

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 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

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

AMONG the books published last month there are at least two of the highest importance. One is the second volume of Dr. Cheyne's *Encyclopædia Biblica*. The other is Mr. Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*.

The second volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* covers the letters E to K. It is larger than the first volume by two hundred pages. This is not surprising. It was remarked on the issue of the first volume that the editors would have to increase either the size or the number of their volumes. This volume is numbered from col. 1145 to col. 2688; that is to say, it contains 772 pages.

It is probable that almost everyone who receives the volume will turn first of all to the article JESUS CHRIST. There is no such article. There is an article under the name JESUS, but it covers only ten pages, and it is occupied with a criticism of the sources for the life of our Lord. There is no article on JESUS CHRIST.

And that enables us for the first time to see clearly what is the purpose and character of this Dictionary. It does not use the name (except as a sub-title), and it does not profess to serve the purpose, of a Dictionary of the Bible. It does not

describe, and it does not profess to describe, the contents of the Bible. It criticises the Bible and its contents. It is not a Dictionary of the Bible, it is a Dictionary of the Higher Criticism of the Bible.

We ought to have seen that before. For it stands plainly stated on the title page, not of this volume only but of the first also. But we were misled by the Preface to the first volume. It spoke as if the *Encyclopædia Biblica* did aim at being a Dictionary of the Bible, and gave it as the reason why there was no Biblical Theology in it that the time had not come for dealing satisfactorily with Biblical Theology. It did not say that the character of the book excluded it.

But now that we see what the character of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* is, we can appreciate it better and profit by it more. It is a storehouse of the Criticism of the Old Testament and the New, or at least of the materials for that Criticism. Accordingly, only ten pages are given to JESUS and sixty-eight to GOSPELS. For the article GOSPELS is the place for the discussion of the most perplexing and most momentous problem in Higher Criticism, while JESUS (the book having nothing to do with His life, character, or teaching) offers only a limited part of that very problem for

discussion. To spend even ten pages on JESUS was unnecessary. They simply overlap the larger and far more important article.

Now, as affording materials for the Criticism of the Old and New Testament, the *Encyclopædia Biblica* is of great value. It could not be otherwise, with a mind of such fertility of invention as Dr. Cheyne's controlling it. Dr. Cheyne's own articles are again very numerous, and he has a hand in many that are not wholly his. Nor does he ever fail to contribute something original, though he has all the literature worth mentioning at his command, and is generous to a degree in acknowledging the work of other men. This is the constant surprise of all his contributions,—every possible theory may seem to have been advanced in the explanation of a problem in criticism, but Dr. Cheyne has another. And that other, coming from a mind keenly conscious of every turn of the labyrinth, is sometimes its most likely solution.

Dr. Cheyne does not confine himself to the Old Testament. His is the article on John the Baptist. It is characteristic and not without a quaint appropriateness that he should never call him John but always Johanan. It is also characteristic, but not so commendable, that he should write such a sentence about John as this: 'Primitive tradition rightly accentuates the inferiority of Johanan to Jesus.'

It is a Dictionary of the Higher Criticism, then. That is now quite unmistakable. But even yet there occur things that puzzle. Why, for example, should a Dictionary of Criticism contain an article on FAITH? Searching the article itself (which is by Dr. Cheyne), we find no explanation. It is simply an article in Biblical Theology. Why it has strayed into this book we cannot tell. But we can say how welcome it is. If it had been five times its length, it had been five times more welcome. But it is a very pretty bit of theological dissection, everything, except what we count the

essence of faith, being there and in its proper place.

'Except what we count the essence.' For the essence of faith, as we understand it, is apprehension of a living Christ, and it is clear that neither by Dr. Cheyne nor throughout this book, is a living Christ acknowledged. In the article GOSPELS, the most conspicuous article in the volume, the very existence of a human Jesus is grudgingly admitted, that (if He did exist) He was merely human is most distinctly stated.

The other book is Mr. Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*.

