

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

In the Study.

Ask—Seek—Knock.

A VERY Scotch preacher and a very Scotch pastor and a very Scotch poet was the Rev. Thomas Hardy, D.D., who was minister of Foulis Wester in Perthshire from 1852 to 1910. A volume has been published which gives some account of his work in all its variety. Its title is *Preacher, Pastor, Poet* (R. & R. Clark). Here is a specimen of his pulpit work.

[ON A VERY STORMY WINTER DAY.]

My good Friends,—I am surprised and much pleased to find that so many have ventured to face the storm and to gather here to-day. Considering the weather and the shortness of the day, and the probability that we may have more *drifting* before nightfall, I wish to make the sermon at once *short*, and such as can be easily carried home.

‘ASK!’ ‘SEEK!’ ‘KNOCK!’—Mt 7^l.

That is the text; and the sermon is *three stories*, thus:—

I. ‘ASK.’—Every Scotch man, woman, and child loves the name of Jeanie Deans. Our own Walter Scott has told her story in his own inimitable fashion; and we have all read it. Well, just call to mind that bit of the story where Jeanie is brought by the kindness of the good Duke of Argyle into the presence of Queen Caroline. The poor, modest, country lassie with her hair snooded, and her tartan plaid over her shoulders, stands abashed and trembling in the presence of this grand lady. But the Duke has told her that if she can interest this lady in her story, she will win the pardon of her sister Effie. It is *that* thought, the thought of ‘puir Effie,’ that nerves Jeanie’s heart. ‘Puir Effie!’ lying in the Edinburgh prison, condemned to be hanged on the gallows tree for child murder! Jeanie’s pure, true, brave heart loved her sister Effie, misguided and sinning as she was. One single word of (slightly?) false swearing from Jeanie’s lips at the trial would have saved Effie’s life. Jeanie would not, even for *that*, swear false. But what on earth was there—not a sin—she would not do for Effie? From Edinburgh to London she had ‘trampit’ wearily but bravely. Her tartan plaid,

and her homely tongue and her honest heart had gained the Duke. And now, to gain the ear—to touch the heart of this great lady! Effie! Effie’s life was maybe hanging on this moment, and the words that might be spoken! And Jeanie was a *wise* beggar. She went about her *asking* in the right way. She lost all thought of ladies and dukes, and of where she was. She never paused a moment to think about what words she would use; but just out of her full heart, spoke in her own natural, homely phrases about ‘Effie’—‘Effie in the prison! a puir young craitur, no eighteen year auld, that couldna be ca’d fit either to leeve or dee! and a word frae the king’s mouth would save her life! Oh! ma leddy!’ cried Jeanie, as the tears ran down her cheeks, ‘when the hour o’ trouble comes—the hour o’ death—it’s no what we hae dune for *oorsels*, but what we hae dune for *ither folk* that it’s maist pleasant to think on.’ It was thus, with her whole heart’s longing for Effie’s life, in her homely, simple unthought-of words, that Jeanie Deans, at the feet of Queen Caroline, that day *asked* for what she wanted—and she got it.

Dear friends, at the Throne of Grace *ask* you in *that* way, and you will get it.

II. ‘SEEK.’—Here is my second story. It is a true one—as you all know—for it happened in this very place some years ago—amongst these woods and on that hillside. One day the news began to be whispered that ‘wee Jessie’ was missing. Everybody knew the little winsome creature of six years old, with her blue eyes and her flaxen hair, ‘the sweetest thing that ever grew beside a cottage door.’

I need not describe the anxious search to you, everywhere, up the water—down the water—through the wood—along the heathery brae; everybody—young and old—joined it. I doubt not most of you were there. The folk of this place turned out day after day, and went ranging, searching, *seeking* for any trace of the lost darling. They sought and searched as for hid treasure; and she *was* precious in many hearts, the playful little chatterbox with her old-farrant ways, and her bonnie smile! And I needn’t tell the story of her being found—and that we all wondered how—in what way—the kind hand of

God had kept the wee lamb in life day and night—day and night—till that day when there was the scream of joy and wonder as they found her lying, in soft child slumber, among the brackens. Long ago they would have talked about being carried away to 'fairyland.' We knew better. We made a wiser guess, when we thought that surely He whose little lamb she was—He without whose will not a sparrow falleth to the ground—had bidden some gentle, wise ewe-mother on the hillside to yield her shelter and her nourishment to the little helpless, homeless waif. In that long search *all* were joining. All were *seeking*—anxious—oh, most anxious—to find. But do you remember the look that was on the *father's* face? Do you remember how the *mother* went *seeking*?

