

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

MR. R. CAMPBELL THOMPSON, M.A., Assistant in the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum, has published the second-volume of his work on *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia* (Luzac; 8vo, 13s. 6d. net). The volume contains the text and a translation of five groups of tablets, which are all of a magical order. It also contains Mr. Thompson's introduction to the tablets, in which he states the sum of their contents, and mentions some startling conclusions to which they have led him concerning things in the Old Testament and the New.

One conclusion is that the whole idea of Atonement, so fundamental to the Old Testament, and we thought so characteristic of it, was taken over by the Jews from the Babylonians. By the Jews, you observe, not by the Hebrews. For not only does Mr. Thompson believe that the idea came from Babylon, with all the rites and ceremonies attaching to it, but he also believes that it was acquired during the Captivity.

What is his evidence? It is really very little in amount. Its one striking item is the similarity of the word 'to atone' in the two languages. In Hebrew, 'to atone' or 'to make atonement' is *kipper*; in Babylonian it is *kupparu*. Mr. Thompson has no doubt of the identity of the words. Nor has he any doubt of the originality

of the Babylonian form. For it is really Sumerian. It belongs to the language that prevailed in Babylonia before the Semitic Babylonians entered it. Just as the Babylonians accepted it from the Sumerians, the Hebrews must have accepted it from the Babylonians. And when? Clearly in the time of the Captivity. For it is only in the literature of the post-Exile period, in the Priests' Code, that the idea and ceremonial of Atonement are found.

Well, what then? Then Mr. Thompson reads out of the Old Testament narratives of the Atonement the same magical efficacy as he finds in the Assyrian tablets. In the Assyrian tablets the magic is explicit and unmistakable; in the Hebrew books it is implicit but undeniable. If a man fell sick in Babylonia, he was understood to be under the spell of some enemy, and he was *tabu* until the spell or ban was lifted off him. This was done by a priest. And in order to do it, the priest had to perform certain ceremonies and utter certain words, which, if precisely performed and uttered, had the magical effect of expelling the demon or removing the ban and restoring the man to health. In doing all this the priest was said to 'make an atonement' for the man.

It is the same, says Mr. Thompson, in the Old

Testament. First there is the *tabu*. A house—it is awkward that we cannot get a man—a house is affected with leprosy (Lv 14<sup>33-58</sup>). For the time that house is *tabu* or 'unclean.' The priest is called in to remove the uncleanness. He takes two birds, cedar, scarlet, and hyssop. After killing one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water, he dips the cedarwood, the hyssop, and the scarlet, as well as the living bird, in the blood of the dead bird and in the running water, and sprinkles the house seven times. The living bird he lets go; it flies out of the city into the open fields. What is all this, asks Mr. Thompson, but sympathetic magic? Why does the living bird fly into the fields but that it may carry the curse of the house with it, for which the atonement has been properly and precisely made?

There is a yet more familiar example in the Old Testament. It is the example of the Scape-goat. Mr. Thompson mentions the Scape-goat. But he does not make so much of it as we should expect. The fact is that his comparison breaks down just where it would be most impressive. In Babylonian there is no mention of a Scape-goat and there is no mention of a living bird. The animal that bears the ban is simply slain. Nevertheless, Mr. Thompson does not give up his fascinating discovery. He holds that the essential matter is the charm, and the charm is common to both the Babylonian tablet and the Hebrew text.

We are not quite sure about Mr. Thompson. There is just a little suspicion that he first puts into his Old Testament text what he afterwards takes out of it. And the suspicion grows stronger when we come upon his way with the New Testament.

There is a form of sympathetic magic prevalent in some countries, Mr. Thompson names Morocco, which he thinks has a parallel in a certain miraculous incident in the Gospels. If a man has a headache, he will take an animal and beat it until it falls down. He supposes that in this

way he will transfer his headache to the animal. In Morocco it is usually a lamb or a kid that is taken and beaten. In Assyria it seems to have been a pig. Mr. Thompson translates one of his tablets in this way—

Give the pig in his stead,  
And give the flesh as his flesh,  
The blood as his blood,  
And let him take it;  
Its heart (which thou hast set on his heart)  
Give as his heart,  
And let him take it.