'The Historical New Testament; being the Literature of the New Testament arranged in the Order of its Literary Growth and according to the Dates of the Documents: A New Translation, edited with Prolegomena, Historical Tables, Critical Notes, and an Appendix, by James Moffatt, B.D.' That is the title in full.

Now the first thing that arrests the eye is that extraordinary announcement, *A New Translation*. Can any single man, we ask, provide us with a new translation of the New Testament? Mr. Moffatt answers our question himself. No single man can provide it. Perhaps he knew that several single men had tried it and had failed. Perhaps he had tried it himself and had failed. We cannot tell. But he has not made this translation single-handed. He has had the co-operation of Professor Denney and Dr. H. A. A. Kennedy, of the Rev. David Smith, M.A., and Professor Marcus Dods, of Canon Gregory Smith, the Rev. E. F. Scott, B.A., Principal Bebb, Dr. George Reith, and Professor Walter Lock.

Well, that combination of scholarship ought to give us something of interest. We shall look at its product in a moment. But why was a new translation attempted? We must postpone the

answer to that also for a moment. Let us come to the purpose of the book.

Mr. Moffatt tells us what is the purpose of his book with admirable clearness. As they lie at present the books of the New Testament are often unrelated to one another. They are also unrelated to the time and circumstances of their writing. Recent study has not tended to remove but rather to accentuate that isolation. We have become familiar with 'the doctrine of God in the Synoptists' and 'the doctrine of God in St. John,' with 'the idea of Faith in the Hebrews' and 'the idea of Faith in St. James.' The books of the New Testament, unconnected before, have almost become antagonistic.

Now there is not a word to be said here against the science of Biblical Theology. It had to come, and its fruits have been good and lasting. But we are not going to let the science of Biblical Theology run away with us. The Faith of St. James is the Faith of St. John. It is Faith in a Saviour Jesus Christ who died and behold He is alive for evermore. And when we begin seriously to combine, where lately we have been separating, the views of the writers of the New Testament, we shall find that we must get the books of the New Testament in the right relation to one another, in order that our conception of the organic unity of the whole New Testament may be right. And then shall we come to Mr. Moffatt.

For Mr. Moffatt's design is 'to arrange that selection of early Christian literature which is known as the New Testament in the order of its literary growth, and at the same time to indicate the chief grounds upon which such an order may be determined or disputed.'

Now this is not the kind of 'interference with the New Testament' that will trouble any of us. We are accustomed to find St. Matthew first and the Apocalypse last; but we are also wont to take

any book and read it by itself. We have never supposed that even verbal inspiration was dependent on the order of the books which contained it. So we are not shocked when we find 1 Thessalonians before us as we open our *Historical New Testament*; we are only slightly hesitant when we close it with 2 Peter.

There is a great opportunity before us, however. We are accustomed to take the books of the New Testament singly. We are even accustomed, alas, to take scraps of chapters out of them. But to get the full benefit of the *Historical New Testament* we must read it right through. We must begin with 1 Thessalonians. We may dispute, of course, Mr. Moffatt's order; but if we let that go, we must begin with 1 Thessalonians and find the Pauline doctrine in its simplest primal form. We must pass to 2 Thessalonians and find it slightly but perceptibly advanced. We must go on to Galatians and discover a man more tried, wrestling with more vital problems. We shall have reached the last of the Epistles of St. Paul, and caught the atmosphere that surrounds both the Epistle to the Philippians and the First Epistle of Peter before we come to the earliest of the Gospels. And we may not pause there. We must proceed through St. Mark and St. Matthew, through the Epistle to the Hebrews and St. Luke, through the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of St. John (taking with Mr. Moffatt, if we will, the Apocalypse before the Gospel and the Epistles), through the Pastoral Epistles, St. James and St. Jude, and through the Second Epistle of Peter. And only then shall we have got our good of this volume, and seen how rich is the interest that comes from the mere placing aright of the writings of the New Testament.

