

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Rev. C. H. W. Johns, M.A., Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, has written an article for the Extra Volume of the *Dictionary of the Bible* on THE CODE OF H<sub>AMMURABI</sub>.

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Winckler described Hammurabi's Code as the greatest discovery yet made in the East. And the interest in it is not only maintained but seems to be steadily rising. The most popular book on the subject is Mr. Stanley Cook's, which is reviewed by Mr. Johns in this issue. The great English edition is coming from America, under the editorship of Professor R. F. Harper of Chicago. But scholars are working on it everywhere. And Mr. Johns will take account in his article in the Extra Volume of all that has been done, offering a corrected translation, estimating the religious worth of the Code, and discussing its influence on Mosaism.

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A keen struggle is going on at present between Christianity and Agnosticism. Its centre seems to be in Manchester. And to the Central Hall in Manchester dense crowds of men are going every Sunday night to hear what Christianity has to say for itself. They are mostly working men. For this is a working man's battle.

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The lecturers are carefully chosen. We observe

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the Headmaster of the Manchester Grammar School, Dr. James Moulton of Didsbury College, Professor Peake of the Primitive Methodist College, Archdeacon Wilson, Canon Hicks, Principal Adeney of the Lancashire Independent College; the Rev. Henry Haigh, an able missionary from the Mysore, and Mr. Frank Ballard. When the lecture is over a conference begins. The working man, who has used his ears, now finds his voice. And when the meeting has dispersed the lecture is printed and sent out in its thousands for a penny. That is the modern method of the ancient and aristocratic game of Apologetics.

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We have read one of the lectures. The lecturer is Dr. Moulton. His special topic, under the general subject of all the lectures—'Is Christianity True?'—is 'How God prepared for Christianity' (C. H. Kelly, and all the booksellers; id.). Dr. Moulton gets into touch with his audience at once. He lays down the proposition: 'I want to show how God made man in such a way that Christianity was the one thing that was fitted for him.'

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By putting himself in touch with his audience Dr. Moulton puts himself in the very front of the battle. It is not religion that is assailed in our day, it is the Christian religion. No one denies the necessity of a religion of some kind for every

man. The Agnostic, who is now an Agnostic in relation to Christ rather than to God, takes credit for having discovered the universality of religion. Man is so made that he must have a religion. The only question is, 'Which is the best religion for him?' The Agnostic answers that practically every man's own religion is the best religion for him. Christianity is one of the religions. It has to take its chance with the rest. It may be better than some, and worse than others. Dr. Moulton says, 'Man is so made that Christianity is the one thing fitted for him.' He and the Agnostic can give no quarter.

The ferocity of a battle is often due to the weapons with which it is fought. Dr. Moulton knows that the Agnostic is using the weapons of latest and best manufacture. He knows where they come from. He turns at once to Dr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

For it is Comparative Religion with its twin science of Anthropology that supplies the modern Agnostic with his weapons of war. That is why so many of us are helpless in the presence of modern unbelief. Anthropology has not yet reached our Colleges. No rich man has thought yet of endowing a Chair of Comparative Religion. But Dr. Moulton has made a study of Comparative Religion for himself. In the department of the Persian Religion he has scarcely an equal now in England.

He turns to Dr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Not that Dr. Frazer is on the side of the unbeliever. As a Cambridge man Dr. Moulton is proud of Dr. Frazer, and proud that he is privileged with Dr. Frazer's friendship. But the *Golden Bough* has been hastily read by certain Agnostics. They have discovered from the *Golden Bough* that there are features of Christianity, and these the most essential features, which are found in the other religions of the world also, even among the manners and customs of some of the lowest savages. And, having already a prejudice against

Christianity, they say that Christianity has nothing which other religions do not have; it is doubtful indeed if it has anything worth having which it has not borrowed.

Dr. Moulton denies the borrowing. He doubts if there has ever been much borrowing by one religion from another. It is a charge that is easily made, but it is usually made by amateurs in Comparative Religion. There are certain parallels between Judaism and the doctrines of the Parsis, between Christianity and Buddhism. Borrowing is the very first thought that occurs, and that religion was the borrower against which the prejudice is most strong. Dr. Moulton would not be afraid to say that all the while the Jews were under the sway of the Persians, they may have gained some religious ideas which they developed in accordance with their own genius and their own destiny. But the deeper study of one religion and another makes the charge of borrowing always less impressive. And Dr. Moulton looks straight at the working men who listen to him, and says, if you are told that Christianity is not original, 'if you are asked to believe that there are other sacred books in the world which can for one moment be compared with the Bible, and especially with the Gospels, I have to ask you to *read those sacred books*.'