With something like the eager anxiety of *that* search, 'seek' *you* for (what is it you need most at this time?) peace—guidance—strength—joy—hope—better, stronger hope of the promised home! 'SEEK' for it as you sought that time for the missing bairn.

III. 'KNOCK!'—this is a story which the late Dr. Guthrie told. Dr. Guthrie of the ragged schools—Dr. Guthrie, the big broad-shoulder'd, broadly-speaking, tender-hearted, humorous Scotsman, that could, better than any man of his time, win tears and laughter, and their hearts, and their money, and their prayers, from any audience he spoke to. No man then could tell a story better.

It was a wild winter night—cold, bitter, sleet lashing the pavements. Dr. Guthrie, late that night, had been down in the Grassmarket, where his blessed work lay, called to some poor sick-bed—and returning home he was passing the door of what was then called the 'Night Asylum' or the 'House of Refuge,' or something like that. It had been something grander in its day, for there was a huge, heavy, strong, forbidding gate, with iron nails, and a very formidable big iron knocker high up on the gate. Dr. Guthrie described what he saw, as only *he* could do it—the poor wee ragged, half-naked laddie, with the pale pinched face of hunger, drenched to the skin, the sleet lashing his bits of bare feet, and the bit heart sinking in the wee breast in wretched sobs. The Doctor told how he drew from the child the outline of a common Grassmarket tale—father in jail, mother drunk, the door 'lockit,' he was seeking shelter for the night. He had 'knockit' (with his poor wee bits of knuckles) and *cried*, but

they 'wudna come,' the knocker was 'ow're high,' 'he couldna *grup* it.' 'So I took that knocker in hand (said the friend of the ragged laddies), and I did make it sound through and through that "House of Refuge."' I need not tell you that the laddie got shelter that night, and was in the ragged school next day.

Friends—if we but knew it, we are as much in need as that wee laddie was that night. And, if we feel our helplessness to knock as we would need to knock, doesn't the Bible tell us of a Saviour who will speak for us at the door, and of a Holy Spirit who will touch our poor hearts, and help us to reach the knocker—and to 'KNOCK'?

Recent Biography.

In *Early Letters of Marcus Dods* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s.) we have the story told once again of the Scottish probationer's trials. After being licensed by his Presbytery to preach the gospel, Marcus Dods spent six years before any congregation offered him a Call, and so made it possible for him to be inducted and ordained. He was for a short time assistant here, for a short time *locum tenens* there, but for the most of the time he was going up and down the country preaching as a candidate. It was trying enough. But in all trades and professions men have had to wait. Dods did not complain of having to wait. He did not complain of anything unless (almost in a parenthesis) of a certain want of 'luck' which seemed to fall to the lot of the whole Dods family.

And yet there is pathos in the story. For this man had an intense love of literature and could not buy books. 'I must confess to you [his sister, Marcia]. I have bought books lately to the following amount: Owen on the Holy Spirit (folio), 1s. 6d.; Warren's *Blackstone*, 1s. 6d.; a translation of Augustine's *Confessions*, 2s.; but if you knew the amount to which I have been tempted, you would think the self-denial of Francis of Assisi luxurious and indulgent compared to mine. (I got Herbert's poems, too, for 10d.—a nice little copy, not very correctly printed, but that only makes you read the more carefully.)'

More than that, he was never quite sure that he had not made a mistake in choosing to be a minister. 'However, I have made it my almost incessant prayer that I may get work fit for me, whatever it be, and I believe I will; meanwhile I

go on.' And yet he had a message to deliver, and a strong desire to deliver it.

He knew why he failed. 'I did not get on well at the meeting to-night. I am not getting any better at addressing people. I can read to them, and I can write, but it is not in my nature to speak to more than two.' Ah, how well he could speak to two! His friends made suggestions. 'Change your style of delivery.' But he knew that it was a deeper thing than that. 'If I could get a man to put warmth into me, and utterance, in Paul's sense, I would deliver wonderfully. But it vexes me all the more when people talk of my delivery, for I feel all the more deeply that it is not an external thing that art can overcome, but my nature that is not a preacher's nature.'

