

# 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 Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

the present and for the amount of real good that she can do in it. The voice which says, "Yea, I come quickly," loses its attractive power, or is resolved into a shadowy amelioration of society. The Pharisee, the Sadducee, the Herodian, the Priest, the Scribe sweep by upon the stage, all of them citizens of the Holy City, members of the new Divine Theocracy. The hearts that sigh and cry for a pure and spiritual righteousness are few in number, and are not heard amidst the disputations of the Sanhedrin or the clash of instruments in the Temple. What can happen but that the Lord of the poor and lowly and meek shall at length say, "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" ?

WM. MILLIGAN.

---

## THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

### VI. THE SCHOOLING OF THE CHRISTIAN.

#### *Chapter ii. 11-15.*

CHRISTIANITY is at once a revelation of God as man's Saviour and a system of moral discipline for mankind. It reveals God as saving men in order that it may tutor saved men into goodness. So intimate is the link betwixt what it has to tell us of God and what it requires from us, that the former aims at the latter as its natural and intended result. That is to say: The ethical design of the Gospel is *the* design of the Gospel. God discovers Himself in Christ in order that He may re-make man. Redemption is the commencement of a process of which the termination is holiness.

Such is the teaching of these verses, as everywhere of St. Paul, and indeed of St. Paul's Master. The Apostle has

been enforcing certain homely duties of domestic life upon the various members of the Christian household; and now he grounds all these duties, as congruent with sound Gospel teaching and apt to commend it, by expounding the disciplinary character and scope of Christianity itself.

Two thoughts are wrapped up in this general relation between the doctrines of the Gospel and its practice: The first, that the revelation of God in Christ is of its own nature a moral discipline, fitted to exert a wholesome ethical influence: the second, that the Saviour's work on man's behalf had for its design or main intention to make him holy. Of these two, the former is the thought conveyed in Verses 11 to 13; the latter is the purport of Verse 14. The Gospel's influence is to educate men into virtue; and such, moreover, was the purpose of its Founder.

Let this be noticed at the outset: St. Paul's conception of Christian character as moulded by the discovery Christ has made to us of God, includes a man's relations both to this world and the next. As a citizen meanwhile of this world, he is taught (Ver. 12) to be temperate, just and devout. As an immortal being with a citizenship in the invisible and enduring world of spirits, he is taught (Ver. 13) to expect and prepare for the second advent of Christ, with the new heavens and earth which are then to be ushered in. The programme, it will be admitted, is extensive enough. It embraces with impartiality both the transient and the permanent conditions of human existence. It neither proposes, with the fanatic, to sacrifice a man's usefulness in society to his final salvation; nor, with the secularist, to sacrifice his eternal interests to present success. Accomplish it or not, what the Gospel proposes at least is at one and the same time to train a man for the best sort of life on earth, and thus to prepare him for the most blessed and elevated destiny in the future.

With an aim so comprehensive, what method does it

pursue? To answer this, we are thrown upon the central word of this passage—a word of which the full significance may readily escape the hasty reader. It is the word rendered in the Authorised Version, “teaching,” and, by the Revisers, “instructing.” Both renderings fail to convey an adequate conception of St. Paul’s word; for it really covers the entire education or training by which a boy is fitted for the functions of manhood. Instruction is included certainly; so are discipline, admonition, correction, incitement, encouragement, example, whatever method, in short, is likely to be employed by the wise father or skilful educationist to develop and train the faculties of youth, in order that the lad may not only be temperate, brave, and truthful in his school-days, but may grow up a large-minded high-souled man, capable and prompt and honourable, fit for noble enterprises. I fear that we have grown down a little in our notions of the scope of education since the best days of English thought on this subject; perhaps even since the best days of Greek thought. We shall have to widen our modern conception of what goes to the making of a man, who is to be cultured on all sides and trained to render his country the most various or exalted service, if we would render justice to the Apostle’s metaphor. For the widest range of a youth’s training,—physical, moral, intellectual, social,—under all those helps and processes which contribute to the rearing of great men, would still afford us but an imperfect picture of the manifold processes through which God our Father is training his Christian children for a noble life here and a happy eternity hereafter.

