

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

---

## Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR H. R. MACKINTOSH is best known by his volume on *The Person of Christ* in the 'International Theological Library.' But he has published a volume on *The Originality of the Christian Message* (Duckworth; 5s. net) by means of which we believe that not only his skill as a writer but his learning as a theologian will be still more clearly seen. It is a volume of lectures—lectures delivered on the Haskell Foundation, in the Theological Seminary of Oberlin College, Ohio—and Professor MACKINTOSH is one of the very few learned theologians who can lecture well. Nothing is ever lost of the learning in the lecture, and nothing is ever lost of the lecture in the learning.

---

His purpose is to prove that Christianity when it appeared in the world was essentially a new religion. Some of us believe that that needs little proving. But Dr. MACKINTOSH is aware of the literature that has gathered round the Study of Religions. He knows that the originality of Christianity is the most difficult thing in the world to prove now. And he also knows that it is the thing most worth proving.

---

It is most worth proving. For if Christianity is not essentially original, it is not essentially superior to other religions. And if it is not superior to other religions, what has the missionary

to carry with him to peoples professing Buddhism, Muhammadanism, Taoism, or any other of the great religions? What has he to say to the adherent of Judaism? 'It is a matter,' says Dr. MACKINTOSH, 'of crucial moment for the advocate of foreign missions.' And he quotes Mr. J. H. Oldham, an unrivalled authority on such a subject: 'The nerve of missionary endeavour,' says Mr. Oldham, 'is the conviction that in the Christian revelation there is something distinctive and vital which the world cannot do without.'

---

But it is very difficult to prove the essential originality of Christianity. 'It was one theme of the second-century Apologists, and well-known discussions of it abounded in the eighteenth century, though the chief disputants showed very little sense for history. But on the modern mind it bears with a quite peculiar sharpness of impact. The scientific Study of Religions, which has recently made giant strides and has proved of such value to theology in its historic and apologetic branches as permanently to widen our view of the religious life of man, prevents us from assuming so naïvely as our grandfathers did that the Christian faith is unique and independent. God has nowhere left Himself without witness.'

---

'A great missionary once said that he had never preached the Gospel anywhere without finding

that God had been there before him. Not only have there been revelations less adequate than Christianity, but devout souls through these less perfect media were enabled in a real measure to trust God and do His will with an obedient faith to which the Father surely responds. There has been genuine fruition for such worshippers, not aspiration merely; and the Church has scarcely yet appreciated the width of the charter to hope given by St. Peter's great words, "In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him." By degrees we are learning to conceive of Christianity not as an isolated thing—truth in sheer contrast to ethnic lies—but as the climax and crown of other faiths in their nobler meaning.' \_\_\_\_\_

'To describe one religion, however, as "the climax and crown" of others is clearly to discriminate most positively among religions everywhere in respect of truth and value; it is to apply a standard of excellence or perfection. Hence we cannot too often remind ourselves that the principles of historical research, relating as they must to purely causal issues, are insufficient for these deeper questions of validity. Our conviction, if we have it, that Christianity is the best religion in the world—better, say, than Judaism or Buddhism—is in no sense the fruit of merely scientific or disinterested thought. It is rather the reaction of our whole nature to the spiritual meaning with which the historian's facts are laden. It is a value-judgment, in short, irreducible to terms that express purely causal relationships. And to perceive that things are what they are and what they come from—in other words, to make a clear distinction between truth and genesis, origin and value—is the first and possibly the last lesson which the student of religious history ought to master.' \_\_\_\_\_

But what is Christianity? Clearly that is the first thing to settle, and Professor MACKINTOSH recognizes it. His definition is short. 'For my part, I take the Christian religion to mean, in

essence, fellowship with God mediated through Jesus Christ.' It is as sufficient as it is short. That is Christianity, and just that is what no other religion is. The originality of Christianity lies in its power to bring us into communion with God, and it is properly called Christianity because it is Christ that brings us into that communion. Dr. MACKINTOSH'S whole book is an exposition of that definition. \_\_\_\_\_

