

# 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 Church all that Christ said ;<sup>1</sup> He will take of Christ's, and declare it unto her,<sup>2</sup> and in the teaching of Christ, interpreted by the Spirit, will be found in due time the solution of problems which may for the moment threaten the foundations of our faith.

H. B. SWETE.

### A MODERN SEANCE.

"Mutato nomine de te fabula."

"COME in!" said our host, the Professor, opening the door in reply to a gentle knock ; and in stepped a small woman, dressed quietly and without jewels, yet so that not poverty but choice appeared to be responsible for the simplicity of her attire.

She glided in, just as if she knew the place, and sat down without word or greeting.

I now perceived that she had a perfectly regular face, colourless rather than pallid, and of the Roman rather than the Greek type. I was struck by something in her manner which resembled but was not impassiveness. It was not that she had taken her place without any seeming consciousness that the large reception-room was quite full of people, nor was it that she apparently saw nothing—rather it was this, that she looked away from us very attentively at something, something which interested her extremely.

So this was the mighty medium, the greatest yet known to students of psychology, indisputably (so they assured me) the mistress of strange and occult powers, concerning whom, if I was to believe my friend, the only question among well informed and unprejudiced persons was, how far did these powers extend ?

Like one who wakens, she called herself back from her own thoughts, and turned her gaze upon my friend, who had remained since her entrance expectant, silent, watchful.

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 26.

<sup>2</sup> John xvi. 14.

"Shall we then begin?" said he, and she assented by the least possible gesture.

A few slight passes, *very* few and slight, were enough: the strange fire which had kindled in her eyes faded out again: with a little sigh she closed them and sank back gently into her chair.

"Where are we now?" said the Professor; and she murmured, "We are in Sydney: it is a vast city, a city of palaces and parks: it is the new and beautiful metropolis of the world; and this is the year of the Lord Four Thousand."

"Good heavens!" cried two or three of us; but the Professor frowned slightly and proceeded:

"Can you see any person who appears noteworthy among the people?"

"Yes," she said, with a distinct accession of interest in her voice. "I see a pale, thin man of about forty years entering the portico of a vast and stately building over which a golden dome is gleaming: it is the greatest university in the world: students salute him with the deepest reverence, and follow him; but so indeed does every one: he is a very great man."

"Can you hear his name spoken?" asked the Professor.

"No," she said, "but I know it: his name is Smith," whereat some of us irreverently smiled, and the Professor raised a warning hand.

"Follow him if you please," said he.

"He leads the way into a magnificent and spacious hall, lined with marbles of various colours, against which splendid statues shine out in dazzling whiteness: it is crowded with an eager multitude; he mounts the platform: he raises his hand and quietly begins to speak. The hall is built in obedience to acoustic laws unknown to us, for the whole vast audience-chamber is filled with his gentlest utterance—is filled, but does not resound. LISTEN!"

And I protest that we no longer heard her dreamy voice, but another, that of a man, a masterful, modulated, musical, distant voice, and here is what he said—or will say, I suppose, two thousand and ninety-eight years hence :

“Gentlemen, we resume our study of the ancient and extraordinary legends of the British Islands. I cited last week the significant fact that, not so long at all after the death of Napoleon—that centre of myths—his very existence was questioned by an acute and distinguished writer named Whateley, who is said to have been an archbishop, but is also described as a successful writer upon logic, two assertions apparently irreconcilable.

“We need not follow him into such depths of scepticism, but content ourselves with what is certain, namely, that around the person of this formidable warrior, not only have legends gathered, but myths have striven to make him a sort of embodiment and incarnation of the new European movement, of the Revolution. This tendency is audible, for instance, in the phrase too pertinaciously applied to him by Carlyle, who calls him the ‘armed soldier of democracy,’ although he not only crushed out French democracy during his life, but invented methods of election, and devices for enslaving prefects and other officers of the government which strangled French democracy, for a full century at least, in red tape. Of one such myth, the myth of the Peninsular war, I am about to exhibit to you the very curious genesis.

“But first I must devote the bulk of this lecture to an indispensable preliminary task, the task of showing you that the literature said to be of the Victorian age belongs in reality to various periods, and was spread over a very considerable space of time ; and further, that it has been more or less seriously tampered with.”