The question must needs arise: How comes the Gospel to be the instrument in so complicated and protracted a process of ethical education? To this the answer is less easy than might be supposed. For what, in the first place, is the Gospel? It is, replies St. Paul,<sup>1</sup> an epiphany or

<sup>1</sup> In verse 11, where the word *ἐπιφανή* is to be noted.

manifestation to all men of the favour of God as a favour that brings them salvation. No briefer or better definition can be found of the special evangel or glad tidings which came into this world by Jesus Christ. That God is the Father and Friend of no selected race alone, of no aristocracy, whether of virtue or of culture or of descent, but cherishes a wide equal favour for all mankind, and desires all men to be saved; that He has taken upon Himself the task of saving all who will, and is now prepared, moved by mere kindness, to hearken to every man's cry, to pardon the most criminal, cleanse the most defiled, recover the most erring, instruct the most ignorant, and console the most wretched: this is the good news in its very pith or kernel. Rising like a dawn in Bethlehem, this new light issued afresh like daylight out of Jesus' grave, and shines on since then, ever wider and more wide over men's horizon, ever clearer and more gladdening into men's hearts: "the epiphany of that favour of God which bringeth salvation."

Here, then, recurs our question: How does this revelation tutor men into virtue now and fitness for glory hereafter?

The question admits of a crowd of answers which it would take long to enumerate. For of this central Gospel the moral influences are manifold, like those of the sun when, after wintry death, he "tricks his beams" anew to "flame in the forehead" of the summer sky.

For example, I might speak of the obstacles which the Gospel has lifted out of the way of human regeneration. (a) Shut the windows of the soul by which it can look out into a happy future or up into the face of a known God: what can the poor soul do but abandon itself to petty material interests and pleasures of sense? This obstacle to a nobler life is lifted when Christ reveals to us the larger hope and a wide outlook into eternal life. (b) Leave upon the conscience the paralyzing dread of the Unseen, which

avenges guilt: how can human nature recover the cheerfulness or elasticity of those who do right spontaneously because they love it? But the doctrine of the cross reassures the alarmed conscience and sets a sinner free to begin without misgivings from the past, a purer and better career. (c) If God be viewed as a partial Being who cares for some men only or loves me better than my neighbours, how can I fail to be as narrow in my sympathy, as partial in my judgments, as the Object whom I reverence? Whereas when the Divine charity for all men alike was disclosed, then all men became brothers and philanthropy was born. Thus, one by one, have those causes which previously obstructed men's growth in virtue, or turned their characters awry, disappeared with the dawning of the Gospel.

Again: I might ask attention to the appliances which the Christian system brings to bear upon each portion of human nature with a view to educate the whole man. How it informs the *intellect* with the noblest spiritual truths, feeding the roots of intelligent life with the grandest thoughts of God on duty and immortality, expressed in the words and acts of One, who is Himself the supreme utterance of the Divine Mind! To the *affections* it has supplied an Object infinitely more worthy of loyalty and passionate devotion than any known before—One, who, to the pure majesty of Godhead unites the humbleness and sensibilities of a Man of sorrows. By exhibiting the Divine Being as One not too high to stoop to the lowest, nor too self-satisfied to suffer with the most sinful, the Cross has proved to be the most powerful of all moral forces, subduing the proudest, mellowing the hardest, and winning the most rude to the imitation of virtue. What motives, again, does not the Gospel apply to stimulate the healthy action of the *conscience*? What paints evil in such repulsive colours as his sorrow, who was the victim for it? What

deepens the shame of contrition like the sense of having injured a forgiving Lord? If gratitude be a motive to duty, Christ has laid Christians under the most overwhelming obligation. If fear, what insight does the atonement afford into the terrors of the Lord? If hope, what opens before the obedient such a splendid reward as the kingdom of heaven? In brief, Christianity addresses its appeals, not to a single faculty of the soul, but to every one, operating upon the will and moral nature through every legitimate avenue of approach. In many an accent of persuasion, it speaks. By many a method of education does it school its disciples. In its hands this world and the next equally yield arguments in favour of virtue. The trials of life become rods to chasten us into self-control, and its smiling bounties are so many calls to imitate the generosity of our Father. Surely, Christians are set in the midst of a moral culture more skilful, more unremitting, and more powerful than is furnished by any other system of belief named among men.

