

# 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](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

---

## Notes of Recent Exposition.

UNDER the Carey Foundation—a lectureship founded in memory of the great missionary—three lectures have now been delivered. The first was delivered by Sir Andrew FRASER, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the second by Sir William Robertson NICOLL, and the third by Dr. John CLIFFORD. Dr. CLIFFORD delivered his lecture in Leicester on the 18th day of April 1912. His subject was *Comparative Religion and Missions to Non-Christian Peoples*.

It is the first time that the comparative study of Religion has been made the subject of a popular missionary lecture. At work among non-Christian peoples, the missionary himself discovered the necessity of some knowledge of this study long ago. And with that intellectual adaptability which makes a man a successful missionary, an adaptability which even St. Paul was conscious of using, he soon surpassed the home-keeping preacher of the gospel in his knowledge of the ways in which God had made Himself known in the world. But even the missionary has felt that this knowledge was almost contraband. Openly to commend the cause of foreign missions by advocating the comparative study of Religion—that was left to one who is distinguished alike by courage and outlook. And it is appropriate that the first lecture of the kind should be known as the Carey Lecture.

Dr. CLIFFORD recalls those early days in which the comparative study of Religion was struggling for a place among the sciences. He recalls with yet more emotion the days in which it first appeared among the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ with the claim that it also could interpret the ways of God to man. 'The first flash of the new light was, as I can testify, most disturbing.' But that is all past now, he says, and forgotten as a dream, 'except by a few individuals like myself, who had the advantage of passing through it.'

Sometimes when one looks back upon a theological controversy one is astonished at the magnitude of it. Dr. CLIFFORD is not astonished that the first entrance of the comparative study of Religion created such a disturbance. For he sees that it involved a complete revolution in theology. Not so much that it raised the question whether Christianity is the final religion, for that question, momentous as it is, was scarcely considered at the beginning. It was rather that now for the first time the theory of evolution was directly applied to Religion. Did God appear at a certain period in the history of the world, and in a certain place, and give to a small nation the only true religion, choosing that nation to be a peculiar people to Himself out of His mere good pleasure, and leaving all other nations in the darkness of what

was called 'nature'? That was the common belief. Or did He—and this was the contention of the new study—did He endow man with a religious faculty, and place him within reach of the means of gradually attaining to the true religion, leaving him to build it up slowly, through the ages, just as stage by stage it took untold ages for the formation of a bit of old red sandstone?

The disturbance was partly righteous and partly not. In so far as it sprang from pride in the religion of our own profession it was unrighteous. In so far as it was due to jealousy for Christ it was well-pleasing to God. But Christ is not really in it. The entrance of Christ into the world does not disturb the application of the theory of evolution. If that theory is true, He is simply an accelerating force in its favour. Christ does not arrest the ascent of man from the lower animals; He hastens the ascent. Nor does He interfere with the working of the religious faculty in the world, except to direct its aim, to increase its force, and to secure its gains.

Princeton Theological Seminary closed its hundredth session on the 12th day of May, and in commemoration of that event a volume of essays has been prepared by the members of the Faculty. The volume has been published by Messrs. Scribner's Sons of New York, under the title of *Biblical and Theological Studies* (\$3 net).

It is a large volume, and very acceptable. An index would no doubt have made it larger, but then also much more acceptable. For without an index how are we to continue the use of so elaborate an article as that of Professor WARFIELD, 'On the Emotional Life of our Lord'? In that article Professor WARFIELD names the separate emotions which are attributed to Jesus in the Gospels—His compassion and love, His indignation and annoyance, His joy and sorrow; and he offers us much reliable material for the appreciation of our Lord's

humanity. But how are we to return again to Professor WARFIELD'S conspectus of passages when, for example, our subject is Anger? And how are we to recover the page which contains an exposition of some difficult passage, or the footnote which offers a stinging criticism of some erring theologian?

