

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 Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

above all, it is for those of us who believe in Christian ideals to demand that the problem shall be solved in a way that does not run counter to those ideals. China has had reason enough to think ill of Great Britain as a "Power"; but if there is one hopeful feature in all this sordid and sorry history it is surely that the best and most patriotic amongst the Chinese do recognize that, whatever reform has come about, and whatever sympathy shown to China—and there has been much, as we know—it has been inspired by our Christian ideals; and thus, as we hope, "the appeal of China to Christ" has not gone altogether unanswered.

A. CONSTANCE DAVIES,
Hon. Sec. Church Anti-Opium Committee.



Notices of Books.

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY. By the Rev. F. A. M. Spencer, M.A.
London: *T. Fisher Unwin.* Price 7s. 6d. net.

Mr. Spencer, like the authors of "Foundations" and others, believes in the necessity for restatement. He knows that criticism has dealt hardly with the Bible, and has shown that much of it is the product of beliefs and ways of thought current in a bygone age, but long since out of date. Therefore "we must not take the theology of the Bible without alteration as the foundation of our theology." Similarly, the dogmas and theology of the early centuries of Christianity represent the endeavour of early Christians to construct a theology by means of current thought, and these also need criticism and modification. With these premises probably every thoughtful man is to some extent in agreement, and he is therefore prepared to consider sympathetically any attempt to translate traditional beliefs into language which will make them more acceptable and intelligible to men of the present day. The danger of all restatement is that only such part of traditional belief will be restated as happens to fall in with dominant modes of thought at the moment. Hereby it often happens that the new expression is as much or far more open than the old to the charge of being a creature of its age. And, what is worse, the many-sided character of all truth about Divine things falls out of sight. Now, with however much sympathy we read Mr. Spencer's attempt to restate, we cannot feel that he has escaped these dangers; and with however great a consciousness of possible defects in the old, we still feel that "the old is better." Mr. Spencer expounds in lucid language his views on God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin, the Atonement, the doctrine of grace, the institutions of Christianity, the end of the world, the Resurrection, the Judgment, the Kingdom of God. It is impossible within the present limits to follow him in all these topics. The chapters on Christ and the Atonement may serve as illustrations of the rest, and Mr. Spencer shall speak for himself.

On p. 150 he says: "We found that the traditional conception of Christ was involved in certain difficulties arising from the progress of science.

Upon examination it appeared that these difficulties arose from a certain application of the notion of personality to the idea of Christ, and that this application had been made gradually during an age of inferior scientific knowledge to our own and with a less acute sense of personality. And we attempted, by readjusting the idea of personality to that of Christ, and in particular by substituting for personal unity spiritual unity, to preserve the religious values of Christianity while delivering it from its scientific entanglements. And in the course of this argument Jesus has for us, as it were, ceased to be a Being who has lived for ever with the Creator of the world and is equal to the Creator of the world, and has become one among the myriad souls dependent on God that pass through human existence; though, indeed, He was truly of the very essence of God, being spiritual, and the divinely appointed Leader to all others on this planet in becoming likewise spiritual and Divine." This theory is said to embrace both Athanasian and Unitarian doctrines. We question if Athanasius would have been satisfied with so meagre an interpretation of his *ὁμοουσία*; and still more whether St. Paul would have suffered this theory to be associated with his statement of Christ's pre-existence and kenosis in Phil. ii. by the suggestion (Mr. Spencer only puts it in the form of a question) that all souls exist before as well as after their human life.

The chapter on the Atonement begins with an attempt to interpret the experience upon which atonement doctrine is based, and Dr. Starbuck and Professor W. James are quoted to show that it is a surrender to the Divine will followed by a sense of peace with God. It is next argued that "atonement tends to conform to certain types in particular epochs." This is well known, but we were not so prepared for the elaborate distinction between the conversions of Luther and Paul, which is apparently meant to correspond with Starbuck's distinction between the "volitional type" and the "type by self-surrender." Finally, we come to the relations of Christ to the Atonement, and we are told "Christ effects the atonement through revealing the truth as to God and man—the sin of man, the mercy of God, the will of God, the higher life of man in union with God. For this revelation, appealing to intellect and will and emotion, produces that state of soul in which men are under the influence of the Holy Spirit." This is the "moral influence" theory again. We gladly admit the truth and beauty of this theory, and that it is an essential element in any complete statement of the Atonement. But we are still old-fashioned enough to believe that Paul was not merely a creature of his age when he talked of the wrath of God, of reconciliation, and of propitiation; that there is an essential element of truth underlying these terms; and that Dr. Forsyth and Dr. Denney are nearer the truth than Mr. Spencer.

