

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

MR. A. S. PEAKE, M.A., contributes to the April issue of *The Evangelical Magazine* a short address which he delivered recently before the Congregational Union. Its title—which was suggested to him, not chosen by him—is “The Indwelling Spirit and the Living Christ.” It is not one subject apparently, but two, and Mr. Peake takes them up separately. Moreover, they are such subjects as might, each of them, have been good for ten addresses of this length without a symptom of exhaustion.

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Mr. Peake does not run the risk of entering into either of them. Yet he says some timely things in both, and says them well. Catching the attention at once by the personal reference, he says his difficulty, as he learned his theology from the Apostle Paul, was to find a place for the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption. “I seemed to have all I needed in the union of the believer with Christ. It was clear, however, that Paul did teach that there was a work of the Spirit. The immediate explanation that all that the apostle means is that Christ dwells in us through the Spirit, was not found satisfactory. The apostle’s language and the believer’s religious instinct both demanded nothing short of living union with the Lord Himself.”

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Mr. Peake frankly owns that he cannot give any adequate account of the difficulty. He is inclined “to look for light in the suggestion that the Spirit

is the vehicle whereby Christ and the human spirit are brought into vital contact.” But there is one thing he is clear about—that it is “entirely unsafe to examine the Christian consciousness in order to discover the solution. For we immediately run the risk of fashioning our consciousness to suit a particular theory of what it ought to be. St. Paul uses certain expressions to designate *his* consciousness of the presence of the Spirit. Our risk is to assume that our consciousness must be the same—and then *make* it so.

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This, Mr. Peake believes, is a very prevalent tendency of our times. And the moment he passes to consider the Living Christ, which is the second part of his subject, he utters a warning in this very direction. The *living* Christ suggests to Mr. Peake the *historical* Christ: if there is any one to whom no such suggestion comes, there is great risk that such a one will so separate the two as to stake his whole apologetics upon his consciousness of the immediate presence of Christ within him.

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But why should we not stake the truth of Christianity upon our own experience? Because, in the first place, says Mr. Peake, your experience, that is, your consciousness, is not to be trusted. And in the second place, because you have thus cut the ground away from all apologetics, For, if the consciousness of the adherents of a religion

may be taken as the final evidence of its truth, there is no religion upon earth but may be proved divine. Take the lowest of all. "Among many savages, anything that has been used by a chief becomes taboo, and may not be appropriated by any one else, for fear of certain penalties which are expected to follow such a trespass. Now, there are well-attested cases where a man has unknowingly transgressed taboo, and on learning of his fault has suffered the consequences which superstition has attached to such an offence. The experience has been perfectly real, for many have actually died in this way; yet no civilised person will seriously believe that it was due to anything but the man's faith in his creed and conviction that most disastrous consequences must follow his use of forbidden things. Yet the savage points triumphantly to such facts as proving the truth of his belief."

Mr. St. Chad Boscawen is sending some letters from Egypt to THE SUNDAY SCHOOL. In the latest, which is published in the issue for April 13, he writes most admirably on "The Shepherds and the Exodus." In a footnote he contributes this item to the still vexed but gradually settling question of the date of the Exodus. He says: "An approximate date for the period of the Hyksos or foreign rule may be now obtained. The entry of Abram into Egypt precedes by a short time the war of Chedorlaomer and his allied kings in Syria (Gen. xiv.). Here the Elamite ruler is evidently supreme over the Babylonian and other kings. It is, therefore, the Elamite dynasty founded by Kudar-Nakhunti in B.C. 2280. This dynasty was overthrown by the native Babylonian king Khammurabi, whose date is also to be fixed. In an inscription of Nabonidus we are told that there were 700 years between the reign of Khammurabi and that of Burraburyas. Burraburyas was the contemporary of Amenophis III., B.C. 1450, which gives B.C. 2155 for date of the end of the reign of Khammurabi. He reigned fifty years, which places his accession in B.C. 2200; so that the entry of Abram into Egypt is between B.C.

2280-2200. Lepsius places Hyksos commencement B.C. 2136; Brugsch 2233."

In the days of His flesh our Lord encountered two classes of men. He could not have encountered more than two classes, for there were no more. One might hazard the conviction that there never have been but these two classes anywhere. But it might demand proof. And at present it is sufficient to deal with unquestioned fact. In Palestine in the day of Jesus Christ there were two classes of men, and there were no more.

That is unquestioned, because we have Christ's own word for it. In one of the most Messianic sentences He ever spoke, He unmistakably divided the men of Israel into two classes, and named them so. The words are these: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." "Sinners" and "just persons"—these are the two classes. And it is impossible to deny that they included, at least, all those who belonged to the house of Israel then.