The authors of the essays are well known to be men of ability and earnestness, and here they are found at their best. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about the book is the uniformity of its contents. They are uniform in attitude and in accomplishment beyond any volume of the kind which has been published, although many such volumes have been published within recent years. It is our present purpose to touch upon only one of the articles, and upon only a portion of that article. To satisfy curiosity, however, it may be well to name the authors and set down the subjects of their essays.

President PATTON has the first place with an essay on 'Theological Encyclopædia.' Then follow—'On the Emotional Life of our Lord,' by B. B. WARFIELD; 'The Child whose Name is Wonderful,' by John D. DAVIS; 'Jonathan Edwards: A Study,' by John DE WITT; 'The Supernatural,' by William Brenton GREENE, Jr.; 'The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit,' by Geerhardus Vos; 'The Aramaic of Daniel,' by Robert Dick WILSON; 'The Place of the Resurrection Appearances of Jesus,' by William Park ARMSTRONG; 'Modern Spiritual Movements,' by Charles Rosenbury ERDMAN; 'Homiletics as a Theological Discipline,' by Frederick William LOETSCHER; 'Sin and Grace in the Biblical Narratives rehearsed in the Koran,' by James Oscar BOYD; 'The Finality of the Christian Religion,' by Caspar Wistar HODGE, Jr.; 'The Interpretation of the Shepherd of Hermas,' by Kerr Duncan MACMILLAN; 'Jesus and Paul,' by John Gresham MACHEN; 'The Transcendence of Jehovah, God of Israel,' by Oswald Thompson ALLIS.

The essay we wish to refer to is by Professor ERDMAN on 'Modern Spiritual Movements.' It is a paper that finds an appropriate place in the volume. For a volume commemorating the centenary of a theological institution will be expected to give some account of the movements in Christian life which have characterized the century of the seminary's existence. Now there is nothing that is more distinctively characteristic of nineteenth-century Christianity, when compared with the Christianity of the previous centuries, than the endeavour that has been made, by a great variety of movements, to reach something higher in Christian attainment, or to gain something deeper in Christian experience. The variety of these movements is amazing. Professor ERDMAN has had some difficulty in bringing them all within the seven characteristic divisions of holiness, peace, power for service, confidence in prayer, fellowship, knowledge, and hope.

The holiness movements claim his attention first. They are the most numerous. They are of the most intense earnestness. They are also most characteristic of the spiritual life of the nineteenth century. They range from sinless perfection on the one side to ethical revival on the other. But, however extreme on either hand, they are worthy of attention because without exception they have emphasized the Christian duty of closer conformity to the will of God.

To the perfectionists Professor ERDMAN has nothing more serious to say than that, in the words of Bunyan, 'Your conversation gives this your Mouth-profession, the lye.' They have claimed perfection; they have never shown themselves perfect. He seems to say that Christian perfection as a claim has never been taken seriously.

Yet he does not forget that this very phrase 'Christian perfection' was used by WESLEY to describe an experience which was to him real and momentous, and that it is still used by his

followers with reality and moving power. But WESLEY'S Christian perfection is a different thing from such perfection as that, for example, of Noyes and his followers. It is a perfection that does not exclude ignorance and error of judgment, with consequent wrong affections. 'It needs,' in WESLEY'S language, 'the atoning blood for both words and actions which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law.' Or, again in the language of WESLEY, and acceptably enough to all men, 'It is the perfection of which man is capable while dwelling in a corruptible body; it is loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind.'

Professor ERDMAN is more dissatisfied with FINNEY'S theory of perfection. This theory is known by the name of 'the simplicity of moral action.' Sin and virtue, said FINNEY, cannot co-exist at the same moment in the same human heart. A man is therefore wholly consecrated to Christ or he has none of His spirit. The two states may alternate. The man may be a Christian at one moment and a sinner the next; but he cannot be both at once. A sinful or imperfect Christian is therefore a psychological impossibility. If he is sinful he is not a Christian; if he is a Christian he is not a sinner.