It will be apparent that we differ widely from many of Mr. Spencer's conclusions. Nevertheless, what he has written is the result of his own thought; it will stimulate thought in others; and in the end the interests of truth as a whole will be served.

C. H. K. BOUGHTON.

OUR LIFE HERE. By the Rev. Edward Hicks, D.D., D.C.L., Vicar of Fairfield. London: *Robert Scott*. Price 2s. net.

A companion volume to the author's helpful little work on "The Intermediate State; the Life Hereafter." Six out of the seven sermons present

the "life here" in a series of contrasts. The common experiences of suffering, sorrow, and temptation are shown to be balanced by the love, joy, and peace which are the fruit of the Spirit. The last sermon, preached after the *Titanic* disaster, and entitled "Reflections for To-day," is on the subject of endurance. There are sermons *and* sermons; happy are those who listen to such as these. The great perplexities of human life are manfully faced, the preacher is neither fanciful nor flippant, and the Redeeming Lord is "lifted up" so that all may see Him.

THE AUTHORITY OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. By C. L. Slattery, D.D.
Longmans, 1912. Price 6s. net.

The ruling idea which lies behind the book is that the scholar as such is not to be trusted with the solution of theological problems. He lacks "fresh air and reality." In all science theory must be tested by experiment—appeal must be made to the laboratory. Now, the laboratory of theology is the parish, and the only effective operator therein is the experienced pastor who has moved among men and understands them. Hence the scholar must not despise the pastor, but rather regard him as an indispensable colleague. The pastor will tell him what his theories are really worth, and will, moreover, render him the vital service of keeping him in touch with present religious experience.

This idea appeals to us as good, and deserves to receive much more attention than it has done in some quarters. Mr. Slattery proceeds to illustrate it by reference to the Bible, the Church, immortality, Jesus Christ, God. His book thus covers a wide range of subjects, and it is not always easy to discern the connection of his later chapters with his main theme. Nevertheless, on all the subjects he has found something helpful to say. Perhaps his most piquant remarks are on the pastor's view of Higher Criticism; for example, he makes much of Unitarian and other editions of Wesley's hymns as illustrating critical theories of "the later hand." In connection with the Church Mr. Slattery writes on the limits of the use of private confession, and quotes Mr. A. C. Benson's reminiscences of Bishop Wilkinson: "Though he carried in his heart the stained secrets of hundreds of lives, he never used his power for personal ends, nor tried to establish a personal dominance. He had no desire to seem to stand between the soul and God, or to retain a confidential hold over a single heart." If the book cannot be called a solid contribution to any branch of learning, it yet puts, in an interesting way, a pastor's thoughts on scholars, their merits and their failures.

C. H. K. BOUGHTON.

LIGHT ON THE GOSPEL FROM AN ANCIENT POET. By Dr. E. A. Abbott.
Cambridge University Press. Price 12s. 6d. net.

It was only in 1910 that Dr. Abbott published a massive book on "The Son of Man," forming Part VIII. of "Diatessarica." Now we have, as Part IX., a volume of 600 pages, marked by all the knowledge of detail for which he has accustomed us to look; and surely no one save so veteran and industrious a scholar could have described it as a by-study to a work on the Fourfold Gospel. The subject of the present book is the Odes of Solomon, of which the *editio princeps* by Dr. Rendal Harris appeared in 1909, a subse-

quent revision being published in 1911, and of which Professor Harnack has also issued a translation and commentary. Dr. Abbott's book differs considerably from that of Dr. Harris. Though nearly four times as large, it only gives us a commentary on twelve odes out of the forty-two—namely, on Nos. I. to XI. and XIII.—with a chapter on parts of Ode XXIII. A translation of the twelfth appears in an appendix. It differs considerably from Dr. Harris's, and we imagine also from that of Harnack, though we have not compared it with the latter. But the difference is intentional. Dr. Abbott professes to translate the Syriac quite literally, and to lay much stress upon giving each word its full value, believing that every small variation (as in the Fourth Gospel) is important and has its meaning. The commentary is most minute. Indeed, it is not commentary at all in the usual sense; it is rather a series of topical studies gathering round prominent words and ideas. In this way the book covers a good deal more ground than the twelve odes actually translated.