At this point we, sitting in the Professor’s room six weeks ago, distinctly heard a movement of the great audi-

ence in Sydney, a catching of people's breath, suppressed applause, and, in general, what the reporters call "sensation in the room." Without the least apparent emotion, the lecturer calmly went on.

"I am aware of the responsibility of thus treating a literature which is among the most treasured gifts to us of the past. But I am upheld by two considerations, that the soul of this literature will remain with us whatever be our theories of its origin; and again, that truth is more precious still than any theory, and will vindicate itself. I appeal, then, in the first place, and with absolute confidence, to the infallible test of language.

"Take for example the History attributed to Lord Macaulay, and remember that two different persons are known to have borne that name. One was a philanthropist, the friend and colleague of Wilberforce, keenly interested in the home life of the people. The other, reported to have been his son, was a statesman of imperial instincts; his genuine speeches blaze with the glory of England, which he extols above that of Greece. And now open the history. Chapter differs utterly from chapter in the subject-matter, the authorities drawn upon, the heroes magnified, and in that which concerns us most of all, in the vocabulary. Dozens and scores of words occur dozens and scores of times in one set of chapters, and not once in the other set. Statistics, the state of agriculture, of trade, of the currency, just and unjust judges, harsh administration, and beneficent laws, Jeffreys, Somers, Montagne and Newton. I repeat, gentlemen, that one Macaulay is known to have been a philanthropist. But you turn the page and all is changed. Now we have battle and siege, mine, ravelin, citadel and counter-scarp, charge and rout and orderly retreat, France, Holland, Austria and England, Sarsfield and Schomberg, Marlborough and Luxemburg, James, Lewis, William, and the Pope. I said, gentlemen, that the other Macaulay was a

somewhat jingo statesman. The subjects and the vocabularies—much more various than those of J and E—alternate in such blocks as if two carts had emptied into a promiscuous heap one load of brick and one of stone. In these heaps I recognize beyond hesitation the part which belongs to each of the men whose name the work bears. But with them are curiously entangled (like those half lines of ‘Q’ and ‘R’ and the others which astonish us in the Old Testament) fragments of other writers; for I have myself discovered in the narrative of the trial of the seven bishops, lines identical with lines in the fragmentary work of Makintosh. These it is likely that both appropriated from Halifax, who was an eye-witness of the event, and therefore, in my forthcoming work, I have marked them with the letter H. But there are passages which I boldly assert that neither of the Macaulays can ever have seen. Neither the abolitionist nor his son, himself the admiring friend, in youth, of the leading abolitionists, could ever have written that page in the first chapter which describes the abolition of slavery. With no allusion in all the history to the heroic struggle and daring legislation of his own time, its abolition, and to all appearance its final abolition is placed in the Tudor times! Thus he writes, if any one can believe it to be his writing:—‘Slavery, and the evils by which slavery is everywhere accompanied, were fast disappearing . . . The change was brought about neither by legislative regulation nor by physical force . . . Moral causes noiselessly effaced, first the distinction between Norman and Saxon, and then the distinction between freeman and slave.’ And this is all.

“Take Wordsworth. Consider the bewildering difference between the soaring Ode on Immortality and the abject Ecclesiastical Sonnets—observe the word *Ecclesiastical*, and say whether there is not profound significance in the tradition that there was another Wordsworth, a bishop and

writer of hymns. In Wordsworth's poems also there is distinct evidence of their having been retouched by a deliberately unfriendly hand. It is incredible that he defended his Fears for England on the ground that he felt for her 'as a lover or a child,' and yet in the same poem described the same fears as 'unfilial'—'unfilial . . . as a child.' It is incredible that he should in one poem describe the lark as 'Type of the wise who soar but never roam,' and also as the 'Pilgrim of the sky.' What is a pilgrim who never roams? Gentlemen, the greatness of his genius forbids us to believe that these, its waters, have not been befouled.

