
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.

THERE is no department of study in which women come short so conspicuously as in the study of the Bible. We need not search for reasons. One reason may possibly be sufficient. They have not had to study the Bible professionally. In other words, they have not had the training. But there it is. No one takes up a volume of exposition by a woman with the least expectation of enlightenment.

Then comes the exception. The exception tests the rule. If there is one exception, may there not be more than one? It bids us see if we ought not to withdraw the rule. We shall not withdraw it yet. But the exception is unmistakable. Mrs. Hugh JONES is an expositor. Her *Studies in Love and Daring* (Rider; 3s. 6d. net) compel us to acknowledge insight. They are expository sermons on passages of the New Testament, and might have been preached to edification.

The position of Mary Magdalene is touched. She is distinguished from Mary of Bethany and from 'the woman that was a sinner.' She is distinguished without elaborate argument, with just the expositor's note of surprise that she should ever have been identified with either. Then the question is considered why Jesus said to her, 'Touch me not.'

He did not say this to Thomas. He said to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side.' To Mary He said, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father.' But He was not yet ascended to the Father when He said to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy hand.' Why did He treat the one so differently from the other?

Mrs. JONES reminds us that Mary was subject to obsessions. She had been 'possessed.' Now those who are subject to obsessions are apt to be dependent upon others. They crave support. If they have been delivered they are sure to cling to their deliverer. And there may be little harm in that, as long as they have their deliverer to cling to. But if their deliverer is about to leave them, they must be taught to stand alone. Jesus was about to leave Mary and ascend to the Father. Her will must be strengthened. She must be taught to stand alone. 'Touch me not,' He says. And the meaning no doubt is, 'Do not cling to me.'

Thomas is different. And he is differently treated. His emotions are strong, but they are slow to move. His head runs before, his heart follows after. He has to believe that Jesus has risen before he can say, 'My Lord and my God!' And belief is always hard put to it when it has first to conquer the intellect. Mary had no difficulty in believing that He 'is risen indeed.' Thomas's slower imagination has to be stimulated. Nothing but the physical

contact will suffice to bring him to his knees. There was danger in physical contact for Mary; there is none for him.

But a difficulty is left. Jesus said to Mary, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father.' The difficulty is in that word 'for.' It seems to mean, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to the Father: but after I am ascended you may touch me.' And is not that just what it does mean? When He is ascended to the Father she may cling to Him as she will. She cannot cling too much. For then the contact will be spiritual. Our confidence in the flesh is a false confidence, even our confidence in the flesh of Jesus. 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh,' says St. Paul, 'yet now we know him so no more.'

One thing remains. How is Mary's character to be braced? By laying responsibility on her. By giving her work to do. By sending her to cheer and brace others. 'But go to my brethren, and say unto them.' It was so also with that other out of whom certain devils were cast, and who 'besought Jesus that he might be with him.' The word was, 'Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee.'

The difficulties of Prayer are due to thinking. When we pray they vanish. But the remedy is not to pray without thinking. If it is necessary that we should throw our heart and our will into prayer, it is just as necessary that we should throw our mind into it. The remedy is in thinking aright.

The difficulties about prayer are greatest when the prayer is intercessory. Then thinking seems to make them simply insurmountable. In praying for ourselves we can always fall back upon the consolation that if we get nothing else we at least get some quietness of spirit. But what can our prayers do for others? If they do not pray for themselves, what good can our praying for them do? It is there especially that we need to think aright.

And it is easier to think aright about intercessory prayer now than it used to be. With all their contempt for prayer—and it must be admitted that very many scientific men still express the utmost measure of contempt for it—with all that, we say, men of science have helped us much to pray for others. Their scientific discoveries have helped us.

They have proved, for one thing, that all men belong to one family. That is the first principle of intercessory prayer. We knew, before Science spoke, that God had 'made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.' Because 'the life was the light of *men*,' because the Divine Spirit had made mankind the instrument of His personal self-expression, we knew that there was no nation and no man outside the denomination 'humanity.' We had already been using the word 'humanity' so as to cover all the races of men, and even to express the brotherhood which one man and one race of men bears to another. Still it is a welcome encouragement to us, as we aim at right thinking about prayer, to be told that science pronounces all the races of men to belong to one family.

The Rev. A. H. McNeile, D.D., Fellow and Dean of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, has written a book on *Self-Training in Prayer* (Heffer; 1s. 3d. net). He accepts the scientific discovery of the oneness of mankind. But he sees that it does not lead scientific men to intercession. Why does it not? Because it is an abstraction. It is a figure of speech. If it is to be made use of in the interests of intercessory prayer it must be changed from an abstraction or figure of speech into a clear-cut and appealing fact. And the best way to do that, says Dr. McNeile, is to study what we call *Influence*.