So here is the pathos. He loved intensely. The best of all the book is the love between Marcus Dods and his sister Marcia. And he would do his work for the sake of those he loved. He had also manliness in him, large, strong, sensitive manhood, and he would give of it ungrudgingly for God's sake and the sake of his fellows—and he could not get a beginning. That is where the pathos lies. That was the source of the suffering. 'Other people with stronger natures may have, doubtless have, endured a great deal more, but I could not have endured more misery than I have done since I began to preach.' And that was after the first two years. 'When I look at the two years as a whole, I cannot but wonder how I have got through so long; the mercy is it comes piece by piece.'

'By the way, if John Gibb is in low spirits, tell him with the kind regards of one who has tried it, to write a sermon on "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice," specially the last clause.'

The life of John Stuart Blackie, written by Miss Anna Stoddart, was published in 1896, that is to say, the year after his death. But in 1869, at the age of sixty, Blackie commenced an autobiography, and within two years completed seven chapters of it. Those seven chapters are now published by Messrs. Blackwood, under the title of *Notes of a Life* (6s. net).

Was it worth while? Certainly not, if the purpose of an autobiography is to give information. For there is nothing whatever about Blackie here that we had not already learned from the *Life*. But if an autobiography shows us the man from

within as a biography shows him only from without, and if the value is great in the degree that the revelation is impartial and illuminating, then it was well worth while to publish this autobiography of John Stuart Blackie.

Blackie was not the fool that perhaps the majority of his countrymen took him to be, and there are no blazing indiscretions in the book. But he was unfettered in thought and speech and action beyond most of his time. And so, besides the criticism of institutions and individuals, which is independent enough to be interesting, while it is never ill-natured, there is a criticism of himself which is at once so full of egotism and so free from it that one is carried right through the book, delighted to listen to a man talking about himself through 340 pages.

There are few good stories, though there might have been many. One of the few is of Dr. Guthrie. It was after what is called in Scotland a Soiree Speech, and it was in Inverness. The audience was unprepared for laughter, for it was the day after the Communion; but they had to laugh. One of them had his revenge. After the speech he came up to Guthrie with an air of kindly and reverential confidence: 'O, Doctor Guthrie, Doctor Guthrie, you have indeed great reason to be thankful, for had it not been for the grace of God, you might have been a great comic actor.'

Lethaby of Moab is the title that has been given to a record by Thomas Durley of the work of Mr. William Lethaby, who spent a large part of his life in Kerak, ministering to the modern and very degenerate Moabites (Marshall Brothers; 6s.). It is not a biography. A biography was perhaps impossible, for lack of materials. And it does not belong to that most objectionable of all kinds of literature, a biography written out of the biographer's imagination. There is no attempt to imagine anything. There is no attempt to write. The biographer has picked portions out of letters and printed them, occasionally introducing them with a word of obvious explanation, such as 'Mr. Lethaby, on the 2nd September, turns the kaleidoscope again,' or 'This possible helper was, unfortunately as it seemed, never discovered, and there was real disappointment'; and so the book is made. Only by perseverance in the piecing of scraps does one begin to realize the heroic life this lonely servant of Christ led, and the marvel of

strong faith in Christ which sustained him. Was it worth while? Was not a valuable life thrown away? So says the Pharisee who wants his reward here and now. Lethaby of Moab laid up his treasure in heaven.

The biography which is prefixed to a selection of sermons by the late Alexander Tomory is brief, but it is singularly happy. Mr. Tomory did his work in Duff College, Calcutta, of which he was appointed Principal a few days before his sudden death. He did his work so well as to make himself a force that was felt throughout the intellectual and religious life of India. But those who knew Mr. Tomory himself had the best of it. And that is the good this short biography does—it brings us all into personal touch with this man of God who had the strength of a prophet of Israel and the grace of a Christian apostle.

The sermons are scarcely superficial enough for the ordinary mind. They suggest more than they express. They beg the reader to think. And ever behind them is the person of the preacher, as if he were one who had fought his doubts and gathered strength, till now every thought has been taken captive to the mind that is in Christ.

The biography has been written by the Rev. W. S. Urquhart, M.A., and Mrs. Urquhart, Mr. Tomory's colleagues in Duff College; and Principal Smith of the University of Aberdeen has contributed a foreword. The title is *Alexander Tomory: Indian Missionary* (Macniven & Wallace; 3s. net).

The Rev. J. Gregory, the author of *Puritanism in the Old World and in the New*, is an ardent admirer of Bishop Phillips Brooks. He believes that in America you can tell nothing about the great preacher that is not known already. But this country does not know. And so he has written a book calling it *Phillips Brooks: A Study for Present-day Preachers* (Stockwell).

