

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE is a special article every week in the *Sunday School Times* of America written by some scholar of good repute. The article has usually something to do with the International Lesson for the week. In the issue for the 15th of January this year the Lesson is on 'Some Laws of the Kingdom,' being taken from the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, vv. 17-26, 33-48. The author of the special article is Professor HARNACK.

'Did Jesus do away with the Old Testament Law?' That is the title of the article. Professor HARNACK answers his own question at once. Jesus did not do away with the Old Testament Law. The notion that He did, 'is largely entertained,' but it is refuted by the Gospels. Not only may Mt 5<sup>17, 18</sup> be quoted against it, but a great many more passages and testimonies.

Can Professor HARNACK tell us, then, what was Christ's attitude to the Mosaic Law? He is quite sure he can. He states it in five particulars: (1) Jesus recognized the Law and the Prophets as a part of the inspired and authoritative Scriptures; (2) He derived His proofs from the Old Testament; (3) in doing so He followed the same method as His contemporaries; (4) He promised salvation to those who obeyed the Decalogue; and (5) He also approved of and desired the observance of the ceremonial Law. The testimonies to all

these things are 'so numerous and distinct in the Gospels as to leave no room for doubt.'

And that Jesus did these things is proved by the fact that after the Resurrection His disciples did them. They went up to the Temple daily; they were zealous for the Law. That they should have continued to do this against the custom or the command of their Master is 'highly improbable.'

'But do not the Gospels contain very many passages and incidents in which Jesus broke with the Law?' Professor HARNACK supposes that some one will put that question to him. 'Very many?' he retorts. 'This is not correct.' For most of the passages that are quoted in that sense are simply misinterpreted. When correctly interpreted, they are found to contradict not the authority of Moses, but only the traditions of the Pharisees. It is true that when He forbade divorce Jesus opposed a permission granted by Moses, but in doing so He grounded His prohibition on an older law.

But what will Professor HARNACK do with words like these: 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time—but I say unto you'? He answers unhesitatingly that the reference is not to Moses. It was not Moses that said to them

of old time, this and that, it was the Scribes. 'Jesus would remind His disciples of what the Scribes had for generations been teaching the people.' His purpose, accordingly, was to explain the will of God as expressed in the law of Moses, but to reject the superficial Scribal interpretation of it.

There remains the incident of the plucking of corn on the Sabbath and our Lord's justification of it. Professor HARNACK does not deny that this incident was a transgression of the Fourth Commandment; and he does not deny that Jesus justified it. But how did He justify it? Out of the Old Testament. He appealed to the Old Testament itself, which allowed a deviation from the law of the Sabbath under special circumstances. Professor HARNACK omits to show that the present circumstances were special. He simply adds that 'consequently the words, "Pray ye that your flight be not on the Sabbath day," may also be regarded as genuine, for, as a rule, the law of the Sabbath was to be respected.'

And no sooner has Professor HARNACK proved in this way that Jesus did not do away with the Old Testament law than he proceeds to prove that He did. Without a word of warning he suddenly turns round and says that 'there are some passages—not many, indeed, though this is of little consequence—which are in conflict with the Mosaic Law.' What are these passages?

They are such familiar passages, taken from the same Sermon on the Mount, as 'Swear not at all,' and 'Resist not evil.' When He said 'Swear not at all,' Jesus 'overthrew this part of the Mosaic Law.' So, 'when He tells us not to avenge ourselves, nor to return evil for evil, He opposes that fundamental principle of the law which demands an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' Again, 'when He requires us to love our enemies, He antagonizes the law according to which they are to be hated.' When 'He seeks still further to defend His deviation from the law of the

Sabbath by declaring that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, He corrects the law by advancing a new view of the law.' When 'He maintains that a man is not defiled by whatsoever entereth into him from without, He thereby proclaims the Levitical laws regarding purifications superfluous.' And, finally, 'when He associates with the unclean, with publicans and harlots, and touches a leper, and goes into the house of a heathen, He places Himself above the law, not only in word but also in deed.'