A good example of the commentary is that upon Ode XIII., which is: "Behold our mirror is the Lord: open ye the eyes and see them in Him: and learn of what kind your countenance is. And declare [a song of] glorifying to His Spirit: and wipe off the filth from your face, and love His holiness, and clothe yourselves therewith. And be ye without spot at all times before Him. Hallelujah" (§ 3,884, p. 401). We notice at once a similarity of thought to the passage of St. Paul about "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord" and "the Spirit," and remember the parallel passage of St. James about "the law of liberty." "Now," says Dr. Abbott on p. xli, "our poet comes between these two, not as a later writer imitating either or attempting to harmonize both, but independently, supplying the missing link of Jewish thought which enables us to understand that the two apostles were describing the same thing in different aspects. The missing link is the thought of the bride adorned at her mirror, representing the redeemed soul or the New Jerusalem. . . . And the phrase that supplies the link is in the ode *without spot*—literally, *no spot*—and in Solomon's Song of Songs, 'Thou art fair, my love, there is *no spot* in thee.'" And then in § 3,884 the ode is shown to rest on the tradition in Exod. xxxviii. 8, that the laver in Moses' tabernacle was made of the mirrors of serving-women. Hence we get the connection of the Bride, the mirror of God in Christ, the transformation by beholding, and the cleansing of baptism. Dr. Abbott admits that his interpretation seems at first sight far-fetched, but the comment shows at least the minuteness and interest of his work.

On critical questions also he strikes out a line of his own. As a date he suggests provisionally the end of the first century, soon after Nerva's accession (pp. xxii and 463). As to the original language, he disagrees with Rendal Harris's view that the Syriac text is translated from Greek original, and is inclined rather to suggest a Hebrew original (p. xxiv). As to independence, he says the author "never quotes from any book of the New Testament, and never three or four words consecutively from any work of the Old Testament except the Song of Songs," though "he is continually reproducing, not indeed words, but pictures" (p. xxiv). As to continuity of thought, he denies the existence of the interpolations discovered by Harnack

and others, and holds that all the odes "taken together exhibit a mystical picture of God's design or plan of redemption for man. The first ode begins with the fruitful crown, of truth, ordained from the beginning. Then, after many preparatory odes indicative of the need of a conflict for the Crown, the twenty-seventh ode introduces the Cross under the title of 'the upright tree' and in connection with the Lord's 'sign.' The last ode takes up again the tree, and describes, in effect, the triumph of the Cross, through which the Crown was to be attained" (p. 466). It will be now no surprise that the author is "a Jewish Christian writing in the first century, under the influence of Palestinian poetry, Alexandrian allegory, Egyptian mysticism, and—most powerful of all—the influence of the Spirit of Love and Sonship, freshly working in the Christian Church, at a time when Jesus was passionately felt to be the Son revealing the Father through such a love as the world had never yet known; but before the doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit had begun to be hardened by controversial iteration into a dogma accepted by the lips of almost all Christians, including many that did not feel the beauty and necessity of the doctrine in their hearts" (p. xxix).

The present reviewer is quite incapable of criticizing Dr. Abbott's conclusions, but he hopes that the extracts given will lead to a conviction of the wonder of the author's commentary and of the beauty of its subject, "The Odes of Solomon."

C. H. K. BOUGHTON.

CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER FAITHS. By W. St. Clair Tisdall, D.D. *Robert Scott*. Price 5s. net.

