

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

IN the announcement that is made on another page of the forthcoming Dictionary of the Bible, there is probably no item that will give more general satisfaction than this, that Professor Gwatkin has undertaken to handle the whole subject of the Organization of the Early Church. For it is doubtful if there is any man living whose judgment on the many unsolved and thorny questions that remain will be so widely accepted.

Is the identity of the Bishop (*ἐπίσκοπος*) and Elder (*πρεσβύτερος*) one of the questions that are still unsettled? It does not seem so. In his new book, *St. Paul the Traveller*, Professor Ramsay discusses it, and dismisses it in a paragraph. He dismisses it indeed in part of a sentence: 'it is plain from Titus i. 5-7 that they are synonymous.' And Canon Gore dismisses it now almost as briefly. 'It seems to me,' he says in a letter to the *Guardian* of November 27, 'that if Titus i. 5-7 was written by St. Paul, and Acts xx. 17 and 28 really represent his meaning or phraseology, the idea of a difference between the two titles in early Christian use can be allowed to go but very little way.'

Nevertheless, Canon Gore holds that these titles differ in their origin, and hence, though they are

applied to the same person, they actually differ in meaning. The term *presbyter*, he says, is both vaguer and more inclusive than the term *episcopos*. As a title both of honour and of office, *presbyter* can be used of an apostle, and *episcopos* can not. 'Thus, in a somewhat vague sense, St. Peter calls himself a presbyter (1 Pet. v. 1), and St. Paul reckons himself in the "presbytery" which presided at Timothy's ordination (1 Tim. iv. 14 compared with 2 Tim. i. 6). For the Christian "presbytery" is the governing body of the local Church, and as such includes the apostle when he takes part with them, and exercises his apostolic function with their assistance.'

Canon Gore traces this difference of application from a difference of origin. In a subsequent issue, the Rev. W. S. Wood, M.A., Rector of Ufford, traces the difference of origin. The *presbyter*, he says, will be of Jewish origin, being in fact the Jewish 'elder of the people' transferred to the Christian Church. *Episcopos* is a Gentile title, and is used by contemporary Gentile writers (Arrian, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and others) to designate any officer or functionary in charge of a region, town, division of an army, or the like. 'Hence it is evident that *presbyter* is a title of station or dignity, *episcopos* of office or charge,

and they answer to our "priest" and "rector," which are both applied to the same individual from different points of view.'

Mr. Reader Harris—whose name it is never safe to mention without adding that he is not Professor Rendel Harris of Cambridge—Mr. Reader Harris, Q.C., lately offered a reward of one hundred pounds 'to the first Keswick speaker who forwards a passage of Scripture which, read with the context, positively affirms the necessity of sin in the spirit-filled believer.'

Principal Waller of Highbury is not a 'Keswick speaker,' but he answers Mr. Harris in the *Record* of December 6. He answers Mr. Harris, and he says that his hundred pounds is very safe, and Mr. Harris knows it. For who is to interpret the text of Scripture, and who is to judge of its context? There is a verse in the First Epistle of St. John which reads: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;' but because the apostle adds in the next verse, 'These things write I unto you, that ye sin not,' Mr. Harris counts the plain statement of the previous verse cancelled. So if Mr. Harris is himself to be judge and he names no other, the cause is settled already.

To Principal Waller there seem to be many passages which positively affirm the necessity of sin in—well, no, not in the *spirit-filled* believer. For what a phrase is that, and how cunningly selected! The *spirit-filled* believer?—it is the flesh, not the spirit, that is the sphere of sin. And the presence of sin in the believer arises from the fact that he is not, its necessity from the fact that he cannot be, *filled* with the Spirit. There are many passages which seem to Dr. Waller to positively affirm the *presence* of sin in the believer. There is our Lord's teaching in the prayer He taught His disciples: 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' There is His warning to St. Peter: 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with

Me;' where the feet-washing of him who has been already bathed must mean the forgiveness of the believer's sin. And there is at least one striking passage which seems to affirm the *necessity* of sin in the believer; for St. Paul says that 'the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be.*'