Now, it is not to be denied that FINNEY'S doctrine of perfection proved to be of great power in promoting personal holiness. For it came upon the Church at a time when its members were living lives of selfish indulgence, waiting for some mysterious, Divine impulse to deliver them. FINNEY declared the duty of moral choice, the necessity of immediate and whole-hearted acceptance of the salvation of God in Christ, and held out the promise of entire freedom from the dominion of sin. Dr. ERDMAN admits the practical power of the doctrine. All he says in disapproval is that FINNEY carried it too far.

There is a much more curious, and much more objectionable, doctrine of holiness than this, at-

though it moves on somewhat similar lines. It is the theory that regeneration consists in the creation of a new nature. This new nature constitutes the real self, and is sinless. The old nature still exists and may be the source of acts which are displeasing to God. Nevertheless the regenerated man is sinless. For this old nature is not himself. He himself is the new nature which does not sin. It is our old combination Jekyll and Hyde over again, but with this exception, that the man is accountable only for the good deeds of Dr. Jekyll.

The doctrine of Jekyll and Hyde has been attributed to the Plymouth Brethren, but it has never been more than a perversion of Plymouthism. In spite of their divisive tendencies, their occasional misinterpretation of Scripture and their fondness for controversy, Professor ERDMAN is sympathetic towards the Plymouth Brethren. They have been, he says, examples to their fellow-Christians in practical separation from the world, in loyal adherence to the doctrines of grace, and in personal holiness of life. To them, more than to any other body of Christians, the Church is indebted for the teachings and work of Mr. D. L. MOODY, who, though never identified with the Brethren, made their doctrines the substance of that message which he carried far and near with such marvellous results.

But the most conspicuous movement in favour of holiness made in the nineteenth century is that which is known as 'the Higher Life.' It is known by other names, as 'the second blessing,' 'entire sanctification,' or 'complete salvation.' But 'the Higher Life' is the choice of its own advocates, and is now usually accepted as more comprehensive and less committal. The essential teaching of the Higher Life, says Professor ERDMAN, is that absolute sinlessness may be attained by a single act of complete consecration to God.

Is that the doctrine of the Higher Life as it is preached to-day? Is it the doctrine of Keswick? Professor ERDMAN does not think so. That, he

says, is an extreme position, and was soon discovered to be untenable. The doctrine now declared at Keswick is not absolute holiness but a perfection of Christian love and a relative holiness of life, which are now usually described as deliverance from known sin.

And such a message, says Dr. ERDMAN, the Church needs to-day. Such a movement, he says, it should welcome and promote. Too long has the mere mention of holiness awakened suspicion and a conscious contempt for theories of sinless perfection on the part of those who are content with practices of sinful imperfection. 'It is no new doctrine to declare that Christ came to save us from the power as well as the guilt of sin; but it comes like a divine revelation to many, who are in bondage to some particular form of evil, to be assured that they may enjoy and should expect continual victory. Every Christian is familiar with the divine command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy"; yet by what qualifications and excuses do we allow ourselves to be guilty of pride and indolence, and covetousness and censoriousness, of self-indulgence and spiritual indifference! Conscious of secret faults, yet facing our serious tasks, we need to be reminded anew that our Lord will use only clean vessels. Let us review the written pledges of divine help and divine fellowship, and "having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."'

The Life of Robertson SMITH has at last appeared. He died in 1894, that is eighteen years ago, and the world he lived in has been moving at a great pace. But there are advantages in the delay. The Robertson SMITH case, the editors tell us, is now passing into history and it can be treated in an historical spirit. That is one advantage. And they name another. They say, 'Now that so many of the chief disputants have disappeared, the authors have been less embarrassed by the fear of wounding susceptibilities

justly entitled to respect, and have been able to treat every aspect of the great controversy fully and frankly.'