Mr. A. K. Langridge, who has written the sequel to the *Autobiography of Dr. Paton: The New Hebrides Missionary*, has not the literary gift which made that book so fascinating. Nor has he the fascinating materials. Yet his book, called *John G. Paton: Later Years and Farewell*

(Hodder & Stoughton; 3s. 6d.), will certainly be read by those who have already come under the spell of the great missionary's influence, and they will not be disappointed with it. These last scenes are familiar to many. But here familiarity breeds admiration. In every respect Dr. Paton was greater after sixty than before. His courage was greater, his faith was more dynamic, his actual work done was more. If we read breathlessly the story of the escapes he made in earlier life, and enviously the loving devotion he gave to those who plotted his destruction, we read more calmly but more thankfully here the story of journeys made to America and to Europe in order to plead with the professed followers of Christ to put down the abhorred Kanaka traffic and build a missionary ship. We feel that it was a greater demand on faith to come to Scotland than to stay on Aniwa.

Mr. T. N. Foulis, among other enterprising and successful publishing schemes, has undertaken to issue certain Scottish classics in a style surpassing all previous editions. Among the rest he has published the *Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle* (6s. net). It is a carefully printed handsome crown octavo and contains thirty-two portraits in photogravure, together with a frontispiece in colour, the frontispiece being a portrait of 'Jupiter' Carlyle himself from a miniature.

Talleyrand the Man (Herbert & Daniel; 15s. net) is the title that has been given to a translation of Bernard de Lacombe's *La Vie Privée de Talleyrand*. The translation is by A. D'Alberti. It has faithfully preserved the confident, somewhat superior, and distinctly gossip-mongering tone of the original. M. de Lacombe had a purpose in describing the private life of Talleyrand. He wanted to show that Talleyrand before he died became wholly reconciled to the Church, and so died a good Catholic. And for that end, it was necessary to show that his life had been—well, not quite so un-Catholic as it has been supposed to have been. M. de Lacombe is not troubled about morality. Always that is a matter of public opinion and nationality. Talleyrand the Frenchman does not set himself the same standard as Gladstone the Englishman. And who will care to say which is the better man? That is the

attitude of the author to morality, public and private. And so he is not concerned to deny improper relations between Talleyrand the bishop and Madame Grand; all he is concerned with is to show that Talleyrand, being a priest, vowed to celibacy, and even a bishop, who should be an example, had to be secularized before he could marry, and had to be reconciled to the Church before he could die.

So the book is a fine unedifying mixture of religion (in the ecclesiastical use of that word) and immorality. The flag of Catholic obedience flies bravely; the standard of life and conduct is quite accommodating. Into the whole history of that beautiful and 'lucky' woman, who fascinated the great Minister, M. de Lacombe has entered without puritanical scruple, even taking the trouble to unearth letters and decipher documents to make it the more accurately doubtful. And all the while he understands that he is fulfilling a duty of the most exalted and exacting kind, a duty he owes to the Church.

M. de Lacombe had special advantages fitting him for his task. Besides what he was in himself, he had access to documents unknown to all previous biographers. In especial, he had in his possession fourteen volumes in which Mgr. Dupanloup, who was the instrument of the final reconciliation and blessing, had collected documents of all kinds concerning his celebrated penitent. These volumes Mgr. Dupanloup bequeathed to M. de Lacombe's father. They have not been altogether unknown to previous biographers, but they have never before been so industriously made use of. The most important document of all has been published *in extenso* at the end of this biography.

There are anecdotes of course. Among the rest there is a version of that popular story about the way to make a religion, which is worth quoting, for this version is probably much nearer the truth than any of the versions that are current in pulpit literature. 'One day at the Institute when Laréveillère in enthusiastic terms was vaunting the beauties of the new ceremonies of Theophilanthropy, Talleyrand interrupted him: "I have but one observation to make," he said gravely. "In order to found his religion Jesus Christ was crucified, and rose from the dead. You should have tried to do as much."

Virginibus Puerisque.

'Take . . . a little honey' (Gn 43¹¹).

This word was spoken by an old man to his sons when they were setting out upon a long journey. Those stalwart sons of Jacob were going down to Egypt. They would travel for days and weeks together—all the weary way across the desert to Egypt. And the old man said to them, 'Now you will take a great many things with you, but remember this—*Take a little honey.*'

It is good advice for people who are going to travel. If you want to get your friendship and your temper tested, just travel together. I know what it means, for I have travelled for three months with friends of mine—day and night, by land and sea, for so long. There are difficulties and discomforts: people have different tastes, and they want to go to different places and see different things: it is not easy always to keep things sweet. So this is good advice before you travel—'*Take a little honey.*'

But Jacob was thinking of what would happen when they arrived in Egypt. They had been there before, and they had told Jacob about the Governor, the Lord of the land, who was so harsh and severe. And Jacob said, 'When you come again into the presence of the great man, in the present you make, with all the other things you offer, *take a little honey* with you.'

