but we do not think that it is the meaning of the text. We doubt if perfect love *was* a new commandment. There was no instance of it till now; but the new instance did not make the commandment new. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thy neighbour as thyself" demanded perfect love to fulfil it—the very reason why it could not be fulfilled, except by One. The key, says Mr. Hughes, is to be found in the context. We

believe he would have found it there if he had looked at the context more closely, and at the words of the text itself.

Mr. George Reith, who is the author of a Commentary on St. John, just published by Clark of Edinburgh, says in his note on this text: "The fine shading of Greek tenses attempted to be done into English in the margin of the R.V. produces no change in the meaning of the passage—'Even as I loved you, that ye also may love one another'". Now, we may not agree with the purpose of that translation, which attempts to give to the word *that* (*ὅτι*) the force it would have in a classical author; but we must admit that it alters the meaning considerably, for it makes the commandment refer to something else—to the Supper, for example, as some think—and to be given for this purpose—that ye may love one another. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye keep this Supper in remembrance of Me, in order that ye may love one another as I have loved you." The observance of the Lord's Supper would be the commandment according to this translation, and the purpose of this observance is stated to be to maintain a spirit of brotherly love. But we are dealing with Biblical Greek, and there is no necessity for this translation, which gives a meaning quite foreign to the context.

But it is different with the words "as I loved you". That is the only possible translation, for the tense is the aorist or simple past (*ἠγάπησα*). And it does alter the meaning, as we shall see.

The emphasis of the text is on the word "one-another". Its position in the sentence puts that beyond question. But the moment we read the verse and put the emphasis there, the meaning starts into view: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love *one another*". Jesus has only the eleven disciples with Him, for the traitor has already gone out into the night. In the hearing of these eleven He had already announced the old commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," with an added emphasis and extended grasp. In particular, He had pointed out that their neighbour included their enemy, even such as the hated and despised Samaritan. Now He says, "A *new* commandment I give unto you, that ye love"

—not your enemies, but—"one another". The old command is not taken away. It lies upon these men with a great obligation, such as never was known by Jew or Gentile before. But another is added to it, another and a different commandment, that Peter love John, and John love Andrew, and Andrew love "Judas-not-Iscaiot". "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love *one another*."

It is the love of one true Christian to another. And it was new, absolutely new, for till then there were no Christians to love or be loved. The disciples recognised it as new. Of this we have an immediate and conclusive proof. For when a new thing comes into the world, one of the first needs is a new name to call it by. A new invention or discovery must have its new name—the "type-writer," let us say. So the disciples, recognising that a new thing had appeared in the world, chose a word,—like "type-writer," compound of two things,—a word unknown before, to name it by. "Phil-adelphia" (*φιλαδελφία*) they called it, "love of brothers," "brotherly-love". And their use of this word shows us that they recognised this commandment as not only new, but different in kind from the old commandment of love. In the rope of Christian virtues, as it has been well called, which St. Peter weaves in the first chapter of his second letter, the last two strands are "brotherly love" (*φιλαδελφία*) and "love" (*ἀγάπη*), as the Revised Version does well to inform us: "In your faith supply virtue . . . and in your godliness love of the brethren, and in your love of the brethren love". The two virtues are kept distinct, for they rest upon two separate and distinct commands, the one very old, and the other altogether new.

"As I loved you." The words are not given to unish a new standard of love, either in intensity or in kind. If the tense is rendered correctly, it is seen at once to be incapable of any such meaning. It points to an action which is past and done, not to a continued state, such as that meaning would demand. Westcott endeavours to preserve the tense and yet apply it in the ordinary sense. "The exact form (*ἠγάπησα*, 'I loved')," he says, "implies that Christ's work is now ideally finished." But a much simpler explanation lies to our hand.

"That ye love one another as I loved you." The act He refers to is just past. It is the washing of their feet. We view that marvellous action chiefly as a great wonder of condescending love. He meant it as an instance of true *brotherly* love. If I, your Lord and Master, act as a brother towards you, ye ought to act as brothers surely towards one another. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye act towards one another as I have just acted towards you. The whole strange action of the feet-washing leads up to this command; and the command interprets the action. "As I have just loved you"—the exact meaning of the word is brought out better by that translation than by any other. In washing their feet He offered them a single instance of the brotherly love He commanded. But it was an instance which involves the principle, and was capable of endless application.

There rests upon the Christian, then, two different commands to love. The old is not taken away. The new is added to it. Thou shalt love thine enemies, thou shalt do good to them that hate thee, thou shalt bless them that curse thee, thou shalt pray for them that spitefully use thee. That is the great Mosaic command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Christ added nothing to it when He gave it to His followers. He simply pointed out its scope and intensity. Then, when the time came, He added another commandment to love, of a different scope and a different nature. And thenceforth these two separate commandments have lain upon every follower of Christ.