Dr. McNeile is much attracted by that word 'influence.' Derived from the same word as 'influx,' it designates a 'pouring or flowing in.' Of course the pouring or flowing in is metaphorical. But it is an extremely good metaphor. Influence

is the pouring in of personality into personality. It is the interpenetration of souls.

'An officer is in a trench with his men, and the order comes to make a charge. He leads the way with the courage of a true man, shouts a rousing word of encouragement, and pours courage into the whole of his company. But think what that means. Courage is not an unreal abstraction, but, on the other hand, it is not a thing in itself with an existence separate from the officer. It is *his* courage which he pours into them, an ingredient of the person flowing into other persons. May we not say that Influence, looked at in this way, becomes a clear-cut and appealing fact?'

'Courage does not *leave* the officer. On the contrary his courage grows, because in rousing his men to courage, he in turn receives theirs poured into him. It is a mutual influx of personalities. But I think we may go further, and say that all the soldiers who are fighting bravely in Europe and Asia and Africa, whether of the allies or of the enemy, are severally items in one complex system of Influence. The mutual give-and-take of courage extends over three continents. And more than that, it extends to thousands who are not fighting: the courage of the wounded, the courage of those who are maimed for life, the courage of prisoners of war, and the courage of multitudes of men and women who are bravely bearing sorrow, anxiety, and strain. It is one communion and fellowship of courageous souls, every one of whom is poured into all the others.'

That is one example, one minute specimen, of influence. Two things are characteristic of it; they are characteristic of every kind of influence. One is that it does not diminish in the process. The other is that there are no limits to the extent of its flow.

There are no limits to the extent of its flow. 'All mankind,' says Dr. McNeile, 'all mankind, past and present, form one communion and fellowship, one inconceivably complex system of interpenetration.' If that is so, how great is the possibility of a single person's will. It is a frightening thought to Dr. McNeile—the immeasurable responsibility of every soul in its effects upon the whole of mankind. He quotes a parallel from the physical universe. He quotes from a paper entitled *The Modern Conception of the Universe*, by Dr. G. F. C. Searle. 'The effects of a single act of free-will extend through the whole of space, and will last as long as the present order continues. Thus the voluntary motion of a man's hand not only affects the motion of the earth by a calculable amount, but also the motions of the sun and of the remotest stars, and the motions of all these bodies will differ for the rest of time from the motions they would have had if the man had not moved his hand.'

It is a frightening thought. It is also extraordinarily humbling, when it is once clearly grasped. The words I and Me begin to be a little less clear-cut and obtrusive. We begin to see that it is not only proud but also very silly to lay so much stress on our individual Self, when we realize that the soul of each of us is conditioned, to so enormous an extent, by the interplay of all souls.

The soul of each of us is conditioned, *and conditions*. That is the secret—at least it is one secret—of intercessory prayer. But it must be thought out before it will make prayer easier. It is not easy to grasp, simply because we always live in it. Dr. McNeile advises a man, if he would excel in prayer, 'to make a frequent and diligent practice of concentrating himself upon it, until it emerges and takes shape as one of the most compelling objects of his thought.'

Professor James Hope Moulton has now published the lectures on the New Testament which he delivered at Northfield in August 1914. There were five lectures in all, and they are all here, together with a harmonious sermon. The title brings us into touch with the lecturer's subject—*From*

Egyptian Rubbish-Heaps (Kelly; 2s. 6d. net). One of the lectures is on Paul.

Is there anything new to be said about Paul? If there is not, Professor MOULTON would not have lectured on him. There is something new to be said even about his personal appearance.

What has been said before about Paul's personal appearance? It has been said that he was a little man, with meeting eyebrows, with a large nose and bald head and bow legs, but strongly built and full of grace. It is in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* that that is said of him. Do you believe it? Sir William RAMSAY believes it. And there is something to be said in its favour. Paul himself declares that his bodily presence was considered weak, or at least that his enemies said so. But Professor MOULTON does not believe it.

There are two considerations against it. Both are found in the Book of Acts. First there is that scene at Lystra, recorded in the fourteenth chapter. Paul and Barnabas arrived at this little town of Lycaonia, and were taken for gods. For, once upon a time, as the local legend ran, Zeus, the king of the gods, and Hermes, their messenger, had come down to earth in the likeness of men and had not been recognized. The people of Lystra were not to be caught napping again. Clearly these were gods, for they had performed a miracle. And they proceeded at once to offer sacrifice to them, calling Barnabas Zeus, and Paul Hermes.

