

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

IT has been difficult lately for some of us, perhaps for many of us, to receive a message from the Quakers. We must get over that. We are getting over it. The Swarthmore Lecture is a Quaker foundation. The lecturer for 1917 was the Quaker, William LITTLEBOY. He lectured on *The Day of our Visitation* (Headley; 1s. net). He lectured powerfully on an urgent theme. We must not pass him by.

His theme is the Second Advent. Much is made in the New Testament of Christ's Second Advent. Is there anything in all the range of Christian doctrine that we are now making so little of? A very small and vanishing band of apologists is still calculating dates and counting numbers. The vast majority see nothing in it. This certainly, they say, criticism has accomplished, whatever be the worth of the accomplishment. It has shown that the expectation of the Second Coming was a false expectation.

The Quakers have taken to the criticism of the Bible beyond all other Christian communities. Mr. LITTLEBOY is a critic. He has read freely in the multitudinous literature of 'Apocalyptic' of our day. He has read sympathetically. It is extremely improbable that he will look for the Parousia with the eyes of a millenarian. The astonishing thing is that he touches the subject at

all. He touches it because he has found truth in the promise of Christ's coming, truth that he dare not withhold from his own people or from us.

This first—that we may be looking for wholly mistaken signs of His coming. When He came to His own His own received Him not. They were looking for Him, but they did not know Him because they were looking for Him in a wholly mistaken way. This is one of the most melancholy elements in the most melancholy event of history. 'Long centuries of expectation, of hope becoming ever more eager—a hope that upheld the Hebrew nation through cycles of suffering and disappointment; an expectation of the coming of a Deliverer who should establish the Kingdom of God on earth, whose divine authority should right the wrongs of ages and restore the nation to all, and more than all, its ancient glory; and then the failure to recognize the Deliverer when at length He came; and a blindness which, beginning with criticism, ended in rejection and the Cross.' Is there any historical situation so amazing?

It is easy for us to condemn the Jews. It is better to consider them. The prophecies and the promises seemed to point to an altogether different kind of Messiah. It is true, they had the one great prophecy of the Suffering Servant. This prophecy is to us highly illuminating, and Jesus

took it as the clue to His mission. But the Jews did not receive the Suffering Servant as messianic. And when He came, and they fulfilled the prophecy by making a Sufferer of Him, it never occurred to them that there was any connexion between them. It did not occur even to His disciples. It was only when He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead that they understood. And they alone understood because they alone clung to His memory through personal affection. We may wonder that the Jews did not all love the Highest when they saw Him. We need not wonder that they did not recognize the Messiah.

Will we recognize Him when He comes again? Not if we do not look for His coming. The greater number do not any longer look for His coming. They say He has come already. He is always coming. He comes in every event that occurs to us, in every step in life we are led to take. We have only to open our eyes to see Him come.

In the rainy gloom of July nights on the thundering chariot of clouds He comes, comes, ever comes.

In sorrow after sorrow it is His steps that press upon my heart.

'Is that the Second Advent? It is not the Second Advent of the Synoptists or St. Paul. But it is said to be the Second Advent of St. John. Mr. LITTLEBOY quotes from Dr. Edwin Abbott. That great mystic, called St. John, says Dr. Abbott, 'seems to be impatient of materialistic details—and especially of any that bordered on the theatrical—about the Lord's coming in a conquering, or royal, or imperial character; preferring to think of Him as entering into the heart of each believer, as into a friendly guest-chamber, so that the friend shall sup with Him and He with the friend.'

Mr. LITTLEBOY is as ready as Dr. Abbott to distinguish between one eyangelist and another.

That is true, he says. It is true as far as it goes. It is true for St. John. But it does not exhaust the promise of His coming. There is one thing especially which is prominent in the promise, which cannot be taken out of it, and that interpretation does not meet it. That interpretation makes the Coming to be by gradual steps and slow. But the Coming is to be with catastrophe.