Not long ago Dr. Tisdall gave us a very handy little volume on "Comparative Religion" in the Anglican Church Handbooks Series, and followed it up by a supplement called "The Mythic Christs and the True," published by the North London Christian Evidence League. His latest volume necessarily goes over a good deal of the ground which he had there covered, but it also contains a considerable quantity of new matter. Dr. Tisdall has here set himself to compare ethnic religions with Christianity so far as may be, point by point, and after some introductory chapters eleven such points are taken up. The method requires that the teaching of all the available religions upon each point be brought together in the same chapter. This makes the book somewhat difficult reading, and it would have been helpful if a close analysis had been supplied, and if here and there a little more attention had been paid to arrangement. This very difficulty will, however, secure from the serious student that close attention which Dr. Tisdall's argument deserves. His book is not one for a beginner. It presupposes at least a general acquaintance with the main tenets of the chief non-Christian religions. Such a preliminary knowledge will be a great help to the due appreciation of the points which are singled out for comparison. It is, perhaps, true to say that the author aims at showing two things. One is that some of the supposed parallels to Christian truth which are adduced are exaggerated, or are even non-existent except in their author's imagination. An instance of exaggeration is the Virgin birth, belief in which Dr. Tisdall denies anywhere outside Christianity, in spite of what Dr. Frazer and such popular writers as Mr. Vivian Philips have said to the contrary. And for the non-existent parallels, several writers are accused,

apparently, of deliberate manufacture of evidence. Dr. Tisdall's other object is the more familiar one of showing that all that is best in ethnic religions—the truth in them separated from its falsehood—is found in purer and fuller form in Christianity. Some of the facts tend to show incidentally that the farther we go back in some religions—*e.g.*, in China—the purer and loftier they become; and it is pointed out that a theory of the evolution of religion must be modified by a due attention to the undoubted facts of degeneration. Dr. Tisdall's book should be very useful to those who are interested in missionary problems and their discussion in study circles.

C. H. K. BOUGHTON.

HELLENISM AND CHRISTIANITY. By the Rev. G. Friedländer. *P. Valentine and Sons (Successors)*.

This is a very interesting attempt to utilize, from the Jewish standpoint, the results of the comparative study of religions in the explanation of Christian origins. The book is frankly controversial, and it is not likely that Christian readers will agree with its conclusions; but its tone is admirable, and the facts are for the most part fairly represented. The author minimizes the Jewish element in the New Testament, only allowing the influence of Hellenistic Judaism; and one of the most valuable parts of his book is that dealing with the relation of St. Paul with Philo, and Apocryphal writings of the Dispersion. Not unnaturally, he is less at home with Hellenism itself; we doubt if such a statement as that "the Greeks were undoubtedly the originators of this Divine King worship" (p. 30 of Alexander) can be maintained; and he fails to distinguish between god- and hero-worship. And he has been led away by the facile and inexact parallels drawn between Christianity (especially in the matter of Sacraments) and the mystery religions. The rigorous examination by Schweitzer in "Paul and his Interpreters," and by Dr. Kennedy in recent articles in the *Expositor*, of these alleged similarities has greatly reduced them; and the surviving likenesses are patient of another explanation than that of plagiarism by the Early Church. We do not think that the writer has allowed sufficient weight to the undoubted influence of the *Palestinian* surroundings of primitive Christianity, nor to the fact that the opposition of the Rabbis to hellenizing influence only crystallized after the fall of Jerusalem into a rigid exclusiveness. But the book contains a very valuable collection of material, which the instructed Christian may well interpret for himself.

M. LINTON SMITH.

REPTON SCHOOL SERMONS. By William Temple, M.A. London: *Macmillan*. Price 3s. 6d. net.

In this volume we have the sermons which the Headmaster of Repton preached to his boys during the first two years of his headmastership. They deal with big subjects, but they do so simply, clearly, and forcefully. Mr. Temple thinks of his school and of the Church as societies, and although his appeal again and again touches the individual, its main tenor is avowedly social. We quote a typical passage: "It is not possible for the isolated individual to be redeemed, not only because it is his duty to bring others with him to the feet of Christ, but because moral and spiritual growth are

always the work of social influences, and it is only as members of some body that we can secure it; and if we are to be moulded in the very likeness of Christ Himself, we must be members of a society whose vitalizing power is the Spirit of Christ—we must be members of the Body of Christ.” We do not agree: the Church of Christ is a society of redeemed individuals. By coming to Christ we enter the Body, as the dying thief entered it, and, having entered, we bring others to Christ as he tried to bring his brother malefactor. Religion must be personal and individual before it is social. We miss, therefore, in Mr. Temple’s sermons the preaching of conversion and of the Atonement; and, excellent and helpful though the sermons are, we cannot but deplore the absence of teaching which we regard as essential to the Gospel.