'Now,' he says, 'the most remarkable parallel to this spell is contained in the New Testament story of the Gadarene swine. The devils which possess the two men beseech Jesus Christ, if He cast them out, to send them into the herd of swine which is feeding close at hand, and when the devils leave the men they at once take up their abode in the swine, which, according to the story, go mad and rush down the hill into the water, where they are drowned. Undoubtedly here is some reminiscence of the Assyrian or some similar tradition; in the cuneiform text we find the disease-devil leaving the possessed man at the sorcerer's invocation and entering the body of the pig. In the New Testament story the swine are represented as alive when the demons enter them, but as soon as this happens they are immediately made to destroy themselves.'

If we were anxious to know the direction in which scientific thought is moving in America, we should see the first number of *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*. It is edited by Dr. G. Stanley Hall, the President of Clark University, and it is published at the Clark University Press. But it is not a local concern. President Stanley Hall has the co-operation in its editorship of Professor Coe of the Northwestern University, Professor Leuba of Bryn Mawr College, Professor Starbuck of Stanford University, and Professor Wenley of the University of Michigan. The movement covers America. And it is a distinctly religious movement.

Its significance lies in that. Those men are not theologians. They are not attached to theological seminaries. Their Chairs are Chairs of Science. But they find that whether Philosophy, Psychology, or Education, whatever the title of their Chair may be, their teaching is steadily moving in the direction of Religion. In 1887 Dr. Stanley Hall founded 'The American Journal of Psychology.' In 1904 he founds 'The American Journal of *Religious* Psychology.' The addition of that adjective marks the direction in which Science is moving in America.

What should the theologian do with this new movement and this new journal? 'The new journal,' says its editor, 'is especially addressed to professors and students of religion in seminaries and colleges, to pastors, to religious workers, Sunday-school teachers, and those interested in mission work and in all those moral and social reforms based upon religious motives.' Will pastors and mission workers welcome it? Not if their first concern is bread and butter. If this movement is widely and heartily welcomed by the Churches of Christ, the Son of man may come, for He will find faith on the earth.

For it is not a movement in the interest of 'organized Christianity.' The first concern of those men is not the filling of church pews. Their interest is in Science. It is not in Presbyterianism, it is not even in Christianity. The very first article in the very first number of the new journal places Christianity by the side of certain other religions, and if Christianity should come out at the top, it will not be because the writer is anxious that it should come out at the top, it will be because to his mind Christianity is the best form of scientific religion.

The first article is written by Dr. Jean du Buy, Docent in Comparative Religion in Clark University. Its title is 'Stages in Religious Development.' It is a comparison, minute and merciless, of five great religions. Dr. du Buy places five

great religions side by side, and asks what is their central idea. What have they to say about God, Prayer, Life after Death, War, Marriage, and so forth? And then, What place should they have in a man's life? The five religions are Muhammadanism, Confucianism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Vedantism. Christianity falls into the middle of the five. That is not an accident. Dr. du Buy believes that that is the proper place for Christianity.

Muhammadanism comes first. Muhammadanism believes in the unity of God and in His prophet Muhammad. Its central idea is the existence of one God, who demands implicit obedience to His will, which will He has made known through His servant Muhammad. It is a theological religion. It does not much concern itself with morality.

Confucianism is a religion of morality. Its centre of interest is man. How shall a man attain to the ideal of what a man should be? Confucius thought he should be a head of a family, and if possible a state official. Confucianism is the religion of aspiring worldly men and good citizens.

Then comes Christianity. To Dr. Jean du Buy Christianity is the teaching of Jesus. And he finds the central thought of the teaching of Jesus in the two commandments of love. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Christianity is thus both religious and ethical. It recognizes both God and man. The Christian is to be the son of a Divine Father and the brother of his fellow-man.

Buddhism follows. The fundamental idea of Buddhism is the law of righteous retribution. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. That is a law of the universe, and in seeking to discover it Buddhism is scientific. It is also ethical in so far as it teaches men to obey that law. Scientific and ethical rather than

religious and ethical is the creed of Buddhism. And in its ethics it is somewhat selfish. The highest duty of man is self-culture.

Vedantism is last. It is rather a philosophy than a religion. Its fundamental idea is the identity between the innermost essence of man, his Atman or Soul, and the Divine essence. It is not a religion, since the Vedantist knows no God beyond his supreme self. Nor has it any ethics. It is a philosophy, metaphysical and mystical.