As for the passages which Mr. Harris may bring forward from the other side, Dr. Waller hints that he brings them forward because he is an indifferent exegete. Take Rom. vi. 6, for example. We are told that 'our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be *destroyed*, that henceforth we should not *serve* sin.' Does this passage teach the necessity of sinlessness? Does it teach its possibility? Neither, if you watch its words. For *destroyed* is no fair equivalent of the Greek word used, which indeed cannot be rendered into English by any single word. The apostle's word (*καταργέω*) means to put a thing out of gear. The purpose of crucifixion is to cripple or paralyse the body of sin, to put it out of gear, that henceforth we should not be in bondage to (*δουλεύειν*; not merely *serve*) sin.

But Principal Waller, though not given to gambling, is prepared to offer a higher stake than a hundred pounds, he will offer one hundred thousand pounds to Mr. Harris 'for the first living Christian man whom he can show to be sinless.' For suppose the man were found, suppose Mr. Harris were to come himself and claim the hundred thousand, who is to prove it? Dr. Waller thinks he could tell if any man were sinful; but if a man were sinless, he could not tell. For he does not know what sinless means. To pronounce a man sinless, one must be at least on a level with him, and as sinless as he. Dr. Waller knows that one Man was sinless. But he does not know it because he has judged Him. He knows it by revelation. He knows that Jesus was sinless, because there came that voice from the excellent glory, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.'

And Dr. Waller thinks that men like Mr. Harris would never claim sinlessness for themselves, or any other, if it were not that they do not know what sin is. Their capital error is that they define sin *positively*. But the Bible defines sin negatively. 'All have sinned, and *are short* (*ὕστερον*) of the glory of God' (Rom. iii. 23). 'To him that knoweth to do good, and *doeth it not*, to him it is sin' (James iv. 17). 'Whatsoever *is not of faith* is sin' (Rom. xiv. 23). 'All *unrighteousness* is sin' (1 John v. 17). Sin is lawlessness (*ἀνομία*)—non-fulfilment of law, negative when the law is positive, as 'Thou shalt love'; positive only when the law is negative, as 'Thou shalt not kill.'

In the December issue of a monthly magazine which describes itself, somewhat disjointedly, as *The Monthly Messenger and Gospel in China*, we have discovered an article of quite exceptional value on 'The Permanent Worth of the Psalms as an Aid to Devotion.' The author of the article is Professor John Skinner of the Presbyterian College, London.

The article is fairly large, but the subject is larger, and Professor Skinner confines himself to 'one or two points of view which seem to me absolutely unassailable by critical investigation, and which at the same time are of some value for a just appreciation of the character and use of the Psalm Book.' The first point concerns the special function of the Psalms in the system of divine revelation. And here Dr. Skinner brings out the distinction—the distinction in function—between psalm and prophecy with admirable clearness. The prophet is conscious that the thoughts which form the substance of his message are not his own thoughts. It is Another who speaks to him, and through him. The prophetic 'I' is not the 'I' of the prophet, but of the God whose words fill his mind. With the Psalmist it is all the other way. It belongs to the very essence of psalmody that the thoughts and the feelings which the Psalmist expresses should be his own

thoughts and his own feelings. Jeremiah was both a prophet and a psalmist. Now he speaks the Word of God as by an overmastering power, not himself, speaking when he would be silent, uttering things that divert the current of his life from its natural channels. Again he is a psalmist, giving vent to his own personal emotion, the sternness of the prophet dissolved in a flood of tears, as he dwells with infinite pathos and compassion on the sad lot of his people.

Thus the Psalter is the believing soul's response to God's prophetic message. It is not less inspired that it is human, it is not less a means of revelation. It is a reflected revelation, if you will; but it is none the less real and divinely given. 'For the Word of God is never a mere formula, summing up in abstract terms what God is, and what He requires us to be. It is a living power, a seed sown in human life, springing up, and creating the kingdom of God upon earth. In order to realise what it is, we must see it leavening and moulding and guiding the thoughts of the individual and the mind of the community, blossoming into hope and aspiration and penitence and prayer and thanksgiving, producing in due order all the flowers and fruits of the spiritual life.'