Take a single item. Jesus had to make God known. For until a man knows God he is not likely to desire to have fellowship with Him. He was original in the God He revealed, in the way he revealed Him, in the completeness of the revelation, and in its universality. \_\_\_\_\_

First, Jesus Christ was original in the God He made known. It was a God who goes forth in search of the sinful. 'The best that had formerly been proclaimed was that God in mercy would receive all who came back to Him penitently; now, for the first time in the history of religion, it was made known that the Father unweariedly seeks the lost, that He reckons no cost too great if only His children can be reached and won. As men stood in Jesus' presence, as they looked back on all that His coming had meant for them, they realized that the bounds of their conception of God had been enlarged. It was not merely that God willed their salvation: He took the first step; He bowed to the law which makes sacrifice the first charge on love's resources.' \_\_\_\_\_

Next, He made this God known, not in His teaching, but in Himself. 'No such person as Jesus had ever lived before, and in His character and experience God was perfectly known at last. Every great man is greater than his language, and psychologists or historians whose foible it is to disparage the originality of humanity's leaders by asking dubiously how much of what they say had been said before, overlook the vital fact that epoch-making progress in the past has invariably come not by words but persons. The new truth

about God became flesh in Jesus; He guaranteed the message by being Himself; mediated by all that He was and did, it seized men with fresh elemental power and passed like fire from heart to heart.'

Thirdly, this revelation was new in its purity, its coherence, its inward spiritual harmony. 'Again grant for the moment that every word of Jesus concerning God had been uttered previously; still, the omissions were new. The Pharisee, it is true, had spoken of God's grace and holiness, but he had unfortunately said other things which made grace and holiness more than doubtful. The Eternal had been occasionally represented as a deity of autocratic and capricious power, who laboured under feelings of revenge. But this means that truth is hopelessly cancelled out by untruth. Error throws it so far into the background that its power over conscience and heart fades. To give a pure thought of God—to convince men that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all—is accordingly to give a new thought. This pure thought of necessity has for its medium a pure life. The authentically Christian view of God, from which the obscuring elements have been cleared away, is distilled through that which we know Jesus to have been.'

Lastly, the God whom Jesus made known is the God of all men. 'National and particularistic limits are abolished once for all. In the Old Testament, the Fatherhood of God is strictly a correlative of the chosen people, and is stretched by way of exception to cover the *gerim* or resident aliens who had become naturalized in Israel. We must bear in mind that even the author of Psalm xxiii. would have repudiated the suggestion that the words, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," could be rightly adopted by a Greek or Persian. Thus within Israel the love of God is clear as the sun, but scarcely God's love for man as man. For that the world must wait for Jesus. In Him every limitation is overthrown. The lost son in the Parable, who is met with kisses

and a feast, is no lost Jew simply, no fallen member of the chosen people; he is the lost *man*, the Father's straying child in any time or place. Even Jesus uttered no more piercing word than "There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth."

---

'Yet how few we Friends are.'

Mr. John W. GRAHAM, M.A., Principal of Dalton Hall, University of Manchester, has written a book on *The Faith of a Quaker*, which has been published at the Cambridge University Press (2rs. net). It is not a well written book, nor is it well arranged. But we should not be wrong if we accepted it as the official doctrine of the Society of Friends to-day—if anything that belongs to Quakers can be called official. In the end of the book Mr. GRAHAM uses the words, 'Yet how few we Friends are.'

Why are they so few? Mr. GRAHAM gives two reasons—the want of placed ministers and the absence of music in worship. But the sympathetic reader of this book will conclude that there is a reason lying deeper than these.

If he concludes that it is the absence of the sense of sin he will be confirmed by the index. In the index there is one reference to sin. It is to a single short paragraph on a single page. Throughout the book there is no recognition of disagreement with God. That every man is out of harmony with his Maker, through his own conduct—for we need not ask Mr. GRAHAM to entertain the idea of inherited sin—that is not taken account of. It is not denied. It is simply ignored. The whole book—this modern exposition of the creed of the Quaker—is written on the assumption that man is right with God and has nothing to do but recognize it.