And now the battle is growing hot. For now Dr. Moulton does not deny the parallels between the doctrines of Christianity and those of other religions. He does not deny that other religions as well as Christianity have their Incarnation, their Atonement, their Virgin-birth, their God-Man. He knows that when the first Roman Catholic missionaries went to Mexico, they found something exactly corresponding to the Christian Eucharist already practised there, and in their amazement said the devil was parodying the most sacred Christian rite. He knows that in degraded religions there are parallels to the doctrine of the New Birth, that doctrine which 'is preached in this and countless other centres of Christian

teaching with such wonderful effects upon the lives of men to-day.' \_\_\_\_\_

He does not deny the parallels. And he knows that he has to reckon with them. Dr. Moulton is not afraid to reckon with them in a way that is new to the Christian apologist. He is not afraid to find their meaning along the lines of Evolution. \_\_\_\_\_

'In the physical world, as science teaches us, God works mainly by evolution. I am not going to give an opinion as to the truth of the theory of evolution this afternoon.' But then, when he has told the man of science to keep his hands off theology, as he, a theologian, keeps his hands off science, he accepts evolution as the theory which largely explains the method of God's working in nature. 'We need make no reservation in the matter,' he says, 'and we may well believe that the theory helps us in a very wonderful way to understand the dealings of God with this world of ours.' \_\_\_\_\_

Very well, Dr. Moulton accepts evolution. He accepts it all round. He accepts it in the world of mind as well as in the world of matter. And he believes that when God came to bring to men's hearts the knowledge of Himself, it is most likely that He would *evolve* the idea of Deity just as He evolved everything else. Now there is one principle in evolution that must not be lost sight of. We know that sometimes one is chosen to suffer for others. It is also true that sometimes one is chosen to be a blessing to others. There is nothing new therefore, far less is there anything contradictory to God's method of evolution, in the choice of the one small kingdom of Israel to be a blessing to all the kingdoms of the world. The Athenian was chosen to receive the blessings of intellect, of art and science and literature, and to give them to the world. The Roman was chosen to teach men the blessings of law and government. It is in accordance with the strictest scientific doctrine of evolution that the least of all lands should be set

apart to receive and transmit the greatest of all blessings to the world, the blessing of the knowledge of God. \_\_\_\_\_

The principle of selection—election we call it theologically—does not contradict the principle that evolution is along the whole line. Dr. Moulton believes that in every nation there have been those that feared God and wrought righteousness. He believes that wherever we find the idea of incarnation, of atonement, of resurrection, and we find them almost everywhere, not only were these the gift of God to every tribe and nation by however natural a process of evolution, but he also believes that they were given to make the soil the more ready to receive the seed that should fall into it in the fulness of time and from the 'favoured' race of the Jews. \_\_\_\_\_

Then he presses home his proposition. That is why he holds that Christianity is the only thing that is fitted for man. That is why the gospel somehow continues to touch the human heart in every part of the world. That is why it has spoken not only to one race, like other religions, but to every race throughout the world. In Christ is found all that the other religions imply—Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, the New Birth, Eucharistic Communion—and they are found in Him free from the local and the temporary, perfect in the satisfaction they bring, yet opening the way to the freedom of evolution still in every believer as he goes on from grace to grace, as he is changed into the same image from glory to glory. \_\_\_\_\_

Is the act of Christ in giving Himself a ransom best described as substitutionary or as representative? Or does it matter how we describe it? \_\_\_\_\_

It does matter how we describe it. The notion that a theory of the Atonement is unnecessary is a frivolous if not an unthinkable notion. We cannot believe in Christ if we do not know who Christ is. And we know who Christ is by knowing what

He has done for us. It makes all the difference to us that we hold a theory of the Atonement. And so also it makes all the difference to us what theory of the Atonement we hold. If we hold that Christ was and is outside of us, apart from us, when He died for us, if we hold, that is to say, the substitutionary theory of the Atonement; or if we hold that He became one with us, entered into us, was and is identified with us, in dying for us and in rising again from the dead, it makes all the difference to us.

It does not make the difference, it is true, of heaven or of hell. But heaven or hell is not the only consideration. It is a comparatively unimportant consideration. For heaven and hell, as external and future, are little dealt with in Scripture, and should be little regarded by us. What is important is what we are in ourselves now. That makes heaven or hell for us. And the question whether Christ is our Substitute or our Representative tells vitally upon that.

For if Christ is our Substitute, simply, solely; if He died for us only to make it possible for us to return to God, by paying our debt; if He then went back to God to wait our coming: it is not certain that any of us will ever return. Why should we return?