There are some flaws in the proof-reading. On p. 84 a sentence begins and does not end; on p. 243 there is an obvious misprint.

Received: THE ISLES THAT WAIT. By a Lady Member of the Melanesian Mission. London: S.P.C.K. Price 1s. 6d. MORE GOLDEN THAN GOLD. London: *The Bible House*. IRELAND’S HOPE: A CALL TO SERVICE. London: *Student Christian Movement*. Price 1s. 6d. net. TWINKLE TWINKLE STORIES. By William Henry Harding. London: *Morgan and Scott*. Price 2s. 6d. net. SELECTION OF TEXTS FROM THE TAUCHNITZ EDITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Compiled and arranged by the Countess of Strafford. London: *Elliot Stock*. Price 3s. 6d. net. THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN THE EAST. London: *Student Christian Movement*. Price 2s. net. A BOOK OF DEVOTIONAL READINGS. By T. M. Connell. London: *Longmans, Green and Co.* Price 2s. 6d. net. THE GIFT AND THE LIFE. By Theodore Monod. Price 1s. net. FOUNDATION TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL. London: *Morgan and Scott*. Price 1s. net. ECHOES OF THE ANGELUS. By W. Manning, M.A. London: *T. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.* Price 1s. net. Excellent studies of the well-known picture. QUIET TALKS ABOUT OUR LORD’S RETURN. By S. D. Gordon. London: *Fleming H. Revell Company*. Price 2s. 6d. net. Another volume in this excellent devotional series. EXODUS XX. 18–XL. By the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., D.D. London: *The Religious Tract Society*. Price 2s. Good, clear, and helpful. SYNTHETIC STUDIES IN SCRIPTURE. By W. Shaw Caldecott. London: *Robert Scott*. Price 2s. 6d. net. A really valuable aid to Bible study. A DEPUTATION HANDBOOK. By the Rev. F. D. Thompson, M.A. London: *Chas. J. Thynne*. Price 2s. net. VISIONS. By Bishop Montgomery. London: S.P.G. Price 1s. 6d. net. A second instalment of a much-valued book. THE MORTIMERS. By T. A. S. BATTY. London: S.P.G. Price 1s. 6d. net. THE SUPREME SERVICE: ADDRESSES TO MEN. By the Rev. F. R. Wilson. London: *Robert Scott*. Price 1s. 6d. net. THE DEAN’S HANDBOOK TO GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL. By the Very Rev. H. D. M. Spence-Jones, M.A., D.D. London: *J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.* Price 1s. 6d. net. An excellent account of this ancient cathedral. “THEOPPEUSTIA.” By L. Gaussen, D.D. London: *Chas. J. Thynne*. Price 1s. 6d. net. A reprint of a well-known and very useful book. THE WELSH CHURCH BILL. By the Bishop of St. Asaph. London: *John Murray*. Price 6d. net. LONDON DIOCESE BOOK. London: S.P.C.K. Price 1s. 6d. net. THE OFFICIAL YEAR-BOOK OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. London: S.P.C.K. Price 3s. A mine of information about all that concerns the Church of England. THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY. By Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Turton, D.S.O. London: *Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., Ltd.* Price 2s. 6d. net. A fine piece of apologetic in a new edition. RATIONALISM OR THE GOSPEL? By the Rev. H. E. Fox, M.A. London: *World’s Evangelical Alliance*. Price 3d. net. CENTRAL CHURCHMANSHIP. By J. Denton Thompson, D.D. London: *Longmans, Green and Co.* Price 1s. net. We are most thankful to note a cheap edition of this invaluable book. THE GIFTS OF CIVILIZATION. By Dean Church. Price 6d. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL MIRACLES. By B. F. Westcott, D.D. London: *H. R. Allenson, Ltd.* Price 6d. Two reprints of books which must never be allowed to pass out of print.