Those are the five religions, and those are their characteristics. As Dr. du Buy looks at them he sees five stages of religious development expressed by them. It is the same five stages as man passes through in his individual life. He finds that Muhammadanism, being theological mainly and scarcely moral at all, expresses the mind of the child; Confucianism, being mainly moral and almost wholly occupied with this world, expresses the mind of the boy; Christianity, being both religious and ethical, expresses the mind of the youth, or adolescent, as Dr. du Buy prefers to call him; Buddhism, being ethical and scientific, expresses the mind of the mature man; and the Vedanta philosophy, being metaphysical and mystical, expresses the mind of the aged.

Then are Buddhism and Vedantism higher in the scale of religious excellence than Christianity? Dr. du Buy does not mean to say that. In the life of man adolescence is, in Dr. du Buy's judgment, the period of greatest attainment. You rise through Muhammadanism and Confucianism to Christianity, and descend again through Buddhism to Vedantism. But Dr. du Buy holds that in the life of man, in the life of every man who reaches old age, there is a place for every one of those religions, and every one of them should have its place.

He says that children cannot become Christians, at least very few children can. It is the things that belong to Muhammadanism which touch us

in our childhood. What are those things? They are the belief in the existence of one God who is the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth, and a King whom it is our duty to obey; the belief in a material heaven with material and everlasting pleasures; the duty of obedience, the prohibition of strong drink, and the duty of kindness to animals. Dr. du Buy says it is not Christianity we should teach our children, but Muhammadanism.

And it is not Christianity we should teach our boys. It is Confucianism. For the demands of Confucius are the demands we make upon our boys at school. What are they? They are the necessity of study, especially the study of history as the most fruitful source of knowledge, also the force of example, sincerity, courage, reverence, faithfulness, friendship, patriotism, propriety.

It is only when we reach adolescence that we should learn the religion of Jesus. For it is only then, says Dr. du Buy, that we can know God as a Father and love Him with all the heart. It is only then that love in its unselfishness, the love of others, the love of enemies, becomes a possible idea to us. It is only then that a life after death not altogether materialistic becomes an object of our desire.

Does Dr. du Buy mean that we are to be first Muhammadans, then Confucianists, and after that Christians? He says he does not mean that. He does not want to send us through a series of conversions all our life. As a religious psychologist he believes in conversion. But he believes that one conversion is enough. What he means is simply that we should learn in childhood the things which are characteristic of Muhammadanism, in boyhood the things which Confucius made supreme, and then when we reach adolescence and know for the first time what love is, give ourselves to the love of God in Christ, and love Him with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

And not only should this be the method of our own lives and the manner of the training of our children. Dr. du Buy holds that this is the way in which we should carry the gospel to the heathen. Why is it, he asks, that some nations accept Muhammadanism so readily, and will not embrace Christianity at all? It is because they are in their childhood as nations. The things of Muhammad appeal to them, the things of Christ do not. If we would take of the things of Muhammad—so far as they are not contradictory to the gospel—and make them stepping-stones to higher things; if we would be content with a little morality until the time when we can get them to see the beauty of spirituality,—then Dr. du Buy believes that the time might really be not far distant when the gospel should cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Can a Christian be a Mystic? The question is asked in the second number of the *Baptist Review and Expositor*. It is asked by Professor Henry Vedder. Dr. Vedder is Professor of Church History in the Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. And it is no doubt his study of Church History that has driven him to ask the question. But notice what he asks. It is not, Have there ever been Christian Mystics? He puts his question in the form, Is there a true Christian Mysticism? But what he means is, Can a Christian be a Mystic to-day?

What is a Mystic? A Mystic is one who has direct immediate intuitive knowledge of God. Tennyson says—

We have but faith: we cannot know;  
For knowledge is of things we see.

The Mystic denies that. No man hath seen God at any time; yet the Mystic knows Him; he gets into communication with Him; in that communication he obtains knowledge, both of God and from God, knowledge that is direct and immediate. Can a Christian be a Mystic?

Why not? No, the first question is Why?

Why should a Christian be a Mystic? Is not the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments the only rule to direct a Christian whereby he may glorify God and enjoy Him? He has the Scriptures. Do not the Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man? Has the Christian any need to become a Mystic? If he has not, is God likely to supply a need which does not exist? Why should a Christian be a Mystic?

There are things that a Christian would like to know which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments do not tell him. He would like to know if he is born again. He would like to know if he has a present union with Christ. He would like to know if he is being sanctified. Regeneration, union with Christ, sanctification—that these are facts of Christian experience he may learn from the Scriptures. But what he cannot learn from the Scriptures is whether they are facts of his own experience. The man who knows that he has been born again, who enjoys present communion with Christ, who is conscious that Christ is being formed in him, is a Christian Mystic.