Professor Denney says that gratitude should induce us to return. But gratitude is the last attainment of noble minds. There is no grace so rare in common humanity, or so inoperative. Common men remember the benefits they have conferred on others and wonder that other men can be so ungrateful. It is doubtful if gratitude has ever brought one human soul back to God. Minds must be noble before gratitude can move them, and they must be back to God before they are noble.

But if Christ is our Representative, and especially if we mean, as Professor Peake means, by saying Christ is our Representative, that He is identified with us, so that His act is our act,—His death our

death, and His resurrection our resurrection,—then we have returned to God, and we are already sitting with God in heavenly places.

A controversy is going on between Professor Denney and Professor Peake on this matter. Professor Denney stated his view of the Atonement of Christ in the book entitled *Studies in Theology*. Professor Peake criticised it in the *Primitive Methodist Quarterly*, and stated his own view in his *Guide to Biblical Study*. Professor Denney again stated his view, more fully and more energetically, in his book on the *Death of Christ*. Professor Peake again criticised it in the *Primitive Methodist Quarterly*. Professor Denney replied in a series of lectures delivered at the Summer School in Aberdeen, which afterwards were published as *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*. The reply was still more energetic in expression. Professor Peake makes his fullest and final criticism in the *Expositor* for January. He too can use energetic language.

He says, 'Not, of course, that I hope to convince Dr. Denney. He has that happy temperament which is not clouded by misgivings as to the soundness of his conclusions, and which airily brushes aside views that do not appeal to him, as meaningless or fantastic, or things not to be taken seriously.' Professor Denney calls the idea that Christ was a Representative and His act a racial act 'a fantastic abstraction.' 'I own,' he says, 'I can see nothing profound in it except a profound misapprehension of the apostle.' It is 'in principle,' he says, 'to deny the whole grace of the Gospel, and to rob it of every particle of its motive power.' Professor Peake calls the last 'a sweeping assertion, to which I hardly think Professor Denney would adhere in cold blood.' And he says, 'Keen-sighted as he is on many sides, he appears, if I also may practise an engaging frankness, to be colour-blind to one realm of Pauline ideas.'

But the controversy, this time, is not about

words. It goes as deep as either of them sees or can express. In Dr. Denney's view Justification by Faith is the central doctrine of Christianity; and settles all the rest. In Professor Peake's view Justification by Faith is of very doubtful morality. He doubts if the statement that God pronounces a man righteous, when as a matter of fact he is a sinner, is calculated to assure those whose faith in the morality of Paulinism has been undermined. And he wonders why we should give the enemy more cause to blaspheme than they have at present.

In Professor Peake's view the central doctrine of Christianity is Christ's mystical union with the race. From that there may follow the mystical union of the believer with Christ. And Professor Peake finds that union expressed in the words: 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in Me.' It is not the believer's union with Christ, however, that is either the first or the essential thing, it is Christ's union with the race.

'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive'—that is Professor Peake's pivotal passage. But what is death in Adam? It is the death of the body. And what is life in Christ? It is the resurrection of the body. Professor Peake says that both sides of the equation must be universal. But Paul is not arguing for universal salvation, he is arguing only for universal resurrection. On the one side physical death passed upon all men in the sin of Adam, on the other physical life was restored to all men in the obedience of Jesus Christ. If Dr Denney's theory may be described as immoral, Professor Peake's theory must surely be called unmoral.

What is the value of it? Professor Peake is not very explicit, for it is his business in this article to vindicate the use of 'a racial act' as a description of the act of Christ's Atonement. But we think he means that the union with Christ which secures the resurrection from the dead has nothing to do with the believer's personal faith. Christ is one with the race, and that oneness carries with it the resur-

rection of the body. But He who is one with the race is the Holy One of God. The sinner looks. He sees one who is bone of his bone, wholly acceptable to God. He clings to Him. That act of self-surrender forms the higher union of will. He too is accepted in the Beloved.

Still Professor Peake claims that his view of the death of Christ does not make the death of Christ a purely physical thing, with purely physical effects. For physical death was the doing of sin. Release from physical death is release from the overwhelming tyranny of sin. The man who knows that he died when Christ died, knows that sin has not now its old *dominion* over him. By destroying death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Now he is free, not from the presence of sin, but from its dominion, and he can look to Christ and be saved.

'There is no outstanding event in the life of our Lord so disappointing as the Transfiguration. It seems so great: we get so little out of it.'

Since those words were written in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for October a number of communications on the Transfiguration have reached us. They have come from men who are not disappointed, from men (and women) who have got much out of the Transfiguration. Well, we did not mean to say that the Transfiguration was a disappointment to everybody. The 'we' was neither editorial nor universal. It covered an ordinary experience only. To most ordinary men the Transfiguration seemed to promise much and yield little.

