---

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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

chapter is stated in its modern form. There is a brief introduction indicating its nature, then follow relevant passages, printed in full in Moffatt's translation. Then come suggestions for personal study, and finally questions for group discussion. It is an admirable scheme, and nearly all big modern questions are included in it, both religious and social. Examples of these are: 'What do the people of the world want?' 'How shall we treat other races?' 'What is a fair income?' 'What good does it do to pray?' This is a little book with great possibilities of influence.

The Student Christian Movement has just issued the fifth edition of *A Child's Bookshelf*, by Miss Lilian Stevenson (3s. net). This is a very excellent bibliography, and the fact that it has gone through several editions shows that it has met a real want. The present edition has been brought up to date by a new section on Plays and Acting.

A group of earnest men who agree on the fundamentals of life have been producing a series of books which they call 'The Christian Revolution' series. The latest volume (the seventeenth) is by one of their leading minds, Mr. Henry T. Hodgkin, M.A., and is called *The Christian Revolution* (Swarthmore Press; 7s. 6d. net). Perhaps the simplest way to indicate the contents would be to say that the standpoint is pacifist and the tone and attitude those of the 'Friends.' The writers of these books all occupy an 'advanced' position on social problems. They deprecate, however, the use of force and advocate the way of love as the solution of all questions and the way to all success in home, school, church, nation, and world. Interpreting religion in a broad Quaker sense, Mr. Hodgkin holds that in religion lies the way out. All social reforms have begun in a religious movement, and 'it is a vain thing to sketch out a possible method of social progress if there be no adequate dynamic to carry it forward.' The dynamic is faith, then, and its way is love, and love is to be exhibited and spread by individual lives. 'Ours is the task of building up little islands where humble service is rendered in the spirit of Christ . . . where we dare to risk all in order to bring love into every relationship.'

# The Differentia of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

By the Reverend John A. Hutton, D.D., Glasgow.

Luke, we are told, was a physician. It is a very remarkable thing that so many physicians or doctors have been such admirable writers. Sir Thomas Browne, the philosopher-physician of Norwich, gave the world the imperishable *Religio Medici*. In another medium, John Brown's *Rab and his Friends* has its own niche in the gallery of immortal things of the mind. In our own day Dr. Paget has written two books for youths and maidens—*I Wonder* and *The Young People*—which for wisdom, knowledge, charm, are beyond all praise. For men and women in the thick of the fight, there is also his *Confessio Medici*, which need not fear comparison with the kindred masterpiece of the seventeenth century. Then, of course, there is Oliver Wendell Holmes, also a physician, and a creator, as it were by the way, of books that will live and be loved so long as there are toiling men who in the evening cherish an hour of fruitful leisure.

It would appear, indeed, as though the very qualities that go to the making of a good physician go also to the making of a good writer—good spirits that enable a man to impart brightness to a patient, thereby bringing him on the way to recovery; sympathy, pity, a final kindness of the heart which will always see something more than the grim temporary facts of the case; faith which sees the health that may be coming when the uninformed eye might see only the heartless ravages of a disease; the fighting instinct which he has daily to summon wherewith to arrest the approach of some malady. And with all these things that may be credited to himself—the deep compassion for his fellow-men which must become the very habit of mind of one whose calling acquaints him so persistently with the ills that flesh is heir to. These, which are the qualities of a good physician, are surely the very qualities of good writing. For a good book, I take it, and the human race in the long run agrees, is a

book which is bathed in a final kindness towards the human race. A good book is a book that will not mock man, that will not accentuate disproportionately the things which turn man against life. A good book rather is a book which disposes man to face wind and weather in the name of something in his own spirit, a sense of honour, a dream, a faith in that Friend behind phenomena whom man names God, whom, with the authority of Christ, he names Father.

Luke also had a qualification for great writing on deep things such as has been shared by all great interpreters of life—*he was not a mere writer. He did something in the world besides writing.* There he is like Thucydides, who was an admiral; Sophocles, who was a soldier; Dante, who 'fought with beasts' in Florence; Leonardo da Vinci, who was an engineer; and in earlier days, Paul, who was a tent-maker; and, to take one case from the Old Testament, Amos, who was a herdsman. Tolstoy declares that there are five conditions which any man must fulfil who presumes to speak to his fellow-men about God: one of the five is that *he shall have wrought with his hands.* For a mere writer is a mere spectator of life; and life is the one game in which the mere spectator sees nothing. Luke was one of those who did something for his fellows, therefore he could write.

And now let me put down some of the things which differentiate the Gospel of St. Luke from the others, and give it its own wonderful distinction. I propose simply to suggest matters, points of view, ideas such as students even with nothing but the text before them may follow very happily; for it is what we find for ourselves that we are apt to communicate to others with the greatest zest.

His Gospel alone begins with an Introduction. He tells us that there were many stories of the life of Jesus in circulation, with some of which, and probably with something in all of which, he was not quite satisfied. Here a teacher might with great profit acquaint himself with those sayings of Jesus unrecorded in the Canonical Gospels, which of recent years have been unearthed from the rubbish heaps of Oxyrhynchus (cf. Hunt and Grenfell, Dr. Milligan, Dr. James H. Moulton). That there were many such sayings afloat we know from explicit statements like that of Luke; and also from such a casual reference by St. Paul to a saying of our Lord's: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

But it is, of course, the substance of this Gospel which is the subject of study; and in particular it is the 'intention' or scope of the Gospel which we are to make clear to ourselves.