Is that Mr. GRAHAM'S own modern idea? It is also for Quakerism ancient, as ancient as it

could be. 'It is remarkable,' says Mr. GRAHAM, speaking of George Fox, 'that confession of sin, pardon, conscious weakness, repentant retracing of error, are wholly absent either in his times of darkness or of light. He says: "When I came to eleven years of age I knew pureness and righteousness, for while I was a child I was taught how to walk to be kept pure." We have here a symmetrical well-formed natural leader, "in unity with the creation," to use a phrase of Fox, and in whom the control from the beginning was where it ought to be. We may be quite sure that if there had been a period of sin or decadence in his life we should have heard about it, and it would have affected his gospel; but never from him do we hear the cry, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?"'

Now that is not a popular doctrine. It does not appeal to the average man. It may be that the average Quaker does not worry about his sins. The average man does. God has made the average man so. Mr. GRAHAM says, and he seems sorry to have to say it, that 'the needs of most people we do not appear to meet.' He had that word in mind when he spoke of the preaching of John Wesley.

For this is how he speaks of John Wesley. 'It has sometimes been said that the failure of Quakerism to reach the masses led to the ground being covered by the Methodist Revival. However efficient Friends had been in their own line of service, I do not think they offered milk for babes. John Wesley, with his terrible preaching of Hell, his cheap salvation (cheap in theory at least), by escape through the merits of another, his stimulating hymns, and his verbal Biblical interpretation, widespread and popular as his teaching has become, could not have done his particular work through any Quakerism true to the name.'

There being no sense of disharmony with God, there is no room for those doctrines which have

to do with the reconciliation wrought by Christ. They are openly, even scornfully, rejected by this candid writer. They have never been of any value, and now at last (by the criticism of the New Testament) they are found to be of no authenticity.

So is it with the Atonement. 'The evangelical doctrine of Atonement, as I am using the word historically, ascribed the salvation of mankind here and hereafter to their annexing for themselves, even while yet sinful, the infinite merits of the crucified Redeemer, whose shed blood was regarded as the equivalent in the Divine sight for the sins of the world. This doctrine most people now find incredible, unspiritual, and even immoral.'

Still more so is it with the doctrine of the Trinity. 'It has, of course, no more authority than a Roman Emperor and a Church Council under his presidency and control can give it. It was no part of the thought of Jesus nor of Paul. The two passages where it occurs are interpolations of the usual doctrinal type—the one in 1 John, now deleted, confessedly so; the other, the baptismal formula in the last words of Matthew's Gospel, held so by a large consensus of scholars. But the doctrine represents one of those hard and fast lines of division and classification which are never of more than mere temporary use as scaffolding, and are really in their permanence the bane of theology.'

And most significantly is it so with the Person of Christ. There being no need of a Redeemer, no Redeemer is discovered in the man Christ Jesus. Not because He is not supernatural enough. Mr. GRAHAM has no difficulty in assigning to Jesus all that we care to demand in the matter of the supernatural. For he holds that every human being has powers and possibilities that are quite incalculably supernatural. Mr. GRAHAM is a believer in thought-transference and all the other ideas that are associated with what is called Spiritualism.

'To a mind accustomed to these ideas,' he says, 'there is no difficulty in accepting both the pre-existence and the continued present life of one so remarkable on earth as Jesus of Nazareth. "Before Abraham was, I am"—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." These words are easily acceptable. The miracles of healing—of apparently supernatural knowledge or prophecy—of the Transfiguration—present no real difficulty to a psychical researcher's mind. Neither does the Resurrection, understood as Bishop Westcott and Prof. Lake and others understand it, as the raising of a spiritual, not a fleshy, body. On this view the parallel drawn by the apostle gains its validity—"If Christ rose, then we shall rise." Otherwise the apostle's parallel fails.'

In like manner Mr. GRAHAM has no difficulty in accepting the doctrine of Christ's divinity. But he has no use for it. For we are all divine. We all have God dwelling in us. The very purpose of his book is to show the rightness and the reasonableness of the Quaker belief in the indwelling God. Now the indwelling God makes every man a God-man. What advantage, then, has Jesus? He has no advantage beyond the possibility that in Him dwelt more of the fulness of the Godhead.