Now there is no idea that is more repugnant to the modern mind than the idea of catastrophe. Darwin has dismissed it; and the modern mind, whether it is 'critical' or not, is certainly Darwinian. Mr. LITTLEBOY is himself a Darwinian. He feels the repugnance. He feels that it is not God's way to intervene in the affairs of men, that He works by the slow and methodical process of evolution, and that it is something like a fool's hope to look for His hand in the unexpected and unparalleled event.

But there is the promise. It is not to be set aside so easily. He takes his feeling to task. Is it true, he asks, that there are no new departures in God's leading of men? Does He never intervene to vary the even working of evolutionary forces?

The evolutionist himself admits some such intervention even in material things. 'An expert, to whom I am indebted for several remarkable illustrations of this phenomenon, writes: "The occurrence of such mutations, which have been observed in a good number of cases now, has led many biologists to suppose that evolution does not only take place by infinitesimal gradations, but sometimes at least by distinct steps, some large and others small."'

Mr. LITTLEBOY finds such intervention in history. His example is China; and China is a better example now than when he delivered his lecture. He might have chosen Russia.

But he has another historical example, and it is

more impressive than the revolutions in China or Russia. The first advent of Christ was such an intervention. That advent introduced a new factor into the process of human development. Christ cannot be accounted for on the lines of evolution. Nor can evolution account for the change which the coming of Christ made in the lives of His disciples. Within a few weeks it 'transformed the "unlearned and ignorant" Galileans who forsook their Lord in His hour of trial into heroes who faced unflinchingly the wrath and cruelty of men.'

Mr. LITTLEBOY is entitled to the use of another example. It is the example of the 'First Publishers of Truth' in his own Society. He quotes from Dr. Rufus Jones: 'Their experience was attended by a great release of energy, and the formation of vastly enhanced personality. Men, formerly somewhat below the normal in physical stamina, became capable of tasks quite beyond the ordinary limits of physical effort, and were able to endure a régime of organised and unorganised persecution which almost passes the belief of this age of undisturbed toleration. But more striking than this heightened power of endurance was the heightened power of mind and spirit which the movement reveals. Persons who had occupied only the most humble stations in life, unschooled in books and unpractised in affairs, by some sudden alchemy became the exponents of a new message and conception of life, the powerful and convincing preachers of a fresh word of truth, the champions of new moral and social ideals, and the organisers of a unique Christian Society.'

Last of all, Mr. LITTLEBOY takes the example of his own and his friends' experience. 'Have there not been in the personal experience of some amongst ourselves also spiritual awakenings—cataclysms, which we can only regard as divine interventions for our salvation?'

Is it difficult to see what he is driving at? He is driving at the war. That is the catastrophe of

our day. That is the direction in which we are to look for the coming of the Son of Man.

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A number of essays on 'Social Reconstruction after the War,' by various writers, have been gathered into one volume by Miss Lucy GARDNER (Bell; 3s. net). The title of the volume, *The Hope for Society*, is the title of the first essay in it. And the author of the first essay is the Bishop of Oxford.

There are optimists and pessimists by temperament, and there are optimists and pessimists by war. The Bishop of Oxford has been made a pessimist by war. And he thinks it possible that this subject, 'The Hope for Society,' was given him deliberately. He has been told so 'by a rather malevolent friend.' It was given him, he thinks, as a tonic for himself. And so, as 'the best sermons a man preaches are those he preaches against himself,' he has accepted the subject and preached the sermon.

Did we say that Dr. GORE had been made a pessimist by the war? Ah, he was something of a pessimist before it. Even then he was conscious 'how desperately wrong the constitution of society was.' He found himself up against great interests, political, social, economic—great interests, with money and power behind them, and they were all selfishly carried on for the benefit of the few. Worse than that, he found that the many, the great multitude of men and women who had everything to gain by opposing these interests, did not oppose them, or did not oppose them seriously. There was discontent in the multitude, but there was 'astonishingly little driving power.'