Those communications are being kept for the present. They will be dealt with. But we have discovered a sermon on the Transfiguration, which has to be taken by itself. It is not a speculative sermon; it is practical. No effort is made to declare in it all that the writer has found in the Transfiguration. But the insight cannot be hid. The writer is Professor A. B. Davidson.

The sermon is found in the middle of the new volume of sermons, *The Called of God* (T. & T. Clark ; 6s.). It is chosen, not because it is exceptional in the volume, or specially characteristic. One of the Old Testament sermons might have been more characteristic—the sermon on the Servant of the Lord, the sermon on David Repentant ('Davidson on the 51st Psalm' it might be called), the sermon on Job and his Redeemer ('I know that my Redeemer liveth'). It is chosen simply because it is on the Transfiguration.

It is a practical sermon. Dr. Davidson called it so himself: 'My object is to make two or three practical remarks.' We shall come to them. But on the way to them we are arrested by the fact itself. 'He was transfigured before them.' What transfigured Him? It was His own mind, says Davidson. It was something that was going on within Him. It covered His face, it shone upon His clothing, it transfigured His whole person. His clothes became white, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them. The fashion of His countenance was altered. And it all came from within. It was not a reflected glory. Moses did not bring it with him, nor Elijah. 'We must by all means hold that the external change that passed upon Him was but the reflection of movements in His own mind and heart going on at the moment.'

These movements of His mind had to do with His death. That is made clear beyond all question. And the immediate occasion was prayer. It was while He held communion with the Father on the subject of His death that the fashion of His countenance was altered. Was it the joy set before Him, then? Joy is said to make the face to shine. Sorrow is said to darken the countenance. No, it was the death itself, and the death was too near. His death was a death of sorrow. There was no sorrow like unto His.

But sorrow does not always darken the countenance. 'There is often,' says Dr. Davidson, 'a

deeper joy in sorrow, the feeling as of a new birth and a new consecration, and of a refining and quickening of all that is highest in us, and an enlarging of the meaning of all things and of human life, that causes the face to shine with a subdued but heavenly light.' If joy makes the face to shine, the joy that rises out of the deepest sorrow transfigures the countenance.

What was the thought that caused the radiance? We need not fix it down to any single thought. It was rather 'that indescribable tumultuous crowding of emotions which rushed into His heart, as He lay on His Father's bosom, and saw, now standing close before Him, His death and all its meaning.' And yet Dr. Davidson sees two unmistakable elements in it.

The first was love. 'We have seen the radiance of a human love that bends over and falls on the worn face of a sick child. What would be the radiance of the love of the Son of Man falling upon the face of a sick and restless world?' The second was suffering. 'Suffering gives men a dignity. We go into it with a firm step and a light in the countenance; the loftiness of the resolution lightens up the face, and deeper feelings of many kinds rush into the mind, and look out from the countenance.' The hour of Christ's suffering was at hand. He was about to set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. The glory which the three saw who were with Him in the holy mount was outward and visible, but it came from within. It was due to the resolution to go to Jerusalem, taken in the act of prayer.

'We beheld His glory,' says one of them. There are few great words so meaningless to us as this word glory. 'We beheld His glory'—it was at first only the outward splendour, for we may be sure John saw no more than Peter saw. So to us even yet, glory is outward show, splendour, magnificence merely. 'Solomon in all his glory' is our favourite recollection.

But when Moses desired to see the glory of God, God said, 'I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee.' What would a blinding show of dazzling brilliance have done for Moses? 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.' That is to see the glory of God; to see how good He is. And that is to glorify God—to let others see how good God is.

And the highest manifestation of goodness we call love. So when Jesus was about to leave the earth, going the way of the malefactor, He would strengthen the disciples for the shock. Will He dazzle them with the show of another 'Solomon in all his glory'? 'Father,' He prayed, 'glorify thou me, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was; for thou *lovedest* me before the foundation of the world.' Let them see that I love and am loved again—that is My glory. Let them know that no man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, that the Father loveth Me because I lay down My life for the sheep.

And when St. Paul would express to the Colossians how great was the destiny in store for them, he said, 'this mystery—Christ in you the hope of glory.' Did he mean that Christ in them was their assurance of salvation, their assurance of getting to heaven? St. Paul was not content with so poor an expectation as that. The wonder was—the mystery of it—that these men and women of Colossæ, so recently aliens from God, so crammed with evils still, would yet be so good, would yet love so unselfishly, that when men regarded them they would see their glory. Christ in you; it was all in that. Christ in you transforming your character, changing you into the same image from glory to glory, till it be said even of you selfish and sinful Gentiles, 'greater love have no men than these.'