Nor does Mr. GRAHAM seem to be in the least concerned that in this he is out of touch with the Pauline or other New Testament teaching, for he cannot have forgotten that according to that teaching it is Christ Himself that dwells in our hearts by faith.

The doctrine of the Trinity 'represents one of those hard and fast lines of division and classification which are never of more than mere temporary use as scaffolding, and are really in their permanence the bane of theology.'

It would have been well if Mr. GRAHAM, before he passed that sentence for press, had read the

chapter in the Cole Lectures for 1919 on the Social Life of God. The Cole Lectures are delivered before Vanderbilt University. Sixteen courses have now been delivered there. And every course has been successful. For both man and subject have been chosen carefully. The sixteenth course of lectures has been published under the title of *The Productive Beliefs* (Revell; \$1.50 net). Rarely have we read a more stimulating book. The author is the Rev. Lynn Harold HOUGH, D.D., President of Northwestern University.

The last chapter is entitled 'The Social Life of God.' Its subject is the Trinity.

But it does not begin with the Trinity. It begins with the most striking fact of to-day—the emergence of the sense of brotherhood. Dr. HOUGH calls it the 'social passion.' 'The social passion,' he says, 'is the pervasive mastering experience of our time. The world is dreaming of brotherhood as it never dreamed of brotherhood before. It has a new and powerful determination to make brotherhood actual in the lives of men. It has an impatience with social injustice, and a determination to right the wrongs which blight human life, which give it a distinctive character. It deeply intends to make the very structure of civilization the support of brotherhood and not in any sense its foe. Man's inhumanity to man is to cease, and society is to become a noble mother to us all.'

What is the source of this longing for brotherhood? Has it any foundation in the nature of things? Passionate enough to-day, is the whole wonderful enthusiasm a passing wave of emotion? If we get back to the last and ultimate reality in the universe, shall we find a basis and a justification for the social passion there? Shall we find its source in God?

Let us study the nature of God that we may see. For 'the very greatest danger to which the social passion is subjected is just the danger which

comes from the suggestion that it is all very beautiful and very noble and very fine, but that it is an entirely impractical and visionary thing. We may be told that it is quite natural for young men who have never had much experience of the actual vicissitudes of life to give themselves with an abandon of enthusiasm to the fight for an achieved brotherhood in the world. But we may be reminded sagely that they will grow older and that the disillusioning experiences of the advancing years will give them a practical poise based upon the apprehension that shimmering sunlit dreams must be tested by the hard stern facts of a very real if a very unlovely world. Now as long as our enthusiasms last we may smile with superior and lofty optimism at such critical suggestions. But the difficulty is that these suggestions come not only from consciously hostile opponents of our position. In a sense they come up from life itself. Even if nobody takes the time to call us visionaries, a long succession of painful and humiliating experiences is likely to put just that word into our own minds.'

Now when we turn to study the nature of God we are at once arrested with this assurance. *There can be nothing of abiding reality in man that is not already in God.* 'If the dream of unselfish brotherhood is something God willed for man without ever possessing it Himself then it can never have the mightiest sanction or the most powerful pressure in our own lives. But if we can carry it back beyond the will of God into the very nature of God then it will be secure for us forever.'

That it belongs to the nature of God is not the private opinion of the Cole lecturer for 1919. It is the repeated declaration of Christ. 'In the memorable intercessory prayer of Jesus which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, the Master is praying for the disciples whom He is so soon to leave. He requests with the most profound and deep solicitude, "That they may be one, even as we." And a little later in

the same great prayer, He is speaking of all that vast company of those who shall become His followers in the future, and He prays "that they may all be one; even as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us." In a moment He recurs again to the same mastering and dominating idea, "that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." Now if we are to give any sort of actuality to these words they must mean that the perfect life of the Father and the Son in the harmony of joyously self-forgetful love is to be the type for the life of that brotherhood of loving men which Jesus founded. He sees in the eternal life of God a pattern for the life of men in time. The Godhead is an eternity of mutual life in love, and the Church is to become a reflection of that kind of loving brotherhood.'