What does Professor HARNACK mean by contradicting himself in this way? He denies that he contradicts himself. The contradiction, he says, is due to Jesus. There the passages stand. Some of them show that Jesus did not desire to do away with the Mosaic Law, some of them show that He did. And it is not that He upheld the Law in its main features and abolished certain subordinate parts of it. For, says Professor HARNACK, 'the Law is a unity; whosoever transgresses it in part, or indeed but at a *single point*, thereby annuls the whole.' Nor is it that at first He taught the absolute validity of the Law, and at a later period its abrogation. Professor HARNACK would be quite satisfied with such a solution as that. But it is not to be had. For at the close of His ministry Jesus spoke words in confirmation of the Law just as He did at the beginning.

How is it, then, that sometimes Jesus upheld the Law, and sometimes He contradicted it? Professor HARNACK answers that when Jesus contradicted the Law of Moses He did not know that He was contradicting it.

Jesus was a prophet. Like the prophets before Him, He was not conscious of contradiction between what He taught and the written Law. He was in direct communication with God. He spoke that which was given Him to speak. Being confident that He had the mind of the Lord, it was not His business to consider whether His teaching agreed with the Law or not. That was the business of

God. And in actual fact, says Professor HARNACK, He had no idea that it did not agree.

So, if the teaching of Jesus went beyond the Law of Moses and at last dissolved it, the explanation is that He builded better than He knew. Has it not been so, says Professor HARNACK, with other reformers? Was it not so with Luther? 'Luther was in many things still a loyal son of the Church and the Pope, even after his evangelical-reformatory consciousness had already become strongly developed. When he wrote his splendid book on *The Freedom of a Christian Man*, he still believed that the Catholic Church was the true Church of Christ. It remained for his adversaries to show him how far he had already broken with the Church, and how he was engaged in an effort to destroy the Church. This he had not perceived, nor did he care to do so. On the contrary, he really thought that with this new freedom of his he could remain in the old Church because he loved it.'

'With due allowances,' says Professor HARNACK, 'we must assume the same regarding Jesus.' And he sums up the whole situation by affirming that '*objectively* the attitude of Jesus toward the Law involves a contradiction, but *subjectively*, that is for Himself, He was not conscious of it.'

Professor HARNACK's article is dealt with in the *Biblical World* for March. It is dealt with by the editors. And the editors of the *Biblical World* see very clearly the issue that is raised by the article.

That issue is not the permanence of the Law. It is not the question whether or not Christ has brought us out of the bondage of the Law into the liberty of sons. In that respect St. Paul only reaped where Jesus had sown. It is not a matter of ethics, but of Christology; not what should be the Christian's attitude to the Law, but what was Christ's attitude, and how we are to rank Him in respect of ethical insight. The editors of

the *Biblical World* come to the conclusion that Professor HARNACK's interpretation of Jesus' attitude to the Law is critically and exegetically indefensible.

From the Oxford University Press there has been issued a volume on *The Inspiration of Prophecy* (3s. 6d. net). The author is the Rev. G. C. JOYCE, D.D., Warden of S. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, and to be remembered as the author of some important articles in the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS*.

The inspiration of Prophecy is but a part of the general subject of the inspiration of the Bible. It is a part that may quite properly be treated separately, and which has, in fact, been often so treated. The novelty of Dr. JOYCE's book lies in the method of treatment. For the first time psychology is used, not by a layman, but by a systematic theologian, to explain the inspiration of the prophets.

Psychology has often been used to explain the facts of conversion. But the facts of conversion are not the same as the facts of inspiration. They differ in one most important respect. Conversion is the appropriation of spiritual truth already familiar to others. Inspiration is the communication of truth that is new to the world.

Now it is with extreme reluctance that theologians allow the entrance of Psychology into the region of things spiritual. The science is new. It is so new that some of them still deny it the name of science. Its use in the explanation of conversion has not always been wisely directed. The suspicion is strong that it comes as an ally of that great all-consuming movement of our day which is directed against the supernatural.

Dr. JOYCE is aware of the suspicion. He has had his share of it. But the suspicion with which Psychology is received is not greater than was the

hostility which Evolution had to encounter. Yet Evolution won its way and has become a good friend. Psychology must simply be directed aright. Dr. JOYCE has studied the young science and applied it to the phenomena of inspiration, and he is no longer afraid. 'Recognizing and accepting the reality and authority of the revelation enshrined in the Bible, I am convinced that the fullest and freest inquiry into the various modes of Inspiration, so far from weakening faith, cannot but serve to increase our reverence for this work of the Holy Spirit among men.'