There are Christians who do not know these things. They cannot tell when or where they were born again, they are never so sure of their present union with Christ as to enjoy it, their continual complaint is that they are not being formed in any unmistakable measure after the mind of Christ. These things are all true of them. They would not be Christians if these things were not true of them. But they are not conscious of these things. They are Christians, but they are not Christian Mystics.

Mysticism, then, is a matter of consciousness? Not so. It is a matter of experience. But a man must be conscious of his experience before he can be called a Mystic. He must have had direct intercourse with the Spirit of God, who alone is

the author of Regeneration, Communion, and Sanctification, and he must be conscious of that intercourse. In other words, the Christian Mystic acquires knowledge of God in Christ, direct, immediate, intuitive, no other knowledge being of any use to him. Other people will know whether a man is a Christian by his life and conduct. He cannot himself know unless he is a Mystic.

Is there nothing else then that the Christian Mystic knows except his own Regeneration, Communion, and Sanctification? It is this question, and not anything that we have yet said, that raises the difficulty about Mysticism. In a timid way it is easily answered. Keep to the things which belong to Regeneration, Communion, and Sanctification—feelings and emotions, perhaps also times and places—and there is little risk in saying that we have them directly and intuitively. The difficulty arises when the Mystic claims direct guidance from God in the ordinary affairs of life.

A long process of generalization has enabled us to see that God never does anything for us which we can do for ourselves. Or, to put the matter in another way, He gives us no knowledge by direct intuition which we can obtain by the use of our natural faculties. Now if we had mislaid a book, and instead of stopping to think where we had laid it, we were to stop and pray, would we be justified in doing so? We would not. For in the first place experience has taught mankind, including Christians, that a mislaid book is not to be found by prayer. There may be instances in which it has been found, but in those instances it is possible that when we stop to pray we really stop to think. And in the second place it would be an encouragement to us to be careless in the handling of our books, if the mislaying of a book should be rewarded by direct intercourse with God.

Professor Vedder is not sure that no man ever receives immediate direction in respect of the ordinary affairs of life. But he thinks it is very

becoming in those who say they do, to make sure that they are not deceiving themselves. 'A minister was powerfully impressed as he passed a house, that it was his duty to speak to the inmates about the welfare of their souls. He passed on, but became so uncomfortable because of refusing to hearken to what he took for the voice of the Holy Spirit, that he turned back, rang the bell, and—found the house empty.'

'Go back again; for what have I done to thee?' (1 K 19<sup>20</sup>). Elijah had come from Mount Horeb to find Elisha. He had come all the way to Abel-meholah for the simple purpose of finding Elisha and making a follower of him. Now he has found him. Elisha obeys the call and follows. And Elijah says, 'Go back again; for what have I done to thee?' What does he mean?

Elijah had been sent to anoint Elisha. It was a curious providence of God that sent him to anoint his successor then. For he was smarting under defeat. He was feeling that he had been a failure. Would it not have been kinder if God had cheered him and sent him to do some work which would have comforted his heart, before He spoke of a successor? We think it would have been kinder. But we do not always understand God. We do not always see that there is more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one man who is a failure, than over ninety and nine clever men who never knew what failure is. God accepted Elijah's failure. And just when he was smarting under it, He sent him to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room.

He sent him to anoint Elisha. Why Elisha? Elisha had no position in Israel. He had not apparently been trained in the schools of the prophets. He had no conspicuous supremacy of intellect. Elisha was a farmer's son. He followed the plough. Was this an added unkindness to the providence that sent Elijah to find a successor

then? No, God was not thinking of Elijah's sensitiveness. He sent him to anoint Elisha because Elisha was ready.

For there had been a day when all the people gathered to Mount Carmel, and Elisha was there. It was a day of decision. 'How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.' It was a day of decision between self-denial and life, or self-indulgence and death. How do we know that Elisha was there? Look down the green valley of the Kishon from Abel-meholah and you can see Mount Carmel. Do you think that Elisha was content to stay at home that day? Do you think that he was content to hear the thunder of the people's voice in the distance? When they shouted, 'Jehovah, He is the God; Jehovah, He is the God,' Elisha was there. But Elisha did not join in the shouting. It was a day of decision for Israel; and it was a day of decision in the heart of Elisha. Israel shouted, but Elisha did not shout. Yet, so strangely is the ear of Jehovah formed, that He did not hear the shout of the multitude for the noise of the beating of Elisha's heart. Elisha went back to Abel-meholah and waited. He was ready.