"Can anything be more evident than that the smooth, and polished style of Tennyson, and the disjected ruggedness of Browning, belong to different stages in the development of the English language? If it is objected that extreme difference of individual temperament must be allowed for, I assent: I do not even reply that the differences here are *too* extreme, nor yet that the readers of the same age would not have tolerated both. No; my answer goes deeper: my answer is that the difference is *not* individual; it shows itself even more distinctly in the prose attributed to that age, the smooth and polished style reappears in Ruskin, and the disjected ruggedness in Carlyle. Ruskin and Tennyson belong to one stage in the history of the language; Carlyle and Browning to another. What, again, of George Eliot and Meredith? And it may be added that the barbarous Teutonisms of Carlyle, and the slipshod Gallicisms of Disraeli's novels cannot possibly have been the offspring of the same literary influences; nor can the latter be the work of a statesman whose recorded speeches are in style manly, direct and poignant. There is another writer in this group, W. S. Landor, of whom we are asked to believe that he published excellent poetry a year before Keats was born, when Shelley was three years old and Byron ten; and also that he published excellent poetry forty-three years after

the death of Keats, forty-one after that of Shelley, and thirty-nine after that of Byron, and that he was for nine years a contemporary of Samuel Johnson, and for twenty-seven years of Mr. Swinburne. You will observe, gentlemen, that the effect of these improbabilities is cumulative: it is not one or two but all of them that you must accept along with the current story of the Victorian literature.

“And now, with minds released from the tyranny of authorities professedly almost contemporaneous, let us return, if only for a moment, to the theme which I announced at starting, to the so-called ‘History’ of the Peninsular war. The story as it stands is quite incredible. Napoleon’s treachery to the royal family of Spain, his inexplicable pause in the pursuit of Moore, his plunge into a European war while this sore was still open, his unnatural endurance of the unnatural conduct of his marshals, any two of whom could more than once have crushed Lord Wellesley by a whole-hearted co-operation, the superhuman daring with which that officer presumed upon their jealousies (so far as to drive Joseph from the capital while aware of being completely over-matched), the supernatural craft with which he always retreated at the very moment when their jealousy had yielded to stronger motives—it is not any of these which staggers our credulity, it is the aggregation of these, it is the beautiful harmony with which all these co-operate to produce the desired effect. Things do not happen thus.

“But the critic has done little who simply rejects the incredible. It is easy, too easy to do this, the true task is to secure the inner meaning. Grant that it is a legend, what greatness inspired it? Grant that it is a myth, to what spiritual reality does it give illusive form and body?

“In this case, it is a myth, and the meaning is so evident that no child of this age can possibly reject it when it is shown to him. But when I have stated it, when you have



recognized that inherent appositeness which is its internal evidence, I shall add some curious evidence of another kind.

“What then was, in very deed, the struggle, the real struggle of that wonderful period? How would it present itself to the next generation, to the children of a moderate but not extreme reaction, to the period when Philippe Égalité’s umbrella was the substitute for Napoleon’s eagles? Their point of view is embodied in these mythic narratives.

“They would regard the great struggle as being at first between the stagnant past, traditions whose vitality had exhaled, cruel laws, cruel penalties, a cruel social system, between these and the Revolution, which, for its part, overturned good and bad alike in its eagerness for a Millennium without a Church. For, in its feverish desire, it also became selfish and cruel; it also, like its adversary, forfeited all right to the final victory, which could not surely belong either to the Inquisition or to the Guillotine.

“France and Spain are, in this story, the embodiment of these tendencies—Spain which only asks to be undisturbed—France, which is ever the assailant, the invader, because the Revolution must annex and absorb; it can keep no faith with kings and established usages; all its promises to these are perfidies.

“But the captains of such a system, so the wise myth teaches, are in the nature of things unable to work together, jealous, insubordinate; and as Danton is betrayed by Robespierre, Robespierre by Tallien, so the Peninsular officers of France will not co-operate against the common foe. And why so? Because, perhaps to abstract reason, but certainly to the convictions of the age when this story was created, moral belief, faith and the Revolution are incompatible: faith works not Revolution but Reform. Yet it is not, nor could it even then have seemed to be, the dead Past and its traditions which can resist the deluge of

revolutionary hope and rage; nothing is more ideally certain than the overthrow of these, that is to say, the over-running, the submerging of Spain by France. Hence comes the intervention of a third force, representing the spirit of moderate and gentle advance, equally removed from Spain with its masses and France with its *Ça Ira*s, and the type of this is England with its constitution, with its successive reform bills.