Finally, before virtue can be sublimed into such holiness as the Gospel aims at producing, there must fall over all the homely duties of this life a serener light from heaven, such as the Gospel alone can shed. In moral goodness which is distinctively of Christian origin, there will always be found a certain spirituality, or elevation of temper, not caught from any sight or sound of time, but learnt in the soul's spiritual gaze of faith, when, enamoured of God her Saviour, she bends forward to behold glories which mortal eye hath not yet seen. The Christian is one who lives in two worlds at once; nor is he the worse denizen of this world, but the better—better householder, better craftsman, better citizen—because he hath elsewhere his true home and treasure-house toward which he doth ever turn with eager sigh of anticipation and warm desire. Behind him there lies, indeed, one epiphany when God appeared upon

our earth in grace to save ; and, beneath the solemn sweet constraint of that supernal grace, he tutors himself into the obedient discharge of every earthly duty. But before him there shines no less, another epiphany of glory ; when He who came once in his lowliness to redeem shall return as "the great God and our Saviour," to make all things new. He has heard those words of the Beloved : " Behold, I come quickly " ; and the words linger on the Christian ear ; they cheer each Christian heart ; they lend an unearthly charm to the irksome services of the present ; they gild the future with a " light that never was on land or sea " ; they lure one's spirit away from the canker and the fret, the dulness and the heart-ache, to bathe itself in fountains of refreshing, and dwell amid visions of celestial beauty. Thus from the future, as from the past, does the Gospel fetch arguments for a pure behaviour, and school us into readiness for the perfect life to come.

It only remains to notice in a few words the second thought of our passage : this, namely, that our Lord's express design in his self-oblation for mankind was to turn sinners into saints. The ethical intention of the Lord Jesus is an idea which is expressly taught many times over in the New Testament, and lies too near its surface to be missed by any reader. The main use to which it is put by the sacred writers is to supply another powerful inducement to Christian virtue. If our blessed Master, when in one unapproachable act of love He surrendered his life for us, did so with this express purpose in view—to liberate us from the power of evil desire, and recover us to the pure service of God, then he can be no Christian who does not throw himself heart and soul into the same sacred design. To make us holy did Jesus seize hold on us and rescue us at the first ? Then let us toil to have his design realized, with an ardour similar to his own. His redemption was a redemption of men from evil ;



from fraud, that is, and lies, from ill temper and self-will, from luxury, intemperance, extravagance, and self-conceit; from irreligion and unbelief in God. It is impossible for the redeemed to sit still the contented bondmen of such vices and sins, and not rather to count everything cheap and worthless in comparison of the moral purity of character for which such a price has been paid by infinite Goodness. Then, and not sooner, can the soul of Christ Himself be satisfied, when the men and women, whose sins He expiated at Golgotha are done with sin, and cleansed into a nation of well-doers, every member of which stands conspicuous for active beneficence, as well as for stainless and honourable virtue—"zealous for good works." We see our goal—it was that which cheered the eyes of our dying Saviour. We see our goal; and we see, likewise, the path that leads to it. It is a path of steady arduous training of the character—a path of persistent education in piety and morals. And the instrument which our religion employs to instruct, correct, stimulate, and tutor us into perfection is simply that good news which tells us with childlike simplicity of phrase, how "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Beneath the tutorship of that commanding epiphany of Heaven's grace we have to place ourselves with all diligence if we would be prepared for the coming epiphany of Heaven's glory.

J. OSWALD DYKES.

---