Was that enough to make a man a pessimist? Dr. GORE does not think so now. For he goes back in imagination to the Gospels. 'There you have Our Lord Jesus Christ Who rides out because of the word of truth, and meekness, and righteousness, a great warrior, and He comes up against the

great interests. That is what makes the thrilling interest of the drama, there as it is unfolded in those Gospels. He comes up against the religious, the ecclesiastical interest, the Scribes and Pharisees. It is a tremendous claim that He makes upon them, the claim that they who are the authorized exponents and representatives of the true religion in the midst of the people of God, shall be content to be told by one who in their eyes is the merest layman that they are to think over again about the real meaning of their religion, over again from the very beginning. It is a tremendous claim to make upon people who stand in that position—the professors and officers of the established religion.

And what success had He? He had no success. The truth is that there is 'hardly an instance in the history of mankind in which the ecclesiastical interest, the religious interest, has stood that test and been equal to that claim—has had the grace to respond to it by anything that you could call a thorough and wholehearted willingness to learn.'

But the ecclesiastical was only one of the interests that Jesus found Himself up against. There was the political interest. The Sadducean families were in office in Jerusalem, and they commanded a powerful majority in the Jewish House of Commons of those days. Their motto was, No Change. Whatever you do, do not disturb the balance of the delicate political situation. For if you do, the Romans may come and take away our place and nation. 'I feel it constantly,' says the Bishop of Oxford, 'that it would not be at all difficult to write the leading articles in the *Daily Sadducee* or the *Weekly Pharisee*.'

And then there was the financial interest. 'Jerusalem was a place, like Benares of India, which lived wholly on pilgrimages. The pilgrims came to make sacrifice and they must buy their sacrifices, and to buy them they must change their money from the current money into the Hebrew money. It was an extraordinarily lucra-

tive business. And if St. John is right, if the Fourth Gospel is right, in telling us that our Lord really cleansed the Temple at the beginning of His ministry rather than at the end of it—and I think that where St. John seems deliberately to correct the synoptic narrative he corrects it rightly—if it was at the beginning rather than at the end, then we understand the significance of this action better.'

All these interests, selfish and powerful, banded themselves together and determined that this voice that was raised against them should be silenced. Ecclesiastical, political, financial—all the great interests behaved then as they have behaved ever since then. They asked no questions. They made no concessions. They simply set themselves to crush out that troublesome and disturbing voice.

But where was the suffering multitude? The common people heard Him gladly. What support did they give Him?

For a time they gave Him the support of their presence. They applauded His successful encounters with the representatives of the interests. They even compelled the interests to go to work warily. 'Not on the feast day,' said the interests, 'lest there be an uproar of the people.' But when the battle closed, the multitude was either wanting or went over to the other side. For they found 'it was something much deeper than political revolution that was being asked of them, even a change of character and temper and outlook, something deep and personal, penetrating to the very roots of their characters and being, that was being asked of them, and that was too much except for a very few.'

Against the great interests of His day Jesus had no success. What then? Did He turn pessimist? The Bishop of Oxford remembers Him and is troubled. How can he, how can any man, become a pessimist because the drink trade is so

powerful, because the Houses of Parliament are so time-serving, because the great ecclesiastical leaders are so timid in our day? It was pitiable, says the Bishop of Oxford, 'to walk about the villages and to feel that the interests stood in the way of anything like thorough reform; and then to feel even more pitiable on the other side the almost total absence of driving power in the people who were suffering most and had most to gain from any change, but whose feelings were only feelings of despair and cynicism, altogether without courage and without driving power.' It was pitiable, but it was not enough to turn a true-hearted follower of Jesus into a pessimist.

Then came the war. It came with new occasions for pessimism, such occasions as the most pessimistic had never dreaded. - Dr. GORE felt the new terror. Before the war 'there were prospects grim and terrible enough to stagger anyone's imagination, but nothing so horrible as what has been actually happening these last two years I suppose did we anticipate.'