But if the psalm is the believer's heart-response to the prophetic Word of God, does it not follow that the prophetic voice will be earlier and the Psalmist's answer later? Professor Skinner does not think that this should be used as an argument in favour of the later date of the Psalter. But if the later date of the Psalter should ever become matter of demonstration and acceptance, then he for one will be ready to hold that the religious mind is in no degree impoverished thereby.

The second feature of the Psalms on which Professor Skinner touches, is what he calls their 'churchly consciousness.' Who or what is the oft-recurring 'I' of the Psalter? Does the Psalmist speak in his own person, and with his own aspirations; or does he speak in the name of the

community, and express the faith of the Congregation of Israel? Dr. Skinner will not say that the 'I' of the Psalter is always congregational, but 'the idea has certainly a wider range of application than most of us are apt to suppose; and even those psalms which at first sight seem to bear the unmistakable impress of individual emotion will frequently be found to gain greatly in significance when we realise that under the form of personal utterance there are portrayed the character and experiences of the idealised people of God.'

In particular, this view may do something to settle the vexed question of the imprecatory psalms. 'No interpretation quite relieves these utterances of the imperfections incident to an elementary stage of religion, and to curse sinners can never be a legitimate act of devotion in the Church. Still, it makes an immense difference to our appreciation of the spirit of the Psalms when we observe that these imprecations are never the outcome of private enmity, but express the resentment of a feeble minority, harassed and hunted to death for its fidelity to the religious interests committed to its charge.'

But let that pass. The emphatic thing is that from beginning to end the Psalms are pervaded by an intense consciousness of religious fellowship. Whereupon we have a test, easily applied and singularly searching, of the hymnody of our modern Church Service. Do all our favourite hymns (as they ought to do) strengthen within us the sense of belonging to the company of believers who in all ages have raised their voices in praise to Him who is the eternal dwelling-place of our spirits? Do not some of them rather accentuate individuality? Are they not sometimes strained in their spirituality, or subtle in their thought? Does it not require an effort of the imagination even to realise the situation in which they could have originated?

But the last point comes. It is the poetical character of the Psalms. Why are the Psalms in

poetry? Simply because poetry is the most natural expression of the emotions the Psalms are meant to convey. But there is one memorable difference between the poetry of the Psalter and the poetry of the nations that know not God. The poetry of the Psalter is not poetry for its own sake, but for the sake of God. Its appeal is to the heart rather than to the cultivated imagination or the musical ear. Its images, certainly, are often of unrivalled sublimity and force, but they are never elaborated for their own sake. They serve their end when they convey the poet's mood to his hearers' heart. And herein lies the meaning of Luther's saying, that 'to an ungodly man they have no savour.'

In the year 1878, Messrs. Trübner published in their 'English and Foreign Philosophical Library' a book entitled *A Candid Examination of Theism*. No author's name was given, and men could only guess from the pseudonym of 'Physicus' and the tone of the book that the author was a student of science. But no one read the book without interest. For the style was lucid, the reasoning acute, the sincerity most unmistakable. And the interest became painful in its intensity as these closing words were reached: 'I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness; and although from henceforth the precept to "work while it is day" will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words that "the night cometh when no man can work," yet when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it,—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible.'

With those touching words the *Candid Examination* ended. The book ran speedily out of print. The author had fulfilled his purpose, he would not have it reprinted, and by and by it

passed out of memory. Meantime men became familiar with the name of Professor George Romanes, the ardent champion of Darwinism, the editor of *Nature*. And when he died, and Canon Gore in 1894 edited and issued his posthumous *Thoughts on Religion*, it was with the utmost surprise, for the secret had been perfectly kept, that men discovered that George Romanes and 'Physicus' were one and the same.