“To me it seems evident that all this allegory is too rich in spiritual meaning to be also prosaic reality. But we are fortunately not left to supposition or inference: I have to offer you, in addition to the gross improbabilities of the history at which we have glanced, four pieces of downright evidence.

“The first is the elaborate and obtrusive nature of the allegory itself: the English at first rely largely upon the Spaniards, and they suffer for it bitterly, until their general exclaims, ‘I have fished in many troubled waters, but Spanish troubled waters I will never fish in again.’ This is simply a sermon upon the text that the greatest danger of moderate conservatism, in Church or State, is reliance upon blind reaction.

“The second is the preposterous names, more like those of Bunyan’s allegory than of real life, with which the success of moderation, rather than the whole war, is connected. No matter how the armies of England may succeed, the end is always a retreat, until they entrench themselves—where? Reaction equally with revolution is innovation, all tyranny is usurpation: behind both are the grand ancient immortal principles, which alone are to be preserved; and the victory of moderation becomes assured and certain when it entrenches in *Torres Vedras*—in the *Ancient Hills*! Thence she

‘issued forth anew  
And ever great and greater grew,’

until one decisive triumph drove the French clean out of the country. And where was this victory won? At a place to which, if you can believe it, there had been given in advance the highly fitting name of Vittoria—assuredly by the same prophetic nomenclator who provided, for the interview where the same general planned with Blucher his crowning triumph, a farm-house with the title of La Belle Alliance. But what would be said of things like these, if we read them in the Book of Joshua?

“My third proof is the curious fact that, next to Victoria the finest victory said to have been won during the whole war, namely that of Salamanca, is really a transference into Spain of Frederick’s great victory of Rossbach, which it follows alike in the emergency, the blunder of the foe, the successful impromptu manœuvre and the result.<sup>1</sup> This is just the device to which a fabulist, in quest of military science, would naturally resort.

“My fourth and last argument is a startling one. Gentlemen, it has just been proved, and my forthcoming volume will contain the evidence, that the Marquis of Wellesley, the conqueror in this allegorical struggle, was in reality that Duke of Wellington who, a little later, became Prime Minister of England in the Conservative interest, and was answerable for the first Reform Bill. *This* was his real office; and it is no wonder that, such being his battles, the Prince Regent always claimed that he himself had charged in one of them.”

There was silence. Presently, muffled as if by distance, we heard clapping and the sound of a dispersing audience; and then, as by a common impulse, we all turned our eyes to the seat which the Medium had occupied. She was gone! No one had seen her go, yet her seat was vacant.

<sup>1</sup> “Frederick’s counterstroke at Rossbach, or the manœuvre, so very similar in design, execution and effect to the Prussian King’s, executed by Wellington at Salamanca.”—Hamley’s *Operations of War*, 4th ed. p. 411.

And although refreshments were offered, we all, I believe, departed almost at once, as I did, in a very silent mood.

My companion, as I went, was a gifted and fearless critic, the editor of an Encyclopædia which is commonly called "advanced," because, I suppose, it has receded from nearly every belief which nearly every one holds dear.

Neither of us spoke a word until we were half-way down Piccadilly, when he suddenly broke out :

"I will tell you what I think : that woman is an impostor and hypnotised us every one while we thought she was being hypnotised herself. As for the substance of what we heard there is nothing at all in that ; I myself could have done it twice as well if I had tried."

"I am sure you could," said I, quite heartily ; and yet for some reason my friend looked almost as sour as if I had disputed his assertion.

My own opinion was that we had been most unwarrantably duped. Our host was just the man to take such a liberty with the scientific methods of criticism. And none of the coincidences which had been relied upon appeared to me to be so significant as this, that the evening papers were dated April 1.

G. A. DERRY AND RAPHOE.

## NOTES FROM THE POPYRI.

### II

SINCE my last paper was written (EXPOSITOR VI. iii. 271 sqq.), the stream of papyrus publications has been continually swelling, and grammatical and lexical matter to illustrate the Greek Bible has grown apace. I have collected the grammatical points in two articles in the *Classical Review* (February and December, 1901), and hope soon to finish the series. Meanwhile I propose to put together the lexical notes which have been accumulating *en passant*.