In that passage our Lord divided the people into these two classes, and called them by these two names. But the division and the designation were not originally His. He did no more than accept a well-recognised distinction, and He used a perfectly familiar designation. How the distinction arose, and how it came to be so freely accepted, are very interesting inquiries, but they are unnecessary for our present purpose. One pregnant remark made by the pharisees, and occurring in St. John's Gospel (vii. 48, 49), may alone be referred to: "Have any of the rulers or of the pharisees believed on Him? But this people (*multitude* in the R.V.) *which knoweth not the law* are cursed." It is enough that the names were there, and that they expressed a distinction which was openly recognised. The sinners did not deny that they were sinners, and the just persons were thankful to know that they were just.

There were other names, of course. There were names with a political or official value; such as Herodian, scribe, and the like, with which we have nothing to do. The distinction before us was a religious one. There were other names, of a religious tendency also, however, and two of these were sometimes used in a sense so very closely resembling those before us, that they might be allowed to stand for the moment as an equivalent—the names Publican and Pharisee. Once Christ did use them almost, if not altogether, in the sense of sinner and just person, when he told the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray. But, though the pharisees were all just persons, and the publicans were all sinners, these words had other references attached to them; and, besides, they were too limited in scope, they did not cover the whole nation of the Jews. The only names which emphasised the one gulf of separation in the land, and at the same time brought out the meaning of it, were these two—sinners and just persons.

Our Lord encountered both these classes. But His attitude towards them was very different. He sought out the one class, He avoided the other. He would not leave the one class alone, the other would not leave Him alone. Without exaggeration, it may be said that He spent His life for the one, and declined to have anything to do with the other. And if that is surprising, it is surely much more surprising that it was the sinners he consorted with, and the just persons He avoided. What a surprise it was to the just persons themselves! Again and again they openly expressed their surprise, and, what we cannot wonder at when we know the circumstances, their indignation. And the sinners were no less surprised than they.

He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. Why? Because He was Himself a sinner? Some one said so yesterday—we have already forgotten the name of him. But the pharisees did not say so. And yet they had a keen scent that way. If He

had been a sinner, they would neither have been indignant nor surprised. They murmured, saying, He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners, just because He was not a sinner, but in their unbiassed judgment and by their most rigid standard one of the class of just persons to whom they themselves belonged. They murmured. For Jesus was Himself a Rabbi, and it was not seemly, it was unprecedented and unbearable, that He should consort with publicans and sinners.

Why did He do it? We may say it was the cause of all His troubles, and even won Him His shameful death at the last. Why did He do it? His answer is, "For therefore came I forth." Again and again He said it, "I am not sent but unto the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel;" "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners." It was no matter of personal choice, therefore, except in so far as He made the Father's will His choice always. Surely it was no matter of personal choice that He who knew what sin was and what it was able to work, should eat and drink with publicans and sinners. But, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." And this was the will of the Father who had sent Him, that He should seek and save that which was lost.

The just persons did not know that. And we cannot wonder that they were indignant. Is it not a surprising thing even to us, that He should deliberately choose one portion of His nation, and that the least reputable, and deliberately reject the other? "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep; I am not sent to call the righteous,"—it is surely surprising enough.

But if is surprising that His mission was to the sinners only, much more surprising was His way with them. We have several instances recorded. Two of them are so touching that we can scarcely approach them without tears. Nothing so moving is to be found in all the literature of the world.

In both cases the sinners were women, and both were guilty of woman's darkest sin. Yet He simply said—"Thy sins are forgiven thee," or, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." If you are not surprised at that, you do not know what it is to be a just person looking on. Nay, I think you would be surprised not a little, if it were not that you dare not criticise Him. Simon the Pharisee was surprised enough. It was not only that there was the scandal of the thing, but he had heard Jesus say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Now, as a just person, he knew that that was both blasphemous and bad. He knew that there were only two classes of persons in the room—the just persons and the sinners; and he knew that the difference between them lay in this, that the one class needed no repentance, while the other needed it very greatly but *would never get it*. Yet Jesus proposed to give it to them. His proposal was blasphemous, for who can forgive sins but God only? And it was bad, for sinners cannot be made just persons, and just persons ought to have nothing to do with them.

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Jesus had nothing to do with the just persons. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners. But the just persons would not leave Him alone. They gathered unto Him; they murmured against Him; they stood up for to do or say something to Him; they would not leave Him alone. He was not sent unto them, but He was compelled to deal with them. How did He deal with them?