But Mr. Moffatt is not content with placing the New Testament books in their order. He also introduces and annotates them. And as he does so he reveals a most extensive knowledge of modern literature and a most refreshing capacity for sifting it. This is the feature of the book

that will first arrest attention and win men's confidence. But the feature that has cost Mr. Moffatt most is the new translation.

In all our commentaries the space that is spent on improving the translation is very great. Can it not be saved? If we use the Authorized Version it cannot. It cannot wholly be saved even if we use the Revised, and we have not all the right to the Revised Version. The only way is to make a new translation. Mr. Moffatt has done that.

Now there is only one thing that can test the value of a new translation. It is time. For in translations the true has little chance when it is accompanied by the new. When the Revised Version came out there was a wide wild outcry. The clink of some familiar passages, like 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind,' was gone. We are getting used to the statelier and more poetical form of the new version. But it is still too new for many of us. Mr. Moffatt's is newer still. And although he and his fellow-translators stood on the Revisers' shoulders and saw beyond them, although many passages at once please the ear better and satisfy the mind, Mr. Moffatt must be content to wait.

Meantime it can be said that he has given us a book which will be the daily companion of every student of the New Testament, and of those who would not call themselves students, but who wish to read the New Testament religiously.

Why is it that the Jews do not embrace Christianity? For the most part, let us say, because they do not know what Christianity is. But some do. There is a select number of modern Jews who make a study of Christianity and do know what it is. Why is it that they do not embrace Christianity? In the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for January Miss Nina Davis answers, 'Because Judaism is better.'

By Judaism, however, Miss Davis means the religion of the Old Testament. It may be that the modern Jew has departed from the religion of the Old Testament. If he has, says Miss Davis, let him return again. Judaism is the religion of the Old Testament, and in comparison with the pure and spiritual religion of the Old Testament Christianity is mixed and sensuous.

There is but one fault in Judaism. It is too exclusive. And dearly has it paid for that fault. There was need for exclusiveness once. It was a great spiritual power once. It was the nation's response to the call of an exclusive God. There is an old story, says Miss Davis, that at the time when the Torah was given, many other nations were offered the choice of close relationship to God, but only Israel would accept the burden which that relationship involved. But having accepted it, Israel ought to have seen that it was not only a relationship to God but a charge on behalf of the world.

Israel did not see that. And so when the great opportunity came, Israel did not take it. It was at the birth of Christianity. The world had become weary of its gods of wood and stone. Israel alone had the true God to offer. And in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the chosen people among the nations, God seemed to say, 'It is that ye may fulfil your high calling and give them a spiritual religion, the knowledge of a God whose worship is in spirit and in truth.' But Israel did not seize the opportunity.

The Christian religion was allowed to step in. A disastrous compromise was made. The gods of wood and stone were only replaced by gods of flesh and blood. And the world, Miss Davis thinks, has not recovered from that disaster yet.

So this is the one fault of historic Judaism, it has been too exclusive. In all other respects it has the advantage over Christianity, and even

in that respect it has learned to be more wise. And at whose feet has it sat to learn this wisdom? At the feet of the Apostle Paul.

Miss Davis does not say so, but Mr. Montefiore does. In an earlier place in the same number of the *Jewish Quarterly* Mr. Montefiore has an article on 'Rabbinic Judaism and the Epistles of St. Paul.' Now Mr. Montefiore has no love for St. Paul, and it was surely a generous thing for the 'St. Paul Association' of London to invite him to deliver this address. He has no love for St. Paul. And it is not simply because he is a Christian. He loves Jesus more. He actually seems to love Jesus. And He also is a Christian.

In this very article Mr. Montefiore contrasts the attitude of Jesus and of St. Paul to the Judaism of their day, much to the disadvantage of the latter. Jesus, he says, did touch some sore places in the practice of the scribes and Pharisees; Paul was a harmless beater of the air. There were three real evils in the religion of His time, and Jesus laid His finger on them all. There was first the putting of ritual in the place of morality, next self-righteousness or pride, and then a certain ill-directed intellectualism. But St. Paul 'sets up imaginary evils, and then with superb eloquence and admirable rhetoric he brushes them away.'