Now the Lycaonians had their own ideas about the outward aspect of the gods. They may not have attained to that conception of beauty which has made the statues of the Athenian gods the very ideal of beauty for all time. But they had their ideas, and their gods were assuredly beautiful. It is simply impossible, so it seems to Professor MOULTON, that the people of Lystra could have taken Paul for Hermes if he had been—what do the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* say?—a little man with meeting eyebrows, a large nose, a bald head, and bow legs.

That is the first consideration. The second is not so evident and not quite so conclusive. It is found in a later chapter.

Paul had been seized by the Jewish mob. They were proceeding to do with him as he had once seen them do with Stephen. But Claudius Lysias sent his soldiers, just in the nick of time, and took him by force out of their hands. The soldiers brought him into the citadel. They proceeded at once to prepare him for flogging. The Apostle had apparently been rescued from one torture to go through another. But the moment that he spoke the scene was changed. Lysias was ready for any cruelty before. He is now filled with anxiety lest he has already gone too far.

We know the reason for the change. Lysias had mistaken Paul for a brigand. He had mistaken him for a particular brigand. That brigand was much 'wanted by the police.' The chief captain believed that he had caught him. If he had, it would be a feather in his cap. When he discovered his mistake, and found that Paul was a Roman, he was not only disappointed, he was afraid; for he had gone so far as to throw him into chains without a legal trial. But if Paul was a little man with meeting eyebrows, and all the rest of it, how could the chief captain mistake him for a brigand? Who ever heard of a horde of cut-throats following a little bald man with bow legs? Professor MOULTON does not believe it.

But whether Paul was little or big, how could Claudius Lysias mistake him for the leader of a band of robbers? Professor MOULTON puts that question. He has never heard it put before. Yet it is important. Claudius Lysias was no fool. Surely there was something about the Apostle that suggested the robber. Professor MOULTON believes that there was. The rubbish-heaps of Egypt have given him the answer to his question.

In the Egyptian rubbish-heaps have been found many official papers containing a man's name and his personal description. Now if a man whose personal description is to be given has anything about him by which he can be easily identified, that feature or mark must not be omitted. A scar, for example. It is an extraordinary thing, says Dr. MOULTON, how often a scar is mentioned in these official documents. Well, a robber is wanted. A price is probably lying on his head. Claudius Lysias looked at Paul as he was being roughly handled by the multitude, and he thought he had found him. The personal description of the brigand would be circulated everywhere. Being a brigand he would have scars, probably not a few, on his person. Paul had scars also.

Go back to the fourteenth chapter of the Acts. When the people of Lystra were persuaded that the two apostles were men, and when they had a visit from Jews of Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded them further that they were dangerous men, 'they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.' Writing to the Galatians—Dr. MOULTON holds by the South Galatian theory—writing to the Galatians, who included the people of Lystra, Paul recalled that stoning. It had left its marks upon him. He said, 'From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus.' The chief captain saw the marks and leapt to the conclusion that this was the outlaw whom the Roman magistrates were in search of.

Before leaving Paul's personal appearance, Professor MOULTON has something to say about the 'thorn in the flesh.' He has no new theory to offer. He has no choice to suggest among the rival theories in existence. Nevertheless he has two things to say about the 'thorn in the flesh,' and they are both worth saying.

The first is that the Revisers made a mistake when they suggested 'stake' in their margin. Dr. MOULTON is very tender with the New Testament Revisers. Was not his father, *venerabile nomen*, one of them? And so he says that thirty years ago no one could be blamed for suggesting 'stake' as a possible alternative for 'thorn.' For, in the barbarous East, death by impaling, that is, by having a stake thrust right through the body, was a common form of punishment. And the word which Paul uses does mean 'stake' in classical Greek.

Yet the Revisers were wrong. Their suggestion, says Dr. MOULTON, 'we are now able to deny with confidence, and the margin had better disappear.' For we have a very illiterate papyrus in which the word most clearly means 'splinter.' In medical writers it is used for a tiny lancet. Any connexion with size must therefore have disappeared from it. And the translation 'thorn,' with its small irritating insistence, is probably just the Apostle's meaning.

Professor MOULTON has another remark to make about the 'thorn in the flesh,' and this time he gives the Revisers all the credit. 'We hear Paul saying, "Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in weakness." Sometimes I think that that little change—"He *hath* said"—is one of the gems among the innumerable beauties of the Revised Version, suggesting, as it does, a message realized once for all, but repeating itself daily as the "thorn" pricks him, and bringing a new joy with every stab of pain.'