We come to the doctrine of the Trinity. What does it mean? It means that 'the life of God has included always the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, three actual persons bound together in the oneness of a perfect life, each perfectly loving the others, each giving Himself in eternal unselfish joy to the others, the very life of God being an eternal glory of sacrificial love.'

Can we entertain such a belief to-day? What would be the value of it? 'The answer comes with a power and a momentum which fairly startles us. If the life of God is an eternal realization of all that we mean by a perfect social organism then the whole conception of society is lifted into new meaning and comes to participate in higher relationships. If the eternal experience of God is built about the actuality of unselfish love, if God Himself perpetually loses His life that He may find it, then it is true that unselfishness is not a soft and vague and impossible dream. It is more real than selfishness. It is more actual than all the hard self-assertiveness of which we know so much. It is as real as the very structure of the universe. It is as real as the nature of God.'

'And now we can afford to be patient. We can afford to wait. Time may seem to be against us. Eternity is on our side. In other words, we do not base our optimism upon a superficial confidence in human nature. We base our confidence upon the very essential quality of the life of God. We know that people have been false. We know that in an environment offering the best sort of opportunity and the noblest stimulus some people will be false. We are not surprised when employers betray workers and workers betray employers. We are not surprised when Peace Conferences are soiled by emerging national and individual selfishness. All these things we under-

stand. All these things we expect. And from the spectacle we look out to that eternal life of God which is perpetually based upon unselfish love. Here we find something solid and dependable. And in every bit of human unselfishness, in every human striving after brotherhood, in every human movement for a more orderly world, we see the expression on the field of this life of that which is the deepest verity in the life of all things. We believe, in spite of sad and heart-breaking experiences, in the triumph of brotherhood here, because we know that the brotherhood which reigns over the whole structure of things must at last come to reign in the life of man.'

## Synoptic Variations.

BY THE REVEREND WALTER F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D., FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF  
LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE, MANCHESTER.

THE two-document theory of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels has opened up some questions that call for more investigation before the curious phenomena of alternate agreements and differences can be accounted for. I do not refer to the universally acknowledged fact that there is much in Matthew and Luke that cannot be traced either to Mark or to Q—for instance, the infancy stories at the beginning, the resurrection stories at the end, and the large amount of new matter in Luke, now sometimes indicated by the letter S. Nor am I thinking of the great differences in the rendering of some of Christ's sayings, especially the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer, which point to different reports, perhaps two versions of Q (Q<sup>m</sup> and Q<sup>l</sup>). Over and above these obvious grounds of variations, we are confronted with differences in parallel passages of Matthew and Luke which we attribute to a common source, especially where we take that source to be Mark. How comes it that when Matthew (I use the name for convenience to designate the author of our first Gospel, although we cannot think him to be the Apostle—who may however, perhaps, have collected Papias' Logia, identical with our Q—and so have got his name assigned to the book which contains so much of it)—how comes it that this Matthew and Luke often

vary considerably from Mark even when their authority is Mark's Gospel? Dr. Abbott demonstrated in *Clue* that they used a later recension of Mark than those which we have handed down to us in our New Testament. This fact will account for some small points where we find Matthew and Luke agreeing together verbally in modification of Mark's phraseology. But there are many more cases in which they differ from one another as much as from Mark and to a much greater extent. These are the cases which call for attention, and they meet us on every page of the first and third Gospels.

A little consideration will suggest to us that they may conceivably be attributed to five causes—sometimes to one of these, sometimes to another: (a) *Literary taste*. One of the greatest merits of our Gospels is their ingenuous simplicity, their artless freedom from self-consciousness. None of the evangelists deal with their material in the manner of the literary historian, as in the case of Gibbon, Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude, writers who, differing greatly in their own mental outfits and habits of thought, shape and colour their materials accordingly. Nevertheless there are clear instances of choice of words, personal mannerisms, and, with all their objectivity and loyalty to truth, individual