The suspicion, however, is due not altogether to the novelty of the science. It is due yet more to the circumstance that it is not the laws and rules of Psychology that are applied to religion, but only its abnormalities. Dr. JOYCE does not deny this. He says: 'The psychology which we shall have to call to our aid has wider limits than that which forms the subject of the text-books, and which restricts itself to the consideration of the normal modes of attention, perception, association, and other functions of the mind. We must rather follow the guidance of those who have devoted themselves to the study of the human mind in its abnormal and its supernormal activities.'

But that is inevitable. Conversion is an abnormality. If inspiration were a normal activity of the human mind, it would not become the subject of special study; it would not receive a special name. It is just the abnormal in Hebrew or Christian Prophecy that is the subject of investigation. To apply to it only the rules of the text-books is simply to deny its existence. Dr. JOYCE admits at once that it is not scientific psychology that he is to follow the laws of, but that later and perhaps less reputable study which goes by the name of 'Psychical Research.' For it is Psychical Research, he says, that 'has succeeded in establishing important conclusions with regard to the existence in man of faculties extending beyond the limitations of the normal consciousness.'

One question remains: Does Dr. JOYCE propose to explain Prophecy as simply an abnormal psychological experience? That is his purpose. For that is his belief. But what then? He does not explain away Prophecy by calling it an abnormal psychological occurrence. He does not reduce it to the level of telepathy, which is also an abnormal psychological occurrence. There remains always the vast distinction of the agent. Telepathy is the influence of one man upon another. Prophecy is the work of God. The mode of operation may be the same in both. The difference is in the agent. And that difference is essential.

This is the very mistake that was made when the doctrine of Evolution was first suggested. A struggle arose over the mode of God's operation. Was it by the one great leap of Creation, or by the slow continuous process of Evolution? The struggle was beside the mark. To the theologian the method is of little account. This is the important thing that 'the worlds were framed by the Word of God.'

But now, it must not be supposed that the psychological interpretation of Prophecy is altogether a study in exceptions. In its full flower it is quite exceptional. But in its sources it is normal. Dr. JOYCE has no doubt that the prophecies of Isaiah rose out of such humble psychological elements as crystal-gazing or casting the lot. And why not? 'If,' he says, 'an arboreal creature be man's ancestor in the physical line, why should we fear to recognize the soothsayer and the diviner as the ancestor of the prophet in the line of mental and spiritual development?'

And there is more than that. The psychological study of Prophecy discovers something of the way of God's working. It is a twofold way. He gives His revelation gradually. It is line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. But with the progress of the utterance comes the preparation of the ear to receive it. Just as the physical ear has advanced in delicacy

of perception and complexity of structure, so Dr. JOYCE believes there has been a corresponding advance in man's capacity for spiritual perception.

And then the question arises whether the forms of one age may not have survived into another. In the infancy of inspiration its modes are the vision, the dream, and the trance. The time comes when men are able to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Is it possible that even then they may speak as if their new knowledge of God's will had come to them in a dream by night or a trance by day? It is possible. It is after the analogy of all human custom and experience.

Take the phrase 'Thus saith the Lord.' It is common in Amos. Dr. JOYCE believes that it expresses some actual 'substratum of mystical hearing.' In the prophets of the eighth century who succeeded Amos it is of much less frequent occurrence. But its frequency is restored in the prophets who saw the fall of Jerusalem and the Exile. Dr. JOYCE believes that the phrase had acquired 'in some measure a conventional use.' He says it would obviously be absurd to suppose that every time any one of the prophets took these words upon his lips he did so in virtue of some definite psychic experience in the way of audition.

Thus the field of psychological investigation is wide and hopeful. There is no question of the Agent. The inspiration may have come at sundry times and in divers manners, but it has always come from God. The province of the psychical is the life of man.

'Blessed are the meek.' But where are they? 'I was teaching the Sermon on the Mount to a Hindu student and friend. When we came to the words, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," he said to me, "Sir, the Englishman may inherit the earth, but if you call him meek he would be insulted."'

The Hindu was right. He would be insulted.

'Blessed are the meek' may be part of the Christianity of Christ, but it is no part of the Christianity of the Englishman in India. Where, then, are the meek? They are found among the Hindus themselves.