Still, Mr. Montefiore will not refrain from adding his 'grain of admiration and gratitude' for him who wrote, 'There is no distinction between Jew and Greek,' 'there is no respect of persons with God.' He says it was not until St. Paul had so written that the prophetic universalism attained its goal. And 'it can be appropriated, and I am glad to think it *has* been appropriated, by Jew as well as by Christian.'

According to an anonymous (probably editorial) note in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' (Gn 4⁹) is 'a much over-worked text.'

When Jehovah asked Cain, 'Where is thy brother?' Cain was not ready to make confession, and resorted to a shrewd evasive question. Its shrewdness is due to the fact that it implies a negative answer. The fallacy lies in the suggestion that there are only two relations possible—a brother's murderer or a brother's keeper. Whereas between these two are found by far the greater number of our human relations.

We must not be our brother's murderer. Must we be our brother's keeper, then? We are told so sometimes. The words are raised to a universal application and sent forth as a command of the Lord. But this writer says that their application depends upon circumstances. Helpless infancy and infirm old age need 'keeping.' The captain of a vessel undertakes to pilot his passengers to their desired haven. He is for the time their keeper, and he dare not forsake his responsibility even to save his own life. As the vessel proceeds on its journey, the captain may discover on the sea a helpless company of shipwrecked men. He is their keeper also. He must change his course, if need be, and delay his voyage to save them.

But the captain of this ship passes other ships on the wide ocean. All *they* need of him is sea room. He is their well-wisher, but not their keeper. Let him take the freest passage he can find; he will leave the larger room for them.

The *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for the present quarter opens with an article by Professor Foster of the Pacific Theological Seminary on 'The Minister of the Twentieth Century.' What the minister of the twentieth century will be depends on what he believes. And if he is to be what he ought to be, there are three things which he will believe.

He will believe in the 'soundness and intellectual value of normal Christian experience.' Now that means first of all a personal experience

of the pressure of sin and of the immeasurable relief that comes when its burden is let fall at the foot of the Cross. But it will not do for him to rely upon his own experience solely, however sound his conviction of its reality. He must face the demands of science. And science demands that in his own experience he should carefully distinguish what is immediate consciousness from what is inference, and that he should lay his experience alongside the religious experience of others, again distinguishing that which is peculiar to the 'converted' man from that which is common to the race.

Take an example. Take the sense of sin. According to 'the popular evolutionary philosophy of things' sin is an incident in the evolutionary process, perhaps the necessary condition of progress, at the worst undesirable, defective, preparatory. How does experience accord with that? Experience does not in the least accord with it. Even in the unregenerate man conscience is awake to moral issues, and affirms moral obligation. Sin is the rupture of that obligation, and it is felt as guilt. And this feeling is so common, is expressed in so many ways over so many lands, that it meets all arguments drawn from the nature of the evolutionary process with a sad 'It cannot be.' Sin is not misfortune, it is sin. The burden of personal guilt accompanies it. And when the regenerate man lays his own experience beside this world-wide confession, it is the same experience. He only finds that the sense of sin has been intensified by the nearness of the Cross and an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ.

But the minister of the new century must also 'have a firm grasp of the idea of the supernatural in religion.' For at the end of the nineteenth century this is the claim of science and its crowning victory, that it has proved the absolute and universal reign of natural law. Its proof is not, of course, scientific demonstration. A few claim even that. But the greater part perceive that

there is a region into which the demonstrations of natural science cannot penetrate. Still the claim is made that where science can go the supernatural flees before it, and so wide is now the sweep of natural law, that the probability of its undisputed sway in the impenetrable region also, is reckoned a workable certainty.