Return now to the Transfiguration. The glory, says Davidson, was from within. It could only be from within with Him, as properly speaking it can only be from without to us. For the highest

manifestation of love is God's, and is ours through 'Christ in us.' But when it is from without its value is in its being made ours within; and when it is from within, as with Him, it must express itself without. 'We beheld His glory'—we saw the inward become outward, we saw His love for a sinful world, His sorrow in the advent of the cross—we saw it all in His transfigured face, in His raiment white as snow.

Thus the Transfiguration is also very practical. Looking at it as he could see it, Davidson says, 'My object is to make two or three practical remarks.' This is the real difficulty of the Transfiguration, how to make it practical. For the most part we are confined to the contrast between the glory on the mount and the lunatic child's shame below. Davidson does not forget that contrast. But that is to emphasize the absence of the practical from the Transfiguration; it is to say that to be up in the mount is not to be practical, that to do your work you must descend to the plain.

Dr. Davidson has some practical remarks to make on the Transfiguration itself. The first is this. If we are to see anything of the glory of Christ, or of Christ in His glory, we must go apart with Christ. He does sometimes—Dr. Davidson admits it—reveal Himself in the crowd and in the business of daily life. He did so to Zacchæus. But that is rarely. Even to Zacchæus, 'the full view that turned the rich publican into a liberal disciple was reserved for his own house.' What did He take the disciples into the mount for? First of all that they might be apart with Him. Knowledge comes that way. It is in the letters written in prison that St. Paul uses the verb *to know*, that he speaks of 'the excellency of the *knowledge* of Christ Jesus my Lord.'

The second practical remark is this. If Christ was transfigured by fellowship with the Father, we may be transfigured by fellowship with Christ. 'The greatness of the issues, and the thoughts

that have been engaging us, will reduce to nothing the facts of life. We shall move among men with serenity, but with sympathy, tender-hearted, kindly-affectioned, forbearing and forgiving, not readily ruffled, smoothing away irritations with a patient hand, meek, doing good as we have opportunity, not thinking this life too mean to attend to, but lifting it up, and filling all its offices with love.'

Jesus was transfigured on the mount. The disciples were not transfigured there. Their transfiguration came after they descended to the plain and began to heal the sick and preach the gospel to the poor. They had to set their goodness a work, before men recognized it as goodness and called it glory. But they got the spirit of goodness on the mount; and all the while it was through fellowship with Jesus that their work on the plain became goodness and glory. 'As though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk!'

And the last practical remark is this. That Christ took the disciples with Him in order that He might not be alone. He cannot bear to be alone. Before He became incarnate He kept coming unto His own, because He cannot bear to be alone. And it was because His own received

Him not, and there was the danger that after all He would have to be alone, that He became flesh and dwelt among us.

Now, says Dr. Davidson, this idea is one we like to dwell upon. For there is no more oppressive or paralysing thought than one that sometimes overcomes us, the thought of the utter nothingness of ourselves and of our life. What do we accomplish? What fruit or gain is there of our lives and the way we spend them? We walk upon the summer road, and see some ant tugging towards the common heap a husk. If it reaches the heap, it will increase it by a husk. But the life of man is not as the life of the ant, increasing the heap by a husk. Christ came to give man's work its worth. He came not to supersede men, but to perfect them. No effort is lost; no man who does work is lost. The effort is perfected in Christ's work, and the man stands beside Him, his fashion brought out by the very light of Christ's glory. For He cannot be alone. He takes them with Him, that He may not be alone. And it is Christ's own glory that shall lighten up on that day when 'they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars, for ever and ever.'

## The General Synod of the Evangelical Church of Prussia of the Year 1903.

BY PROFESSOR ED. KÖNIG, PH.D., D.D., BONN.

THE General Synod of the Evangelical Church of Prussia, which recently held its sittings in Berlin for three weeks (from 15th October to 4th November), meets every six years. The very rarity of its meetings thus lends importance to this Assembly. What a number of difficulties waiting to be solved are apt to accumulate during a single year of the existence of any considerable society. How much greater must be the sum total of wishes that are formed in the course of six years, and that

hope to find expression by the mouth of the General Synod! Another circumstance that gives weight to this Assembly is the nature of its composition. It is made up of laymen and theologians. The former class includes a large number of the leading officials of State; a Minister, several Presidents of the Provinces, Generals, and others. The theologians, again, that are members of the General Synod, are partly clergymen of every grade, up to that of General-Superintendent, and partly