Did the new terror bring relief from the old? It did much more than that. When Dr. GORE had time to think, he found that the war had brought about a collapse, and that on the largest scale and in the most startling form, of the old civilization in which the selfish interests were supreme and unassailable. 'The whole of our conceptions of civilization, the fabric of our civilization, national, international, commercial and to a very large extent religious and almost more than all educational, had been built up on a basis of selfishness, and it has collapsed. I do not think that in our memories we ever had a time when people were as a consequence so openminded. It is an immense ground for hope.'

How do books with original ideas in them fare while our minds are so occupied with material things? How will a book fare which breaks out into originality on every hand, and originality of

the most startling character? It is a book by the Rev. John HUNTLEY SKRINE, D.D., once Head Master of Glenalmond. Its title is *The Survival of Jesus* (Constable; 5s. net).

It is a book written with art and man's device. 'Systematic theology?'—that is science. This has all the beauty of variety and suggestion. A 'body of divinity?' This is as ethereal as Ariel. The author introduces himself (by the name of John DESMOND) as a possible, and possibly awful, heretic, albeit he is now a Canon of the Church and lives with his mother in the Cathedral Close.

Lives with his mother—there is much in that. For the mother has to approve of the heresy. At every step of its progress she has to approve, and its progress is not slow. There are others. There is one good friend among the clergy who is good enough also to approve, and even admirably urge him on to deeper depths of heterodoxy. But it is the mother that matters. The introduction of the mother is part of the artistic way in which theological treatises are written in our day. It is artfulness as well as art. For if the mother approves, had we not better hold our hand, we who have to make all our theology acceptable to mothers?

The title is puzzling. 'The *Survival* of Jesus?' It is puzzling to the end. In so artful a book it is puzzling by its artlessness. For the survival of Jesus means that He did not die and rise again. It means, either that He never died, or else that if He died He never rose again from the dead. Between these two the choice of alternatives is never in doubt. The puzzling thing is that the choice should be thrown in our face, as it were, the moment we take the book in our hands.

Jesus did die. "All men are mortal." That is from the manuals of Deductive Logic, an example of a major premiss in a syllogism. "William Smith is a man"; there is a minor

premiss; and the conclusion is logically certain; "William Smith will die."

That is the beginning of the eleventh chapter. But the conclusion is not immediately 'Jesus is a man, therefore Jesus will die.' Dr. SKRINE knows more of the art of writing theologically than that. All men are mortal. William Smith is a man. 'But now . . . What is this chant that comes ringing down the street?

Vive la—vive la—vive la—  
Vive la compagnie.

It is a company of the Dunminster levy swinging past my door. I stand on the step, and from the athlete striding at the head of his men with the tread of a stag, I catch a salute, which elates me. It is a scholar of mine in college days. "Vive la—Long live the company!" do they sing? Who knows if they will live, this company of a hundred lithe English lads. Next week they will be at a finishing school on a Surrey heath or Wiltshire down. Next month (or so they fondly anticipate) they will be in Flanders. The next month—where? Something of them, not they, will be lying two thousand yards away from a hill-side, innocently festooned here and there with patches of shrub and stacks of firewood, out of which Death, that lay in wait there, has opened her mouth upon them and swallowed them up quick into Hades the Unseen.'

So William Smith is here to introduce us to the Descent into Hades. If Jesus 'descended into hell,' He died, did He not? Surely, He died. 'At Weimar in the Goethe house, to which before it was nationalised my uncle Richard was privately admitted, the last of the Goethes, the then owner, showed him among the relics a pencil-sketch left by the poet. A Greek hero in Hades hails a new-comer, to the Shades, a greater than himself (but I am not clear as to the name of either), with the greeting inscribed below, "Bist du auch herunter gekommen?" "Art thou also" (one might paraphrase), "thou, our great one, become weak as

we; art thou become like unto us?" It haunted my uncle, it has haunted me from him. No wonder: it is mortality's heart-cry-out of a deep heart, the soul of one of earth's strong spirits, long since become "weak as they."