The editors are Dr. John Sutherland BLACK and the late Professor George CHRYSTAL. The title of the book is *The Life of William Robertson Smith*; the publishers are Messrs. A. & C. Black (15s. net). On the title-page are printed three Hebrew words. They are the words of Is 28<sup>16</sup>. Translated into English they mean 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' We are within five pages of the end of the volume before we discover their appropriateness. There we are told that in the corner of the portrait by Sir George REID, which is reproduced in the frontispiece to this volume, SMITH, the day before it left the studio, painted with his own hand in the presence of the artist and another friend these three Hebrew words. The words, we are told, were often on his lips, and they certainly express a lifelong attitude of mind. Nothing, the editors tell us, was more striking in SMITH'S intellectual history than the slow progress he made towards emancipation as a theologian, the almost obstinate conservatism with which he clung to the forms of thought familiar to him in his youth.

William Robertson SMITH was born in the Free Church Manse of Keig, a remote Donside parish of Aberdeenshire. 'Before he was twelve,' says his father, 'we had the consolation of learning that a work of grace was wrought upon him, and in such a form that he was at length delivered from the fear of death and made partaker of a hope full of immortality. That the change wrought upon him was real, we had many satisfactory evidences—not the less satisfactory that there was no parade of piety, no sanctimoniousness, but a cheerful performance of daily duty, truthfulness in word and deed, and a conscientiousness which we could not help thinking was sometimes almost morbid.' Of this conscientiousness he gives an example. When still very young, and on the occasion of one of his serious illnesses, his old nurse came from a

distance to see him and brought him a paper of sweets. His mother, who disapproved of the free use of such dainties, and generally kept the distribution of them in her own hands, permitted him to keep the whole store himself, and told him to take one when he thought he needed it. Some days after, she was surprised to see him rush into the parlour in his nightdress in great and evident distress, and on inquiring into the cause, was told that he could not go to sleep until he had confessed that he had that day helped himself to *two* of his goodies—the second one without any special necessity.

There was a fairly large family, some seven or eight in all. The two eldest boys William and George, with their sister Mary, formed a group by themselves. In process of time they went together to Aberdeen, the boys to the University, their sister to study 'music and other polite arts'; for the University of Aberdeen was not yet open to women. William was fifteen years of age and George not quite fourteen. Before the end of the fourth year's course of Arts, Mary went home to Keig to die. As the end of the fourth year approached William's health broke down. He could not enter for the honours examinations or even take his degree. But the examiners came to his room, put some *viva voce* questions, and granted him the degree. His abilities were always recognized, but he did not always receive this consideration.

George worked on. 'In Classics and Mathematics he not only gained first-class honours, but stood first in both—having made in the latter subject more than twice as many marks as the student who came next to him. This student, nevertheless, went immediately to Cambridge and gained an open scholarship, and afterwards obtained a high place as a wrangler. All unite in praising the brilliancy of the triumph, the modesty of the conqueror. It was at once a realization of past hopes and a lively earnest of future glories. The reversal of fortune was sudden, terrible, and dramatic. On the 6th of April, George left

Aberdeen with every honour his University could heap upon him. On the 11th of the same month he was seized with a vomiting of blood, and on the 27th he was dead.'

Of the three who went to Aberdeen together, only William was left. He recovered his strength, and went to Edinburgh to study Divinity at the New College, for the purpose of entering the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland. It was a disappointment to the Professor of Mathematics that he did not proceed to Cambridge and pursue that subject. He did not let it drop, however. He was appointed assistant to Professor Tait of Edinburgh, and curator of the new physical laboratory established by him; and he carried on this work along with his studies in theology. A younger sister, who went to Edinburgh with him, gives us a glimpse of him in his rooms. 'It used to be his boast,' she writes, 'that he had me so admirably trained that I never disturbed him by talking or anything of that kind. . . . We never talked except at meals; then I got leave to chatter as much as I liked, though sometimes his mind ran so on his work that I used to think he was hearing nothing. However, that was not the case; as I got an answer after a time, but sometimes so long after that I had nearly forgotten what I had said. He never nagged. If I did anything that did not please him he told me so in a few plain words, and then was done with it. If he saw me looking puzzled over my lessons he would suddenly say, "Stuck?" or, "Want a hand?" and then ran rapidly over the different points, making notes here and there on the margin of the book. One had to be very quick to take it all in, and sometimes I used to wish with an inward groan, as I used to wish at home when father was working out a sum, that he wasn't quite so clever. . . . On Sundays we always went to church together in the morning, racing along at a terrible pace, and at night we had as regularly a practice of Psalm tunes, "French" being a great favourite. . . . Sometimes young men came to be coached, and it was a standing joke that he always kept their pencils.'