With that Dr. MOULTON passes from the person of Paul to his writings. He passes to the Epistle to the Ephesians, on which he has something to say that is quite new and quite significant.

There was a time, he reminds us, when only four Epistles were allowed to Paul by the more advanced critics. Now 'there is nobody with a reputation to lose who would dream of allowing us less than eight, and, as to the rest, even they are in a better

position than in times past.' But the Epistle to the Ephesians is still in dispute.

Why is it in dispute? Not because it is evidently a circular letter and not addressed to any Church in particular. No doubt the words of the address are, 'To the saints which are at Ephesus.' But the words 'at Ephesus' are left out of the very best manuscripts. The probability is that a copy was made of the letter for each of the Churches to which it was sent, and each Church got its own name inserted in its own copy. That the copy belonging to the Ephesians should be the one transmitted is the most natural thing to occur. But, however that may be, that is not the reason why men deny that the Epistle to the Ephesians was written by Paul.

Nor is it because its language is different from the language of the other Epistles. It is different. The differences are undeniable. And hitherto they have been very puzzling, very puzzling to everybody. There are what is called 'Semitisms' in it. That is to say, there are traces in it of very close translations or recollections from Semitic language, translations or recollections so close that they cannot properly be called Greek at all. And there are no Semitisms in any other Epistle attributed to Paul. Still, it is not the language of the Epistle to the Ephesians that has been the chief factor in the denial of its Pauline authorship. It is the extraordinary likeness between it and the Epistle to the Colossians.

This is Professor MOULTON's explanation. Paul wrote a letter to the Colossians. He saw the necessity of writing at the same time to the other Churches of the Lycus valley. One letter would do for them all. It could be sent round from Church to Church, and each Church could keep a copy if it chose. But the conditions in Colossæ were particularly dangerous and needed careful handling. The Apostle decided to write the letter to the Colossians himself, and then let Timothy either turn it into a circular letter which would be suitable for all the Churches in the valley, or write a letter himself out of his recollections of Paul's oral discourses.

Dr. MOULTON suggests Timothy as the writer of the circular letter. Why Timothy? Because that would account for the Semitisms. 'I suggest Timothy especially because we read of him that "from a babe" he was steeped in the sacred writings; and he is the one of whom we can easily believe biblical phraseology would come naturally from his lips, so that he would easily drop into "Semitisms." Paul was equally steeped in these sacred writings, but it does not follow that every man who knows his Bible will use biblical phrases in his writings. Paul quoted the Bible, but he did not let it mould his style to any appreciable extent; while Timothy may well have let biblical phraseology colour his ordinary writing.'

What has put the idea into Dr. MOULTON's head? It is something that has been found in the Egyptian rubbish-heaps. He assumes, you see, that the likeness between Ephesians and Colossians is due to their being written at the same time, Colossians by Paul himself, and Ephesians by a friend, most likely Timothy, who reported from memory an oral discourse of the Apostle. Now two letters have been found among the papyri which stand to one another very much in the same relation. Their date is 168 B.C.

'A man having a wife and child had been in very serious money difficulties, and, to save himself from further trouble, he promptly went into "retreat" in a monastery. Perhaps you may think that the monastery suggests Christianity, but the date is B.C., and monasticism is in fact not a Christian institution at all, but much older. (Some of us think that there is not much Christianity in it at the best of times!) In the Serapeum, the temple of the god Serapis, at Memphis, there used to be from time to time companies of temporary monks, who went there into retreat and stayed for a fixed period. These letters are written after the

retreat has come to an end. Most of the people have gone home, but this man has not. He knows that he will find things uncomfortable at home, and so he determines to be very religious and stay. When his poor wife knew the retreat was over, she wrote this touching letter: "Isias to Hephaestion her brother, greeting:" (*Brother* here means husband) "If you are well and everything else goes with you reasonably, it would be as I perpetually pray the gods. I myself am in good health and the child and all in the house."

'Then the good woman adds words between the lines, "making mention of you continually."

'You will find that phrase in Rom. i. 9, in Eph. i. 16, and so on. It was a formula of writing which was used, you see, among the heathen, and which Paul took up.

'And then her letter proceeds.