Nor was this the only or the greatest surprise the new book brought us. The writing of *A Candid Examination of Theism* was found to be but one episode in a mental history of the highest religious significance. He who in 1873 gained the Burney Prize at Cambridge for a strong argument in favour of the efficacy of prayer, in 1876, or earlier, wrote *A Candid Examination of Theism*; and he who in 1876 by the merciless method of *A Candid Examination* cut his mooring lines and drifted out into the world without God and without hope, died in 1894 a happy believer in the revelation that is in Christ Jesus.

And now this very month, the last and most welcome chapter of that eventful history is in our hands. It is not found in *Thoughts on Religion*. The eighth edition of that work, with the date 1896, lies before us, but it is not there. The hero of it, for he is a hero, is not once mentioned in that book. It is found in the present issue of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* of America.

The first surmise of those who catch only the outstanding incidents of the mental history of Professor Romanes is that his mind must have wanted ballast. To read the *Thoughts on Religion* is to scatter that surmise. Rapidly as the change seems at first to have come from faith in the efficacy of prayer to absolute unbelief in the existence of God, the return was slow and painful enough to satisfy the most ardent admirer of consistency. Between the *Candid Examination* and the *Thoughts* there lie twenty-years of incessant

thinking and abundant reading in things religious. And more than that, there lies the friendship with a man whose scientific attainments, along the very lines on which Professor Romanes' own successes lay, were equalled only by his firm faith in God.

In April 10, 1890, Professor Romanes published in *Nature* a scientific article by John Gulick, and as he published it he wrote: 'I cannot allow the present communication to appear in these columns without again recording my conviction that the writer is the most profound of living thinkers upon Darwinian topics, and that the generalisations which have been reached by his twenty years of thought are of more importance to the theory of evolution than any that have been published during the post-Darwinian period.'

Who was this John Gulick? He was and is a missionary in Japan. He was born in 1832 in the Sandwich Islands; he was sent to America to study, first Arts, and then Divinity, in Williams College and in Union Theological Seminary; he was ordained to preach the gospel in Canton, China, in 1864; he was set for the defence of the gospel in Kalgan, North China, from 1865 to 1871; he was transferred to Japan in 1875, and he is labouring there to-day.

But Mr. Gulick is a student of nature as well as of nature's God. As early as 1872 he published a paper entitled 'The Variation of Species as related to their Geographical Distribution, illustrated by the Achatinellinæ.' In 1887 a work of his was presented to the Linnæan Society by Mr. Wallace; another in 1889 by Mr. Percy Sladen, and both were published in the *Linnæan Journal*. In April 1890, as already noted, an article appeared from his pen in *Nature*. Nine months later, Professor Romanes, the editor of *Nature*, wrote a letter to Mr. Gulick and received a reply, which we now see was an important factor in the welcome change which the coming years revealed.

This is Professor Romanes' letter—its date is December 25, 1890:—

'For a long time past I have been meditating upon the possibility of putting to you a question which I have feared you might deem unpardonably impertinent, and this in both senses of the word. But on this Christmas Day I cannot avoid the "cumulative" temptation. My only excuse is the twofold statement that the question is not put from any merely idle curiosity, and that it is put on account of the great value which I attach to the extraordinary analytical powers of your thought.

'The question which—for my own benefit alone—I want to ask is, How is it that you have retained your Christian belief? Looking to your life, I know that you must have done so conscientiously; and, looking to your logic, I equally know that you cannot have done so without due consideration. On what lines of evidence, therefore, do you mainly rely? Years ago my own belief was shattered—and all the worth of life destroyed—by what has ever since appeared to me overpowering assaults from the side of rationality; and yours is the only mind I have met with which, while greatly superior to mine in the latter respect, appears to have reached an opposite conclusion. Therefore I should like to know, in a general way, how you view the matter as a whole; but if you think the question is one that I ought not to have asked, I hope you will neither trouble to answer it, nor refuse to accept in advance my apology for putting it.'

Mr. Gulick's reply has never, so far as we know, been made public until now. Its significance lies in this, that Mr. Gulick was when he wrote the reply, and is now, a hearty believer in and distinguished supporter of, not merely evolution, but that particular explanation of evolution which we call Darwinism. We know what Darwinism did for the religion of Darwin himself. We know its effect upon Professor Tyndall, upon Professor Huxley, upon Professor Romanes. The last mentioned tells us that he can name only one man who was able to stand firmly both upon Darwinism and the

Rock of Ages. The significance of Mr. Gulick's reply lies in this, that he was that man.