What hinders the Christian minister from acquiescing? Why does he not fall in line? It is his personal experience of a personal Christ. The central fact of Christianity is faith. Faith is personal communion with a Christ who lived, was dead, and is alive for evermore. That demands the miracle of the Incarnation and the miracle of the Resurrection. He cannot do with less. For in analysing his own experience, and in checking it by the experience of other believers, he finds these two elements always present. Firstly, in all that he has passed through God has been personally operative; and secondly, God has thus been operative through His divine Son Jesus Christ. Other miraculous elements may fall into their places afterwards or they may not. But the divine personal touch in the world, and the divine object of faith in Jesus Christ,—these things the minister must know.

And last of all, the minister of the twentieth century 'will believe firmly in biblical revelation.' The extreme position of naturalism that there is no God is rarely insisted upon now. Nor is it so often urged that if there is a God we can know nothing about Him. The naturalism of the end of the century has found itself on safer ground in admitting both the existence and the discovery of God, but insisting that it *is* discovery. Who can by searching find out God? 'We can,' say the modern naturalists; 'all that can be found out about Him we can find.'

It is the conclusion of natural science. Has not all discovery been by slow and painful process? Mark the stages in the discovery of electricity. And the science of Comparative Religion has opportunely come to support it. The idea of

revelation, says the science of Comparative Religion, is not peculiar to the Bible. All the sacred books have their prophets, and all the prophets lay claim to immediate inspiration from the Most High.

But here science corrects itself. A narrower attention to details discovers an essential difference. The religion of Israel is found not to be a direct descendant of an Arabian tribal faith. It starts with new elements whose origin science cannot detect. Its history is unique. All the things were arrayed against the religion of Israel which swept over and obliterated the religions of

Babylonia and Egypt. Yet, when the fulness of time came, Israel was able to produce 'the greatest religious genius of the world.' Its present position also is unique.

But the Christian minister has an assurance which natural science can neither give nor take away. 'It is beyond the power of man to lift himself: he can only prevent himself from sinking.' Who says that? Dr. James Martineau. And he says it even while he is arguing that man has by searching found out God. The minister of the twentieth century will be content with that.

St. Paul the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Roman.¹

BY THE REV. JOHN KELMAN, JUN., M.A., EDINBURGH.

I.

St. Paul the Hebrew.

THE first century of the Christian era was notably a time when various streams of thought and life met. It has been pointed out by a famous historian that all the high-water marks of history are reached at moments of the confluence of different streams of idea. Certainly, never was there so high a water mark as then; and certainly never did three such large streams fall into one as the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman elements that united in these days for the formation of the coming ages.

At such times most men drift helplessly along the currents of their time—children of circumstance rather than masters of the situation. At any time it requires a large personality to rise above personal prejudices and local interests, and take a statesmanlike view of current movements

¹ These sketches make little or no claim to originality. Much of the thought, and in some cases the language also, is gathered from the books of Professors Ramsay and Butcher, the well-known Lives and Commentaries, and other literature. This has been done without the constant citation of references, which would break up the continuity. The treatment is fragmentary, and the writer's only endeavour has been by selection and emphasis to suggest an interesting point of view.

and tendencies; to see the drift and meaning of the past, and to forecast the future with something like accuracy. At such a time as the first century, he who could do that must have been a man of gigantic intellectual and spiritual stature. In Paul we unquestionably find such a man. I do not know of any contemporary Greek or Roman man—certainly not any contemporary Hebrew—who had anything like so wide an outlook or so accurate a sense of the world's life then as his. The great Emperor Augustus himself, with all his cosmopolitanism, had not a more imperial soul. These articles aim at showing this—only indeed in the merest outline—in relation to the three great streams that have been mentioned. The present is a study of St. Paul as Hebrew; the second as Greek; the third as Roman.

Few characters in history have been more unjustly and inadequately conceived. Everything seems to have conspired to belittle him. First of all—and truly he would willingly have consented to this—the incomparable figure of Christ has eclipsed him. None can stand comparison with that figure, and all such comparison is unfair.