The strongest force on the teaching staff of the New College was the Professor of Hebrew, the well-known A. B. DAVIDSON, and it was to the study of Hebrew that Robertson SMITH gave his strength. He had just finished his fourth session in Theology when the Professor of Hebrew in the Aberdeen College of the Free Church died, and SMITH was elected his successor. It was something of an experiment on the part of the Church, SMITH being only twenty-four years of age when he found himself the occupant of the Hebrew Chair. But it is one of the advantages of the late issue of this biography that we can now see the evident hand of God in this daring act of the Assembly. For if ever a man was raised up—raised up in the ancient Hebrew prophet sense—to give deliverance to the people of God, deliverance from the intolerable tyranny of a custom that never was a creed, but was the more intolerably tyrannical on that account—the custom of regarding the letter of Scripture as of more consequence than its spirit—that man was Robertson SMITH.

A large part of the biography is occupied with the SMITH case. It begins on page 179, and ends on page 451. It was an intricate as well as a long drawn out affair. Even Free Churchmen, even the Free Churchmen who took part in it, were in continual danger of losing themselves in its technicalities and turnings. But Dr. Sutherland BLACK has succeeded in making it intelligible, not only to Scotsmen, but even to reasonably curious Englishmen. It is a great triumph; and the triumph is all the greater that the central figure, whose biography is being written, remains central throughout, and is clearly seen to have been worthy of so high a calling. It is a great triumph, we say, that from first to last Robertson SMITH is revealed as he was, possessed with a mighty passion for truth, utterly unable to comprehend why other men were not similarly possessed, unhesitatingly accusing those of wanton wickedness who were only guilty of desperate dullness.

The case arose, as most of the world is aware,

out of the article 'Bible' which SMITH contributed to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It was the first clear case of the application of the historical method to the study of the Book of books. In the inspiration of the Bible SMITH was probably a simpler and more child-like believer than any of his accusers. But we now see that the method which he used—he did not advocate it, he simply used it, having come to the conclusion that no other method was applicable—was not merely different from the older theological method of study, but destructive of it. By the older method you take Deuteronomy as it stands and by judicious selection of texts prove your doctrine, not for a moment doubting that your text can be relied upon when once you have ascertained its meaning. That is the theological method. By the historical method you test the texts themselves. You ask where they came from, who was their author, what was their environment and their pedigree. And while you are much concerned to discover their actual meaning, you count it no part of your business to construct a theological dogma out of them, far less a complete system of theology. The men who opposed SMITH honestly believed that they were fighting for their religion; they were only fighting for a method of study in which they had been brought up and which had already served its purpose.

Robertson SMITH's great antagonist is usually understood to have been Principal RAINY. And it was expected that the biography would reveal Principal RAINY in a very unattractive light. It does nothing of the kind. There are no revelations of the ways of an ecclesiastical tactician that were not already made in RAINY's own Life. There is nothing said, even by Robertson SMITH himself, in reproof of RAINY so severe as the saying which is quoted from RAINY's Life about his Jesuitism,

All this will be a surprise, and surely a welcome surprise, to the readers of SMITH's biography.

RAINY actually rises in our estimation. The act by which he put an end to the SMITH case was the act of an autocrat. But there are occasions in the history of the world when only an autocratic act is applicable. The General Assembly of 1881 had met to depose SMITH. Of that probably not a member of it was in doubt. RAINY certainly was in no doubt. But how was SMITH to be deposed? If he was to be deposed after the Assembly had declared that his method of studying Scripture was wrong, a yoke would have been put upon the neck of the Free Church which its members would soon have found themselves unable to bear. Dr. RAINY moved a motion that Robertson SMITH should simply be deposed, and by 423 votes against 245 the Assembly passed his motion.