But how hard it is to give an account of Mr. Gulick's reply without giving it all. First, he says that he discovers by the use of his reason that this universe is constructed according to reason. That is to say, he finds order in it, he discovers law throughout it, he finds unity binding it together. This, indeed, is the very foundation of science, in the faith of which it pushes into unexplored regions of the universe, knowing that it shall find order, law, unity there also. But rationality includes, not only the adjusting of means, but the weighing and choosing of ends; that is to say, not only intelligence, but morality; not only knowledge, but love guiding in the use of knowledge.

Now the immediate application of this principle to any individual man is this, that he finds himself part of a social system in which the more regard he has for the good of all, the more order he brings out of confusion. In short, the more faithfully and the more intelligently a man works in harmony with the law that rules the universe, the law of love guiding knowledge, the higher he advances in happiness and dignity. Well, mark the men who do so. They are mostly Christians. For while other systems are often able to show man the ideal he ought to reach, none but Christianity enables him to reach it. 'No power outside of Christianity seems able to take man as he is, in any and every land, and set him on a new course.'

And what gives Christianity this unique power? Is it its insistence on the brotherhood of man? Yes, assuredly; but not that first. Before the idea of the brotherhood of man will work, the idea of the Fatherhood of God must be apprehended. 'Indeed, judging from my own experience, and what I have observed in China and Japan, it seems as if a strong hold of the brotherhood of man, such as will awaken the enthusiasm of humanity, is attained only by those who are filled with the thought of the Fatherhood of God.' But when the latter idea

is held the former must be made to work, for 'a strong sense of God's love does not remain with the man who refuses to love his neighbour,' and it is only Christianity that insists upon both these things, and insists upon them in their order.

'But the great power of Christianity,'—and with this paragraph, quoted as it stands, we bring our imperfect account of Mr. Gulick's reply to an end, —'the great power of Christianity lies in the direct effects of the character of Christ. His influence on the world is due not only to his elevated conception of the Fatherhood of God, but to the new aspirations awakened by his realisation of the most exalted life, and his promises to lead others to the attainment of a similar life, in their devotion to him and to the kingdom of God which he establishes on earth. This kingdom of God is a kingdom of love, which he assures us is to spread its influence into all lands; for "the meek shall inherit the earth." Not only has Christ become a leading factor in the evolution of society, but, in the survival of the meek and the righteous, He has opened to us the philosophy of this higher evolution, and the truth of the philosophy is sustained by the gradual fulfilment of the predictions based on the philosophy.'

A few days after her husband's death, Mrs. Romanes wrote to Mr. Gulick and said: 'His unselfishness and patience during these two years was something marvellous; and during the last few months he had seen his way to face many difficulties, and God had given him light and help.'

For many years it has been felt, and the feeling has frequently found expression, that there is no greater need of our day than that of a new Dictionary of the Bible. When the first volume of Smith's *Dictionary* was revised and issued in two parts in 1893, and when it was announced that there was no present intention of revising the remainder of the work, Messrs. T. & T. Clark, who had long looked upon it as probable that they might at some time undertake the publication

of a new Dictionary of the Bible, felt that they should now proceed with it, and offered the editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES the responsibility of its editorship.

He did not accept the responsibility lightly. He first assured himself that the desire for a new Dictionary was really felt; and then that if he undertook its editorship he would receive the encouragement and support of leading scholars. All this being made sure beyond his utmost expectation, the work was forthwith begun, and at the present moment the subjects are practically all allotted, and the greater part of the first volume is in type.