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Before the question is answered, one circumstance must be brought to mind. Most of the just persons were pharisees. That word, indeed, as we have already seen, might almost be taken as a synonym for just persons. So much so that, in speaking of the just persons, we can scarcely help thinking all the while of the pharisees alone. Now the word pharisee is an unlovely one to us, for the pharisees are unlovely themselves. "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites!" that is the sentence that rings in our ears and

stamps their character for us. But it is both a pity and a mistake. It is a mistake. The pharisees were not all hypocrites. He who afterwards became so well known as the Apostle to the Gentiles was a pharisee, and it is not on record that his bitterest enemy called him a hypocrite. So it is a pity also. For we cannot enter into the feelings of the pharisees, nor at all realise their situation if we think of them as hypocrites all and nothing more. Pharisee means hypocrite, you say. That is not very likely, when the pharisees themselves were so proud of the name. No, it simply means *separated*, and though to us it appears a somewhat arrogant title, it was descriptive enough, it emphasised a real fact, that the pharisees were more righteous than the publicans and sinners.

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How, then, did Christ deal with the just persons? Did He deny their right to the title? No; He did not. Once and again He denounced them so far as they were hypocrites—denounced them, that is to say, for open acts of dishonesty which they did under the name of religion. But, as just persons, He simply accepted them at their own estimate. They claimed to be just; the multitude were sinners; He accepted the distinction, "Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners? But when He heard it He said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

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There is no doubt it is somewhat staggering that He should have accepted them as if they were the just persons who needed no repentance that they claimed to be. But there is no denying it, and a good reason might easily be found if it were necessary now. The important matter to observe is, however, that as He accepted them so, He showed them in the same breath how unlovely a pharasaic just person is. "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he . . . would not go in. . . . And he said

to his father. . . . But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots. . . ." He even told them that, just though they counted themselves, they were farther off from the kingdom of heaven than the sinners. "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." And when one night in the cover of the darkness a just person named Nicodemus came to Him and asked what additional good deed was to

be done that he might enter this kingdom of heaven, Jesus told him that he must begin at the very beginning again; that his pile of good deeds must all be taken down; that he must start where the publican and the harlot had to start—at repentance and forgiveness of sins. There are no just persons, He said, except those whom I make just by the words, Thy sins are forgiven thee, and so, being born of the Spirit, go and sin no more.

## Professor Ryle's Contributions to Old Testament Scholarship.

BY PROFESSOR S. D. F. SALMOND, D.D., ABERDEEN.

FOR the time being Old Testament questions hold the field both at home and on the Continent of Europe. It is a happy circumstance, therefore, that England and Scotland are alike rich in scholars capable of grappling with the rush of new problems, and of giving shape to opinion in a period of change. In the band of students who are reviving the best traditions of English learning in this great line of inquiry, Professor Herbert Ryle occupies a distinguished place. His contributions to Old Testament scholarship have already won wide recognition. They are valuable in themselves, and they are welcome as the earnest of valuable work to come. The same strong qualities mark them all. They are the qualities of sober sense, definite statement, scientific method, independence of traditional opinion, sympathy with the legitimate processes and best results of modern criticism, all hallowed by a reverential spirit and a profound recognition of the voice of the Spirit of God in the Word.

The edition of the *Psalms of the Pharisees*, prepared with the efficient co-operation of Mr. Montague Rhodes James and issued in 1891, deserves mention as one of the most opportune products of Professor Ryle's studies. This collection, usually known as the *Psalms of Solomon* and unjustly neglected till very recent times, has many claims upon the attention of scholars. "It is the solitary instance," as we are reminded, "of an Old Testa-

ment book, which from being merely *ἀντιλεγόμενον* became *ἀπόκρυφον*." It reflects the feeling of Jewish parties in the final stage of the conflict between Pharisee and Sadducee. It forms an interesting link between the literature represented by Ecclesiasticus and the literature in the Apocalyptic form. It has a position entirely its own, in respect of style, among the Jewish books which have come down to us from the last century B.C. It affords us insight into Jewish opinion and belief in the period between B.C. 70 and A.D. 40,—the estimate in which the "Torah" was held, the prevailing idea of the Theocracy, the doctrines taught on the providence of God, the responsibility and freedom of man, the last judgment, and the future life. Above all, it is of importance for the view which it gives of the Messianic expectations which were current in Pharisaic Judaism, immediately before Christ's time. The place which it holds in the history of the Messianic hope is one of the utmost significance, as it is the first indubitable example in *Palestinian* Judaism of the expectation of a *personal* Messiah, and indicates that the conception of this Messiah was that of one uniting in Himself the offices of Priest and King, exercising a holy rule, fulfilling a twofold ministry of destruction and restoration, the possessor of divine gifts, but not Himself divine.

Something had been done in Germany by Hilgenfeld, Fritzsche, Geiger, Dillmann, Wellhausen,