The incident just referred to is related in a volume entitled *The Interpretation of the Character of Christ to non-Christian Races*, which has been written by Canon C. H. ROBINSON (Longmans; 3s. 6d. net). Here is another incident from the same volume: 'I may speak to an Englishman about an acquaintance, and say, "He is a really good man, though he has a hot temper," and the description will be accepted. If I speak to an Indian of a good man who loses his temper, a look of sheer bewilderment will come over his face. "What is goodness," he asks, "if it is not unruffled serenity and patience?"'

Now, if that is so, how are we to commend Christ to a Hindu? Canon ROBINSON answers that after a long experience of work in India, as well as among other non-Christian nations, he is convinced that there is no way but by learning to be meek.

For the goal of Christianity is the attainment of character. It is not the acceptance of a creed. It is not the performance of a correct ceremonial. Orthodoxy, says Canon ROBINSON, may be obtained in a day; the performance of rites and ceremonies may be taught in a week. But Christianity is character. And for the formation of character decades of years, if not centuries, are required. It must, therefore, be quite unreasonable to be disappointed that the Hindus are not all converted yet. It must be very difficult—Canon ROBINSON says impossible—to measure progress by statistics. But the point is that the Hindus will never be converted to Christ until the Englishman in India has learned to be meek as well as to inherit the earth.

There seems to be no way of approaching the Hindu except through character. And that the character of Christian men. He will not be

impressed with the character of Christ, even if he is induced to look at it, so long as the character of Christians belies it. And it is useless for the Christian in India to say that Christ was courageous as they are. No doubt it is His courage, His sympathy, and His strenuous activity that most appeal to Englishmen. But these are just the virtues that do not appeal to Hindus. The Christ who comes to them in the character of an energetic Englishman, even if he be also full of sympathetic interest in their affairs, and undaunted in the face of peril, will not appeal to them. He is not an object of adoration, scarcely even of admiration. They see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him.

The Englishman must learn to be meek and lowly in heart. He must understand that he has appropriated only one-half of the character of Christ. 'We Asiatics,' said a Japanese Christian, 'gave the Europeans their religion; but in giving Christ we lost Him.' But did they lose Him wholly? The meekness and gentleness of Christ—does it not seem as if the East had never given up that part to the West? At any rate, the Hindu is ready to appreciate Christ's gentleness. Until the Englishman appreciates and appropriates it, he will not win the Hindu to Christ.

But if Christianity is character, if it is the mind of Christ, and if the Hindu has half of the mind of Christ already, where is the argument for Christian missions? The argument is intact. Christian missions are as imperative and as urgent as ever. For the meekness of the Hindu is not the meekness of Christ. The Hindu is content with the abstract quality of meekness. He does not believe in personality. He scarcely understands it. He carries his meekness to the length of self-absorption. But it is absorption in the undefined. It is not the meekness of one who, having his own will, takes it and makes it God's. It is not the meekness of one who can say, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' The Hindu, after all, has lost Christ wholly. For, though he has

retained the qualities of meekness and gentleness, yet they are not the qualities of a man. They are not virtues. And it is necessary that the Hindu should recover the Christ whom he has wholly lost.

But it can only be done by character. There is a story told of an Indian catechist attached to an English missionary society in North India, whose accounts were never right and who was at last dismissed for dishonesty. He spent all the money which was entrusted to him in promoting missionary work, but not exactly in the way in which he was told to spend it. The English superintending missionary demanded monthly accounts and refused to continue the supply of funds until these were forthcoming. Accordingly the poor catechist, who had not kept any proper accounts, filled up the balance-sheet in the way which he thought would please the European missionary, and when he was questioned about some of the items, and they were found to be incorrect, he was dismissed as being unfit for missionary work. Several years later a lady was visiting a distant village in the jungle. She tried to make the simple folk understand what manner of person Jesus of Nazareth was. She told them how He was the poor man's friend, how He used to eat with them and visit their homes, how He used to go about healing wherever there was sickness, how the children used to run after Him in the street and clamber about His knees. Her description seemed to meet with an unusually intelligent response; and, as she finished, some one exclaimed, 'Miss Sahib, we know him well; he has been living here for years!' Amazed, the lady discovered that this old catechist had settled there on his own account. It was he who fetched the old men and women their water and their fuel. Where any one was sick, it was he who used to sit outside the door till evening, and then come in; for no one ever got a chance of sitting up at night but he. When plague and cholera visited the village, he was the intrepid nurse. In the old man unfit for missionary employ the people of that village had seen and recognized Jesus Christ.