The new Dictionary will endeavour to cover the whole range of Bible knowledge at the present day, including Biblical Theology, to which considerable space has been assigned. In allotting the various subjects, the editor's aim has been to find the particular scholar who has identified himself most completely with the special subject in hand. Hence many subjects, which it has been customary to give to a single author, will be found divided between two or even three. Thus the article PRIESTS will be written by Professor Driver for the Old Testament, and by Dr. Denney for the New; Professor Margoliouth will write on the Language of the Old Testament and Apocrypha; Professor Thayer on the Language of the New Testament; the Eschatology of the Old Testament will be done by Professor A. B. Davidson, of the Apocrypha by Mr. R. H. Charles, and of the New Testament by Professor Salmond; Professor Strack will contribute the article on the Text of the Old Testament, Mr. J. O. F. Murray the article on the Text of the New. Even subjects like ADAM and ENOCH, being partly historical and partly doctrinal, will be handled each by two or more different writers, so important is it that men should not write on that which they have not made the subject of special study.

Professor Sanday has undertaken the article JESUS CHRIST, and he will be afforded the space

which such a subject demands. Canon Driver, who has given himself so much to criticism of late, will write articles in Biblical Theology only. Professor A. B. Davidson has accepted the great subjects of Angels, Covenants, God, Eschatology, Jeremiah, Hosea, Prophecy. Professor Ramsay will do the whole of the Asia Minor work, and

Professor Gwatkin the whole subject of the Organization of the Apostolic Church. But it is as impossible here to name the whole of the hundred and fifty authors who will have a share in the work as to make a selection from their number. For the present, we have said enough.

## The Theology of the Psalms.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. W. T. DAVISON, M.A., D.D., BIRMINGHAM.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY depends upon biblical criticism. Systematic theology may often be content to discard consideration of the date of a given portion of Scripture, but biblical theology aims at presenting revealed religion in its historical growth and development, and for it a discussion of date and authorship is always important, sometimes absolutely essential. Hence the student of the Psalter who desires to understand its theology, not as a finished product, but as a living reality, not as a collection of dried plants in a herbarium, but as a growing and blossoming tree, inquires, first of all, concerning the dates of the several psalms in our present collection of collections, and the conditions and circumstances of their composition.

Now here, as is well known, direct and assured reply cannot be given him. Many Old Testament questions are bound up with the answer, questions which are only on the way to settlement, and even critics who are agreed about these differ in their views concerning the dates of the Psalms. It would, indeed, be possible to describe the religious thoughts of this wonderful book without troubling ourselves over the controversies of critics. But some general idea should be given by anyone who undertakes to write upon the theology of the Psalter as to where he stands in this matter, and from what point of view the religious development implied in the book is regarded. Briefly, the view of the Psalter on which the following papers will be based is this. The first collection of Psalms was probably made shortly after the Return from Captivity. In it were contained some psalms from David's own pen,—e.g. iii., iv., vii., viii., xviii.,

part of xix., and others, etc.,—while the whole collection was known by his name. Other pre-exilic psalms are to be found in this and in subsequent groups, but those written by David himself are few in number, and of other authors' names and history we know little or nothing. A very large proportion of psalms is to be ascribed to the times of the Exile and shortly afterwards, while the process of collection went on for at least two centuries after the Return. The *terminus ad quem* is not easy to fix. The latest date possible is 150 B.C.—if indeed, in view of the composition of the LXX. Psalter and facts connected therewith, so late a date be considered tenable. Those who have carefully considered the arguments alleged, e.g. by Professor Sanday,<sup>1</sup> concerning the processes necessary to be allowed for between the composition of the latest psalm and the features characteristic of the Greek version, will hesitate before allowing that any of the psalms that have come down to us can be assigned to so late a period.

For practical purposes, it may be said that the range of composition extends from the tenth to the second century before Christ. But few psalms are to be assigned to the first two or three of these centuries, and concerning some of these it is not possible to speak very positively. A number may be placed with some confidence in the seventh century before Christ; whilst the great majority date from the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. A few were added later, and some Maccabæan psalms may possibly be included. It will be seen that the view here sketched is 'conservative' in character, as the

<sup>1</sup> Bampton Lectures on *Inspiration*, pp. 270-272, Note A, on 'The Inferior Limit for the Date of the Psalter.'