Yes, Jesus died. But it is with the Descent into Hell that we are to be engaged at present. 'Jesus went into Hades the Unseen. We say it in our Creed, and of late have been thinking that we ought to unsay it; and since we are afraid to unsay a word which has once been said in a venerated formula, we have disarmed it of meaning; have told our flock that no more is affirmed than the word Hades (the 'not seen') connotes; that Jesus went out of sight; left the body which made Him visible, underwent a real dissolution of flesh and spirit. The mediæval fancy of a "Harrowing of Hell" must be put away as a childish thing. The New Testament's "Preaching to the spirits in prison" was a pious but unauthorised opinion.'

It has been said already in one of these Notes in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES that there was evidence of a recovery by means of the war of the doctrine of the Descent into Hell. Dr. SKRINE has recovered it. 'To me,' he says, 'it seems of late an inevitable truth. It could not be otherwise. We know that Jesus was no longer in that mangled body laid in Joseph's vault (though not all of us remember that we know this when we theologise about the Rising); then where was He? In the "other world," the timeless spaceless world, where eyes could not follow Him; and so we have called it Hades. What was He doing there? He was doing as He had ever done; He was being the Life, making souls to live.'

Whose souls? 'He went into the Unseen. With whom did He meet there, to whom did He give life by His converse there? The men of the past, so we all have told ourselves. There, writes one churchman poet, He is "at large among the dead," He "wakes Abraham to rejoice," His eye

calms "the thronging band of souls," at His side the companion of His crucifixion "waits on His triumph." It is a very great company, a multitude whom no man can number.'

'But are these the whole company whom Jesus meets in the Unseen World, are these all whom there by His being's touch He redeems from spirit's death, or in whom He fulfils the life which a mortal accident cut down as a flower or an un-gospelled ignorance kept shut in the unopened bud? The fate of the untaught or the early perishing of our day, the child of the thieves' quarter or the boy slain in his teens, how is it different from that of the "thronging band," whom our poet compassionates? If it was here, in Hades, that Jesus brought life to Abraham and the fathers of Israel, or to Dymas the robber, will He do less for one of those soldier lads who drops by a German bullet before his soul has had time to decide its choice for life of the narrow way or the broad?'

'Tell not me that this has not been told us, must be left to heaven's uncovenanted mercy. No, there are things of his mortal destiny which a man knows without being told: there is a mercy of heaven not revealed in the Bible but in the heart. By that revelation I know thus much, and on the knowledge I would venture all I hold dear of here and hereafter: in the Unseen World Jesus works atonement on the still unatoned. In that large opportunity of time and room, He can touch to fair issue the arrested life and the spoilt; souls broken in this world He can make whole, souls which it left still to be made He can there make perfect.'

'He descended into Hell.' Well, let us agree about that. How gladly do we agree, if we possibly can. But, when He came up again, what then? Did He who died and went to preach to the spirits in prison rise again from the dead?

Dr. SKRINE says He did. 'He did really show

Himself alive after His Passion.' 'It was no phantom but His very self.' 'All that had been in the Galilean prophet who had died on the Cross, was present in the Upper Room and in Joseph's Garden and on the Emmaus road.' But—