Now that intention or scope is everywhere most obvious—one sees it in what Luke does *not* record which the other Evangelists have preserved; and equally in what he does record which they had already given; also in what he alone records. That intention or scope, in a word, is—that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a world-message, given to the Jews indeed, but to them only as the instruments, agents, vessels, of a world-constituency.

It is probably the very truth of the matter, that Luke received his spiritual illumination through the ministry of Paul. He certainly has Paul's accent and emphasis. With him also Christ's kingdom has the world for its range. It is to 'St. Luke' therefore that one might go even in a hurry to find a text or an illustration to support internationalism, or brotherhood; and to withstand or rebuke any narrowness in Church or State, any spiritual pride, or bitter nationalism or provincialism. 'St. Luke' is a treasury of sayings and incidents to the effect that 'we are not our own,' that our one business here in this world is to widen the bounds of the City of God. And so, whatever Luke will omit, which another Gospel records, he will not forget to tell the story of the Syrophenician woman—a story the whole point of which struck so deeply into the heart of the hard nationalism of the chief priests and rulers that they began to plan our Lord's death. Again and again that note is struck. Again and again also the point is made that this 'charity towards all' lay all the time at the heart of the Jewish religion as God had given it, and not as men had corrupted it. You might indeed say that it is one of the great assertions of 'St. Luke,' that there was a Cross in the Godhead from all eternity.

The pitifulness of Christ, too, towards all, irrespective of creed or birth or training, who are in distress, in pain, defeated, humbled, alone, is a pervading note of this Gospel. The four blessings in 'St. Luke' are followed by four woes, pronounced on the rich, the satisfied, the scornful, and the outwardly respectable—in this giving a somewhat different tone to the same group of sayings in 'St. Matthew.'

The beautiful birth-stories too which Luke records have, without perhaps intending it, the same effect upon our minds. It is not to the sophisticated, not to those who are at ease in life, that the Good News of the Divine birth is given. It is to simple shepherds—men face to face with nature; to students who then, as now, would in all likelihood be poor men.

And what a gallery it is—and yet not crowded though the space is so small—in which we have the description of the opening of Jesus' ministry in the Synagogue at Nazareth, the stories of the Widow's Son of Nain, of Mary and Martha, of Zacchæus, and, in my own view, most of all worthy of study because unique, of 'the journey to Emmaus.' For surely in that Emmaus-story we are being asked to see the working of the human soul in what is its most difficult achievement, namely, *letting go one hold of truth in order to take a deeper hold.*

And then—to continue our walk round the amazing gallery—here we have 'The Good Samaritan'; 'The Prodigal Son' (or rather as we should say, 'The Loving Father'—for surely it is the Father who is the hero of that story); 'the Rich Man and Lazarus'; 'the Pharisee and the Publican.' In every case, the lesson which is being urged is surely this, that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways; that

> There is a wideness in God's Mercy
> Like the wideness of the sea.

Students of this Gospel and teachers will find it profitable also to note how in 'St. Luke' hints of human limitation to our Lord's powers, such as 'St. Mark' observes, are no longer referred to. To Luke, who had seen, doubtless in the company of Paul, the power of Christ triumphing over the ancient and encrusted evil of human hearts, the unclean being not only forgiven but made clean and fresh (to Luke), Christ has now all power, and is without qualification hailed as 'Son of God.'

But even this higher adoration of Jesus, this derivation of Him from the bosom of God, is always used in 'St Luke' to drive home his one great message, that *God is like that; and we must be like that.* For Luke, we may be sure, would not have quarrelled with the saying that we men have no right to praise God for anything which we ourselves in our measure are not ready to do.

And so, it is in this Gospel we hear the words, 'Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.'

But everywhere in this Gospel, it is as though we heard the voice of the Macedonian, the voice from the great outside world, 'Come over and help us.' How otherwise are we to put to its deepest use such a story as Lk $5^{1-6}$? Surely that story is not only true in a historical sense. Surely it is one of those stories of which our Lord declared that His disciples would never understand the meaning until He had gone, and until life had driven them in upon their memories. What is that story? Let me recall it as I close; for in my view it is itself, in miniature, the whole 'Gospel according to St. Luke.'

Our Lord came upon His disciples in the grey of the morning. They had failed. They knew and confessed they had failed. They had failed in a matter on which they might well suppose they were sure of their ground. They were fishermen, and, with all their inherited wisdom, they had caught nothing. Whereupon Jesus came upon them—once more in the grey of the morning when we are most apt to be disheartened at our task, and when, under the silence of the night and the cold aloofness of the stars, we mortal men are apt to shrink from the Great Assertions and Claims of faith. And what did Christ do to these men who had failed? He sent them back to their tasks; but He added something. 'Launch out into the deep,' He said.

Go into the whole matter of religion, of duty, of faith in God *more deeply*. Follow things backwards and inwards and outwards. Launch out! Let go! Lift your anchors! Dare the utmost for the highest! What is true for you is true for everybody. What is true for the Jew is true for the Gentile. It is things on the surface that dishearten us, that divide us—localisms, nationalisms, and the rest. Beneath the surface we begin to come together. As we make for the centre, we become aware that there are many with us on our quest. If there ever was one Christian, there will be others, and there will be many. Christ's business is never in shallow waters; but always 'in the deep'—among the mysteries and the necessities and the griefs. Out among these, cast your line again, and —take care: your little ship will be laden to the gunwale, and if you do not cry for help you will be drowned in the response from the side of God in human hearts.