Robertson SMITH suffered. He did not suffer in pocket or in reputation; but he suffered. Of that there is no doubt. He loved the Free Church with a passion of devotion, and he counted himself cast out from its communion. But this also has come to pass through the delay in publishing the biography, that we now see how much greater Robertson SMITH was by having to suffer these things. His opponents pointed out that he did not take his reverse in a chastened spirit, and they looked upon that as evidence that he deserved it. But his greatness did not depend upon the spirit in which he accepted the things that happened to him; it depended upon the magnitude of the work he had been called to do and the sincerity with which he had given himself to it.

The after life was uneventful. He was elected to a Fellowship in Christ's College, Cambridge, to the Adams Chair of Arabic, and even to the charge of the University Library. Scholars in all departments of study and in all civilized countries of the world were his correspondents. In the University itself he obtained a pre-eminence in scholarship which no one thought of disputing. It is true that these things did not satisfy him;



but the reader of this biography will not think the less of Robertson SMITH for that. He had given his heart once; he had given it to that Church to which he believed God was speak-

ing through him as clearly as He had spoken to the ancient Jewish Church through the prophets; and when the disappointment came he was not the man to stay himself upon fellowships or flattery.

## Positive Theological Research in Germany.

BY DR. PAUL FEINE, PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HALLE-WITTENBERG.

THE esteemed editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES has, as the result of a letter which I was commissioned by some of my colleagues to send him, requested me to arrange for an account of the work of the so-called Modern Positive Theology in Germany being written for his readers. As my colleagues, whom I asked to do me this service, are at present fully occupied in other directions, I shall attempt to step into the breach myself.

There is something unsatisfactory in separating the various theological tendencies and reporting on only one part of theological research. For we must realize clearly that theological learning is a whole, a unit. The fact that different currents declare themselves within it constitutes its wealth and its progress. It is the mutual discussion of the various views and the comprehensive working out of the reasons for one or the other conception that give an impetus to theological study. To speak quite frankly, we regard it as a blessing that God has ordained that scientific theology should proceed in this way.

But the fact remains that in theological research sometimes the one and sometimes the other branch presses forward with greater energy. In German theology at the present day a remarkable swing of the pendulum is taking place, inasmuch as, on the part of positive theology in particular, important works have been completed, greater undertakings are being planned, and new and promising lines of thought have been opened up. In that fact we have undoubtedly a good reason for now giving a summary account of the work of positive theology; and all the more so because such an account will at the same time be a discussion of the results of the research of liberal or radical thinkers. On account of the close connexion between English and German theology, this movement in Germany is sure to awaken interest in

England. Yet it would seem that, in the sphere of English theological research up to the present day, the works of the liberal rather than of the positive theologians have become known.

I have singled out the department of Old and New Testament Study, as well as of Systematic Theology, since to these fields the above refers in a special degree.

### I.

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT.

About thirty years ago the conception of Old Testament literature and religious history held by J. Wellhausen and his followers began to gain supremacy. It was founded upon detailed critical investigations of sources, and took up, in regard to the history of religion, an evolutionary standpoint. With the fixing of the date of the Pentateuchal sources at a relatively late time, it was considered that a firm basis had been gained for the dating of the contents of these documents and for the analysis of the religious development discovered in them. But this made necessary a construction of the history of Israel differing essentially from the traditional one. The low religious notions of primitive peoples were used as the standard for judging the original form of the Israelitish religion. It was maintained that the Israelites, like all Semites, were people of the desert, and that desert races make no advance in civilization even in thousands of years. So the Patriarchs were held to be adherents of animism and fetishism. Even at the time of the Bedouin life, the foundation of religious and separate national development was laid by Moses; but there was as yet no question of real monotheism, of a moral idea of God, of any connexion between the new national religion of the people and the religions of the neighbouring races, the Babylonians and the Egyptians, or of