But is it possible for the Christian to love in two different ways? Yes; it is not only possible, it is inevitable; not only must he love the world out of Christ in one way, and his brethren in Christ in another, but he cannot help it. Mark Guy Pearse, in his inimitable way, tells a story which lends itself readily to illustration. "Said one of my little ones to the youngest, in that threatening tone which is usually adopted in teaching, 'You must be good, you know, or father won't love you'. Then I called him to myself, and I said, gravely and tenderly: 'Do you know what you have said? It is not true, my boy—not a bit true.' 'Isn't it?'"

said the little one, surprised and doubtful. 'No,' I said; 'it is far away from the truth.' 'But you won't love us if we are not good, will you?' he asked. 'Yes,' I said, 'I can't help loving you; I shall love you for ever and ever, because I can't help it. When you are good I shall love you with a love that makes me glad; and when you are not good I shall love you with a love that hurts me; but I can't help loving you, because I am your father, you know.'

God the Father loves with this two-fold love. "God so loved the world that He *gave His only-begotten Son*." Was the love that demanded *that* a love that made Him glad? Was it not a love that "hurt" Him? But, says Jesus, "If a man love Me, he will keep My commandments, and My Father will *love* him". Why, the Father loves every man, whether he keeps the commandments of the Lord or not. But this is a new love—a love that makes the Father glad. So also is God the Son capable of a two-fold love. What a yearning love there is in that cry over the self-doomed city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" How different from the love He bore to that disciple—"the disciple whom Jesus loved"! And so also to the follower of the Lord is this double love not merely possible but quite inevitable—a love that hurts, and a love that makes him glad. Sharing the love of Christ which sent Him to die for sinners, he loves those for whom Christ died, though they do not recognise Him as a Prince and a Saviour. It is a real love in the true Christian, an anxious, eager, almost consuming love sometimes—a love that brings no gladness, but burns the breast with yearning desire. It is a love which suffers persecution, which makes the gentle woman courageous, which amazes and staggers the unbeliever. But there is a love also which makes the follower of Jesus glad. In a block of London's poorest abodes a woman visited one night, tried room after room, found only misery, filth, brutality. When to the weary knock at one more door a cheerful "Come in" is the response, and she finds herself welcomed at the bright fireside of a poor but real follower of Jesus, and there rushed forth to meet that welcome a love that made her glad. The one is a love that demands self-denial, the other is spontaneous,

irresistible. The one makes us fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, the other proves us saints upon the earth.

At a recent meeting of the Académie des Inscriptions, M. J. Halévy read a paper upon the Hebrew text of Psalm lxviii., which begins in the Vulgate "Exurgat Deus". He contended (says the *Academy*) that the order of the verses had been disturbed, and he suggested a new order which made the whole far more intelligible. According to M. Halévy, this psalm dates from the later years of the reign of Zedekiah, when Palestine, threatened by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, was looking for help to Necho, king of Egypt. Two parties then divided the school of the prophets: one, that of Jeremiah, was friendly to Babylon, and regarded the promises of Egypt with distrust; the other, led by Ananias, son of Azur, favoured an Egyptian alliance against Babylon. The writer of the psalm belonged to the latter party. As the psalm contains references to several facts recorded in the books of the Pentateuch, M. Halévy drew the inference that those books must have existed before the destruction of Jerusalem; and hence he argued against the critical theory which would turn into "pseudépigraphe" the most authentic books of the Bible.

Mr. Flinders Petrie, the Egyptian explorer, brings forward, in his book *Nebeshel and Defenneh*, some facts which have an important bearing on the date of the Book of Daniel. The chief argument against the Babylonian date arises from the frequent employment of Greek words—names of musical instruments in use among the Greeks, and the like. Mr. Petrie believes that he has found a satisfactory explanation of these Greek words in Daniel. When Nebuchadnezzar began to harass the little kingdom of Judah, many of the Jews fled to Egypt, and settled chiefly at Tahpanes, the same place which in Greek is called Daphnai, and in Arabic Defenneh. But Tahpanes was the very seat of that Greek garrison known to have been planted on the Egyptian frontier fifty years earlier by Psammeticus I. With these Greeks the Jewish fugitives must have come into close relationship. During the twenty years of trouble in Judah, from 607 to 587 B.C., a constant intercourse with the Greek settlers

must have been going on, resulting in a wider influence than even a Greek colony in Palestine would have produced. Then came the final deportation to Babylonia of a large number of those who had settled permanently at Tahpanes, carrying with them, no doubt, many Greek words and customs. Thus, by the identification of Tahpanes with the seat of the Greek garrison in Egypt, "a fresh and unexpected light," says Mr. Petrie, "is thrown upon a question which has been an important element of biblical criticism".

In a footnote to a vigorous article in the *Expositor*, on the "Neronic Date of the Apocalypse," Principal Brown says it is "a thousand pities" that both the Auth. and Rev. Versions punctuate Rev. xiii. 8 thus: "The book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". He points out that no such idea as this, that Christ was crucified before the foundation of the world, is anywhere else to be found in the New Testament. The proper punctuation, as Rev. xvii. 8 shows, is: "All whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain". This is the rendering of the margin of the Rev. Ver. It is supported by most recent commentators, including Bleek, Webster and Wilkinson, and Professor Milligan in his recently-issued volume.