When Elisha was ready, Elijah was sent from Horeb to Abel-meholah to anoint him. The rain had come at last, and Elisha was busy in the field. 'He was ploughing, with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth.' His heart God had touched. He was ready. But the seed must be got in. Elijah came over the furrows behind him. He knew that Elijah was coming. He felt the earth tremble at every step which brought Elijah nearer. Yet he did not turn round. He knew that God had sent Elijah. He knew that he was ready. But the seed must be got in, and he did not turn round. Then Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. Elisha left the oxen, and ran after Elijah. 'Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee.' And Elijah said

unto him, 'Go back again; for what have I done to thee?'

What did Elijah mean? Had he not been sent to find Elisha? Had he not trodden the long hot miles from Horeb to Abel-meholah just that he might find Elisha and anoint him prophet in his room? And now when he has found him, and Elisha has cast the plough aside and is ready to follow, 'Go back again,' he says; 'for what have I done to thee?' What does Elijah mean?

He means that Elisha must become a prophet of his own free choice. He must not become a prophet for anything that Elijah has done to him. He must respond to the touch of the Spirit of God and come; he must not be moved by pressure from without. He means that Elisha must take time to think, that he must count the cost. Have you counted the cost, Elisha? Are you sure that you are ready? Go back again and think; for what have I done to thee?

Was Elijah right? Was he right to incur the responsibility of sending Elisha back? Yes, he was right. It is God's way always. It was the way of our Lord on earth. 'A certain scribe came and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.' He had come to get that scribe to follow Him. It had cost Him more than it cost Elijah—

For none of the ransomed ever knew,

How deep were the waters crossed,  
Or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through  
Ere He found this sheep that was lost.

And now when He has found him, when this scribe is apparently ready: 'Lord, I will follow Thee,'—'The foxes have holes,' He says; 'go back again; for what have I done to thee?'

It is God's way always. Many of the things

which we set down to the devil are really the doing of the Spirit of God. The preacher has made his appeal. It has touched our heart. We have vowed a vow, 'Lord, I will follow Thee.' And the service is at an end. As we pass into the street, someone remarks on the weather, recalls an event of the week, touches perhaps upon the eloquence of the preacher, or some amusing incident in the service. The impression passes. The vow is forgotten. It is the devil's doing, we say. No. It is the work of the Spirit of God. 'Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.' Have you counted the cost? 'Go back again,' He is saying; 'for what have I done to thee?'

For He is most particular that He do not force us to follow Him. What would be the use of us if He did? What would be the worth of the work we do? It is not for our work He wants us. We are so pleased with our work sometimes that we are sure God must be pleased with it also. He is not pleased with our work; He is only pleased with us. So important is our work, we sometimes think, that we are almost indispensable to God. We are not indispensable; He can get his work done without us.

God doth not need

Either man's work, or His own gifts.

He is not concerned about the work. He is concerned about us. And He is most particular lest

we should so follow that He gets our work and loses ourselves.

We, too, should be particular about this. We should be as particular as Elijah, as particular as Christ. We say, 'Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come.' We should also say, 'Go back again.' For the work is nothing to God without the worker, and the worker is nothing without his heart. We think we do God service when we crowd His churches with human beings. If God were content with human beings, He could have them in abundance. 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' It is hearts of love He wants. And even God Himself cannot turn the stones into hearts to love Him. He must wait. He devises means, no doubt, that the heart may love Him heartily; but He cannot force it, He must wait. And He is so appreciative of love, so anxious that love be true, a genuine, unfettered choice, that when there is the least risk of pressure, when we are in danger of being carried off our feet by the tide of emotion that is sweeping over the congregation, He does not arrest the word or gesture that jars upon us. 'Go back again,' He says; 'for what have I done to thee?'

And yet, if the heart is set upon loving Him, it is when He is most particular not to force our love that He is most irresistible. 'Go back again; for what have I done to thee?' O my God, Thou hast given Thy Son to die for me.

## Science and Sophistry.

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MANY persons are disturbed by the idea that they must choose between Faith and Science, as it is impossible to give due allegiance to both. I believe that, rightly defined, faith can never be in conflict with true science; where there seems to be opposition between them, it is either because

the limits of faith are not rightly fixed, or because the science is not true science. The Catholic Church once condemned the world-system of Copernicus because it was in contradiction to the 'Sun, stand thou still,' of Jos 10<sup>12</sup>, and only forty years ago, the civic authorities of Berlin,