I do not know whether the sons of Jacob saw this meaning in it, but we may. For Jacob was a wise man; he knew how to manage men; and he said, 'When you come to the Governor and ask for corn and an open market, don't be hard and cold and defiant, and distant and proud; be kind and conciliatory, take gentle words, soft words, see that you approach him so as to *win* his favour—*take a little honey* with you.'

Yes, it is a good bit of advice—if you want anything. I don't think I need to tell the children this. You come to your father at night, and you are very, very good; your father is a wise man, and he says, 'What's this? What is it that you're wanting now?'

But really if you want anything from anybody—if you want the best teaching from your teacher, if you want the best friendship from your friend, if you want the best that anybody has to give you, you must be frank, and kindly, and considerate. If you are cold and proud, and distant and hard,

you get nothing. You must win your way. *Take a little honey.*

What is the honey? It is good temper. You say that somebody has a sweet temper, and somebody else has a sour temper. It means good words, kind words, the soft answer. You know the difference this makes. If just means *Love*. Patience and sympathy and gentleness, all that is humble, thoughtful, generous, self-forgetful, all these are included in love. Read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. See how love is the greatest thing in the world, and the sweetest thing in the world. The honey of life is love. Then *take a little honey* with you.

Thackeray says, 'Life is like a mirror: if you frown at it, it frowns back; if you smile, it returns the greeting.' I think the children may understand this. 'Like a mirror'—You know what happens when you go up to a mirror. If you want to see a smiling face, you must take the smiles with you. If you go up to it with your brows knit, it is the same unhappy face that looks out upon you. You get from the mirror just what you bring to it.

Thackeray says that life is like this. He means that if you go to your lessons singing and smiling, your lessons are ever so much easier. If you go to

your lessons grumbling like a slave, your lessons are all the harder. Even when you go to your play—if you meet your companions in a happy temper, what a grand time you have! But if you go to your games cross and sour, even the play has no pleasure in it, and everything seems to go wrong. You will find how true it is to-morrow morning. Go out in a happy temper, and the whole day is brighter. Begin with a bad temper, and the whole day is spoilt.

Life is like a mirror—if you smile upon it, it smiles on you; if you bring to it frowns, it has only frowns to give you. So take with you the smiles, the sweetness; *take a little honey.*

You will remember this: and perhaps there are some others who will remember this too; and when boys and girls begin to be not sweet but sour, there are fathers and mothers who will look round the table and say, 'Where's the honey? I'll take a little honey, please.'

Think of Jacob and his large family. When he saw his sons packing for Egypt, the old man said:

'Don't forget the honey.'

JAMES RUTHERFORD.

'Men of Galilee.'

BY THE VEN. G. R. WYNNE, D.D., ARCHDEACON OF AGHADOE.

ONE of the chief difficulties in harmonizing the Gospel of St. John and the Synoptic narratives arises from the apparently complete silence of the latter on the subject of any ministry in Jerusalem previous to our Lord's last week. Some, who do not wish to reject the Johannean account of the great deeds and discourses in the Capital, try to lessen or remove the difficulty by assigning all these characteristic narratives and discourses of St. John to the closing period of the ministry. (So Rev. H. L. Wyld, *Contentio Veritatis*, art. 'The Teaching of Christ,' pp. 156, 164.) Those who, like Professor Burkitt, besides accepting St. Mark's Gospel as the principal foundation of the Synoptic story, argue that anything which cannot be fitted in to the outlines of that narrative

should be discredited from an historical point of view,¹ are disposed on that account to reject all St. John's records of a Judean and Jerusalem ministry. Thus two-thirds of the last Gospel are set aside. This rejection of St. John seems to be too serious a matter to be decided chiefly by the silence of St. Mark, or the difficulty of finding place in the Marcan narrative for the Johannean story. It is assuming too much to hold that there is a complete outline of all that is of importance in the brief narrative of St. Mark, or, as seems to follow from it, that our Lord's ministry occupied little more than one year. Were the ministry even prolonged to thirteen or fourteen months, an earlier Feast would in all probability

¹ *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, pp. 103-104.