Professor T. H. Green quotes this verse in his sermon on "The Witness of God," and quotes it according to the translation, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". In seeking to remove the supernatural husk from the spiritual kernel of Christianity, he says that the historical events in the life of Christ were lost sight of in St. Paul's mind, being absorbed in the contemplation of the finishing act of it—that death unto sin in virtue of which Christ lived eternally unto God; even the crucifixion and resurrection were not to St. Paul, after his own conversion, historical events, in the sense that they had been before. "Though they are not St. Paul's own words, yet it is quite in his spirit to say that Christ was slain from the foundation of the world." It will go hard with Professor Green's argument if this text has been misquoted; for we do not know where another can be found to suit his purpose so well.

At a time when the question of employing deaconesses in the Church is being widely considered, the following exegetical note, coming from an eminent authority, will be useful. Professor B. B. Warfield says, in the *Presbyterian Review*: "We are glad to see that the latest student of ecclesiastical polity, Dr. Thomas Witherow, of Londonderry, although only a few years ago (1886) he was inclined to see deaconesses in the 'women' of 1 Tim. iii. 11, now accords with us in finding indication of the existence of women-deacons in the New Testament only in Rom. xvi. 1: 'I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, who is a deaconess of the Church in Cenchreæ'. This is, no doubt, a narrow, not to say a precarious foundation, on which to build much of an ecclesiastical structure. The term here employed (*διάκονος*) is of very broad connotation; and Phebe might conceivably have been only an humble 'servant' of the Cenchrean Church, or, indeed, for all that the term itself declares, only a Christian belonging to that Church (*cf.* John xii. 26). Nor is there any compelling reason apparent in the context, shutting us up to the technical sense of 'deaconess'. Nevertheless, this seems the more likely meaning of the phrase; and this interpretation receives confirmation from a clear indication, coming to us from the earliest post-apostolic times, that 'deaconesses' were then already an established order in the Church."

## Guild Prize Competitions.

### EXAMINATION PAPERS.

(Answers must be received by the 14th December.)

#### I.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

1. Relate very briefly the chief historical events from the Return to the end of the Old Testament.
2. Who were the Scribes?
3. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain:" explain the origin of that worship.

#### II.

#### THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PETER.

1. Describe St. Peter's birthplace.
2. What would be the nature and extent of his education?
3. What relatives of his are mentioned in the New Testament?

Books recommended are: (1) *The Historical Connection between the Old and New Testaments*, by Rev. John Skinner.

(2) *The Life of the Apostle Peter*, by the Rev. Professor Salmond. Clark. 6d. each. Prizes will be given to successful Candidates every month.

Prizes will be given for the best Paper read at any Church Guild meeting; and for the best Syllabus of Guild Religious Work for the Session 1889-90. Syllabuses must be received by the 14th December.

## The Welfare of Youth.

### MONTHLY EXAMINATION PAPERS.

AN Examination Paper will be set monthly on the Life of David. The book recommended for use is *The Life of David*, by the Rev. P. Thomson, published by T. and T. Clark, price 6d. The name, age, and address of the Candidate must accompany the answers every month. Prizes will be given to successful Candidates monthly.

### REPORT OF EXAMINER UPON PAPER, II. (NOVEMBER).

The following Candidates have gained Prizes:—

#### Senior Section.

1. RODERICK LOCHHEAD, 24 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow.
2. ANDRINA G. G. HEDDLE, St. Margaret's Hope, South Ronaldshay.

#### Middle Section.

1. DUGALD CLARK, Post Office, Port Charlotte, Islay.
2. MAGGIE A. M'KENZIE, 2 Castle Street, Peterhead.
3. JAMES GRAY, 162 Skene Street West, Aberdeen.

#### Junior Section.

1. ALEX. MACKAY, Moss View, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
- After the above comes the following order of merit:—

*Senior Section*.—E. S. P. (Glasgow), N. C. (Islay), J. M. (Edinburgh), K. M. (Rannoch), J. C. (Coupar-Angus).

*Middle Section*.—B. M. (Aberdeen), J. C. C. (Dundee), A. K. W. (Glasgow), A. L. C. (Edinburgh), A. M. M. (Hamilton), B. L. H. G. (Auchmill), C. G. (Aberdeen), N. H. B. (Hamilton), J. T. D. (Coldstream), K. P. G. (Auchmill), J. H. C. (Radcliffe, Lancashire), W. G. (Aberdeen).

*Junior Section*.—C. B. (Hamilton), R. G. E. (Aberdeen), W. L. (Aberdeen), E. M. (Hamilton), H. B. (Airdrie), T. B. (Dundee), J. L. (Airdrie).

### EXAMINATION PAPER, III.

(Answers must be received by the 14th December.)

1. What events are associated in the Old Testament with Hebron?
2. Describe the reign of Ishbosheth.
3. What traits of character have we seen in David up to his anointing as king over all Israel?