'But Jones of Pearstead, when he came over to "draw" me about Donaldson's heretical pamphlet on the Resurrection (he drew my covert blank, because I had not seen the pamphlet), Jones did not know his own faith correctly, but mixed it up with things doubtful and irrelevant. He played the stalwart apologist, demanding with thump of fist that Christian critics of the New Testament should accept "evidence good enough to convince a jury." Pitiful heavens, a jury! Twelve householders of reputed integrity who are summoned from their counter or oven. Well, if this were a crowner's quest, and these worthies were there to cross-examine witnesses who identified the person of one found dead, and gave evidence of the when and where and what of the discovery they would be competent to fill the panel. But the task is not such. Physical things are physically discerned, as spiritual spiritually. But here are metaphysical things to discern, and what is Jones for a metaphysician? What has to be determined is not an experience of men's corporal organs, eye and ear, or hand, by which similar fleshly organs were verified in the apparitions, but the experience of the most central spiritual consciousness of a Peter or a Thomas, the precise event which happened to their personality. This juror must investigate and report on, not the stimulation received by the optic nerve of the eyewitness, but the psychic stimulus and response to it between the unseen Reality and the total personality of the man which is the true incident denoted by the witness who said, "I have seen the Lord." Now God indeed looketh on the heart. He can measure the fulness and correctness of that heart's response and self-surrender to a Presence which has passed by it, and in passing has stirred it with a life-provoking touch; He can count the beat of the pulse which

is a creature's will energising towards the will of its Creator. God can look on the heart; but your juryman, friend,—can he? If he cannot, what have I to do with his judgment on what the witness really saw and heard? Eye of witness hath not seen nor ear heard the things which belong to our peace, which are the invisible world, and "they which it inherit." That visitation must be known not by this and that sense, not by all the senses, but by these and that which lies behind them all, the spirit in the witness which creates the sensitive flesh to be an organ of knowledge, the personal being of a man who can have intercourse with a personality that is divine.'

The difficulty is with the body. Dr. SKRINE does not deny the resurrection. He denies the physical resurrection. The body went as other bodies go—ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Yet He rose. He appeared to the disciples during forty days. How did He appear? Dr. SKRINE even puts the question in this way: 'With what body did He appear?' For he holds that He appeared to the disciples in a bodily form, in such a form

that He could say to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side.' With what body did He appear?

He appeared—emphasize the word 'appeared' now—He appeared with the same body as He had when He was with them in Galilee, the same body as that with which He went up and down doing good. But it was appearance only. How did He succeed in persuading the disciples that it was real? He succeeded by means of telepathy. The secret is out. This is the meaning of the whole book. Jesus died as we all die. Jesus rose again from the dead as we shall all rise. But Jesus had a telepathic power, a telepathic personality, which no one else has ever had. And in the power of that telepathic personality He appeared to the disciples during those forty days and persuaded them that He had risen from the dead in the body.

Dr. SKRINE does not say that He desired to persuade them that His resurrection was a physical resurrection. That was their mistake.

## The Beatitudes.

BY THE REV. R. H. CHARLES, M.A., D.LITT., D.D., F.B.A., CANON OF WESTMINSTER.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.'—Mt 5<sup>3-5</sup>.

THE Sermon on the Mount opens with a number of beatitudes. How many those are is a subject of controversy. If we reckon them simply as they stand in vv.<sup>3-11</sup>, there are nine. But it is obvious that the last two are duplicates. Thus in v.<sup>10</sup> we have: 'Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake,' and in v.<sup>11</sup>: 'Blessed are ye, when men shall reproach you, and persecute you.' But not only does v.<sup>11</sup> appear to be a duplicate of v.<sup>10</sup>, but there are reasonable grounds for regarding v.<sup>10</sup> as the last of the beatitudes proper, and v.<sup>11</sup> as the beginning of a new section. For in v.<sup>10</sup> the blessed are spoken of in the third person—'blessed are they,'

as in all the preceding beatitudes, whereas in v.<sup>11</sup> there is a sudden and unexpected change into the second person—'blessed are ye,' a change which persists throughout the rest of the Sermon. Also it is to be observed that the promise in v.<sup>10</sup> is the same as in v.<sup>3</sup>, 'for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' These two facts taken together make it probable that the Evangelist intended vv.<sup>3-10</sup> to be taken together as a whole, complete in itself, and vv.<sup>11-12</sup> to be connected with the section that follows in the second person.

This is the first inference we draw, but before we pursue this subject further, it will be helpful if we briefly contrast the methods of the first and third Evangelists. St. Luke definitely states at the outset his intention to write a life of the events