'"When I received from Horus your letter in which you explained that you were in retreat in the Serapeum at Memphis, I immediately gave thanks to the gods that you were well, but that you did not return when all the others who were shut up returned distresses me; for in view of having piloted myself and your child through such a crisis, and having come to the last extremity because of the high price of corn, thinking that now at last your return would give me some relief, you have never even thought of returning nor sparing a look for our helpless state. While you were still at home I went altogether short, not to mention how long time has passed since, and such hard times, and you having sent nothing. But now that Horus, who has delivered your letter, has told us about your having been set free from the retreat, I am altogether distressed. And your mother, too, is in great trouble about it. I entreat you for her sake and for ours to return to the city, unless, indeed, something most important is keeping you. Remember to take good care of yourself and be in good health. Good-bye. July 24, 168 B.C."

'This letter was found in the temple. No doubt he left it behind in his hurry when he went home! From the same place comes this second letter, dated on the same day—from his brother. I think you will agree as you hear it that the wife and the brother-in-law had been having a conversation in which they have made up together the pleas they will urge in separate letters. "Dionysius to his brother Hephaestion, greeting: If you are well and other things suit you reasonably, it would be as I perpetually pray to the gods. I myself am well, also Eudaemonis and the children and Isias and your children, and all in the house. When I received your letter explaining that you had been brought safely out of great dangers and were in retreat, I rendered thanks to the gods that you were well, but I wished you had returned and come to town as Conon and all the others who were shut up, that Isias, who when your child had been in the utmost danger had done everything to pull him safely through, and had suffered such hard times in addition, might at last get a little breathing space by seeing you. For it is altogether needless for you to stay in seclusion until you can make something and bring it. Every one when he has pulled safely out of danger tries to get home quickly and greet his wife and his children and his friends. So please try quickly to return, unless something most important is keeping you. Take good care of your bodily health. Good-bye. July 24."'

In the end of his lecture Professor MOULTON touches upon another matter concerning Paul. We shall just touch it also.

Had Paul ever seen the Lord Jesus in the flesh? He saw Him on the way to Damascus, and he never forgot the Face which thrust itself that day between him and his sinfulness. Had he seen Him before that great day? The answer will introduce some things which concern the criticism of the Gospels.

In the first place, then, we have Paul's own words in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more.' Do these words

mean that he had seen Jesus while He was upon earth? The best discussion, Dr. MOULTON thinks, is that of Johannes WEISS, in his *Paul and Jesus*. WEISS comes to the conclusion that Paul had seen Jesus. And Dr. MOULTON agrees. For, whatever these words mean, we know that Paul was in Jerusalem before the Passion, when he studied under Gamaliel. We know also that he was there very soon after; for the story of Acts implies it. It may be that between these times he had gone back to Tarsus. But it is at least as easy to believe that he never left Jerusalem.

Is there no other evidence? Yes, there is evidence, Dr. MOULTON believes, in the Gospel according to Luke. Turn to Luke's story of the Passion. There are several things there which are not contained in Mark. Where did Luke find them? Dr. MOULTON believes that he obtained them from Paul. For there are traces in Paul's own words that he had first-hand information about events in the life of Jesus which would be of supreme value to a historian like Luke.

There is his reference to divorce in the seventh chapter of First Corinthians. There he speaks of a woman divorcing her husband. That is extraordinary. No woman could divorce her husband in those days. Where did Paul get the reference? and what made him use it? Dr. MOULTON believes that he got it from Jesus.

One day Jesus was visited by a deputation from Jerusalem. They wanted a declaration on divorce. Why? Suppose He had said that a man may divorce his wife, they would have told Him that He agreed with Hillel. Suppose He had said that a man must not divorce his wife, they would have said that He was of the school of Shammai. But if He gave them a decision about a woman divorcing her husband, then they would have Him. For what an ordinary woman could not do could be done by a princess. Herodias had actually divorced her husband. And 'that fox' was not far away. Jesus gave them a decision, and Paul never forgot it. For Dr. MOULTON believes that Paul was on that very deputation.

Again, Paul speaks of 'a house made with hands.' Where did he obtain that significant expression? Why not at the trial of Jesus before Caiaphas? If he was present he heard the false witnesses declare that He had said, 'I am able to destroy this house which is made with hands, and in three days raise another made without hands.'

'Finally, there is that tremendous saying of Jesus in the Garden, reported by Luke alone. He protested against arrest, telling them He was daily in the temple and they had never laid hands on Him. "But," He said, "this is your hour, and the authority of darkness." Darkness may enshroud the Prince of the Light, in order that darkness may be expelled for ever from the world which He came to redeem. With that word He relapses into awful silence. We meet with that phrase again in the Epistle to the Colossians, where Paul says, "Who hath delivered us out of the authority of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love."'