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BISHOP TEMPLE'S NEW BOOK.¹**A REVIEW**

BY THE RIGHT REV. E. A. KNOX, D.D.

NO one who has tried to realize the position held in our Church by the present Bishop of Manchester can afford to be indifferent to a work published by him, even though he modestly describes it as an essay. In scholarship and philosophical ability he is in the front rank not only of ecclesiastics but of English men of learning. His literary and artistic judgment is keen and cultivated. He has the spirit of leadership and great gifts of organization. The development of our Church through its Assembly for good or for evil is the outcome of his hurricane campaign of Life and Liberty. He is the leader of the new movement known as Copec, which is a splendid endeavour to bring Christian principle into Politics and Economics. Youth and health are his. There can be few safer prophecies than that at some date, perhaps not very distant, he will be a successor to his father in Augustine's throne, if it be God's will to spare him. The wide reach of his interests, the practical turn of his forceful intellect, his undaunted courage, and last but by no means least the depth, sincerity and tenderness of his spiritual life present a combination of endowments which it would be difficult to match in the long line of Archbishops of Canterbury. His writings consequently claim the attention of every serious Churchman.

Unfortunately, in his book, as in the Epistles of St. Paul, there are "many things hard to be understood." The present essay is a contribution to "Christo-centric metaphysics," an exposition of "the Christian idea of God, life, and the world." The Bishop writes because he is convinced that "one reason why comparatively few men of the highest ability and education are at present offering themselves for ordination is that the intellectual atmosphere is dominated by a philosophy which leaves no room for a specific Incarnation." He writes for philosophers in the language of Philosophy, and that is not the language of everyday

¹ *Christus Veritas*. An Essay by William Temple, Bishop of Manchester. London: Macmillan & Co., 1924.

life. But those who will face this difficulty and take the pains to understand him will find a rich reward for their labour.

The object of this review is to reproduce the impression left on my mind of Bishop Temple's outlook, and to call attention to some passages in his book that will specially interest readers of the *CHURCHMAN*. I am persuaded that if I add a note of some points of disagreement, I shall not thereby disparage his influence nor hinder his work in the Diocese of Manchester, but rather help him to understand more completely a line of thought, with which he has, perhaps, not had much contact at first hand. Such a contribution I am sure that he will welcome. For a distinguishing feature of his work is openness of mind, readiness to modify and correct his own conclusions, and large-hearted sympathy with those who disagree with him.

My impression, then, of Bishop Temple's Christian philosophy is this. He refuses to think of the Universe as an aggregate of self-subsistent physical objects to which God and the whole realm of spirit have only a shadowy attachment. For him God is the sole self-subsistent Being, for Whose pleasure and by Whose creative activity all things are and were created. He regards the Universe as a continuous whole in which Matter, Life, Mind and Spirit are strata. At the head of the whole is God Who has given to each order its value, or, if I understand the Bishop rightly, its true worth. Value in each order only comes to light in proportion as that order is indwelt by the order that it is above it. Matter has not its true value till it is indwelt by life, and life again till it is indwelt by mind, and mind till it is indwelt by spirit. Value is not a quality accidentally attaching to an object, but it is the potentiality which is revealed by the indwelling in it of the higher order. Scientific inquiry will show us the constituents of which an object is composed, but it cannot teach us its true value in relation to the Universe as a whole. It can show us what the thing is by itself, but not what it is capable of becoming. It can answer the question "How," but not the question "Why."

It will be seen that this view of the Universe makes a Divine Incarnation not only a possibility, but an absolute necessity, if once it is accepted. But, by itself, it takes no account of the two great problems of evil and of sin. As to the former, in a brilliant chapter relating to it, the Bishop does not seem, after all, to go

beyond the simple words, "What I do thou knowest not now." We are onlookers at an unfinished drama, of which God alone sees the whole, and sees it not in time but in eternity, that is in its completeness: sees it not as an indifferent spectator incapable of being moved by suffering, but as suffering with it, and working through it for the higher good. Bishop Temple considers that the first of the XXXIX Articles is seriously misleading, if by "without passions" we understand "impassible," or, "incapable of suffering."

The problem of sin is obviously far more serious, and I trust that in trying to explain the Bishop's view I shall not misrepresent him. The reader will find no light treatment of the problem, no palliating the gravity of sin, no tampering with the majesty of the moral law. Whether, from another point of view, he will be fully satisfied remains to be seen.

Bishop Temple insists that humanity is not an aggregate of human beings subsisting side by side, but it is the coming to self-consciousness, in many centres, of the one Universe. A person is a self-conscious and self-determining system of experience. Every person is the Universe coming to consciousness of itself in a particular focus. But as each focus is separate and individual, man is at once involved in deliberate selfishness, and the discovery that we exist is the "Fall of Man." The result of this view is to shut out all idea of a departure from original righteousness unless we take that righteousness to be an ideal which man ought to seek. If so the word "original" would be wholly misleading. The fall of man would be no more than an imperfect conception of his real destiny and of his true interests. Bishop Temple would, however, go farther than this. He says (p. 158), "The task of man is to achieve inner and outer unity—the inner unity of complete personality and the outer unity of a perfected fellowship as wide as humanity. For this human nature is plainly destined by the qualities inherent in it, that is to say, *by the qualities originally bestowed upon it by the Creator* (the italics are my own). Toward this, human nature is impelled by the Creator's act at the Incarnation, and the consequent activity of His Spirit at work upon humanity from within." Here we have a phrase far more nearly approaching to the idea of "original righteousness." But we seem to be confused by the conception of humanity as a unit, coming

to consciousness in several focuses, each separate and individual : nor do we understand how far the " qualities bestowed upon humanity " are consistent with the selfishness involved by the awakening of consciousness in the individual, a selfishness for which he is very imperfectly responsible.

When, however, Bishop Temple proceeds to the actual dealing of God with sin and sinners, he is very clear as to the wrath of God, and does not hesitate to say (p. 258) : " There is real antagonism of God against the sinner so long as he continues in his sin. It is true, of course, that God loves the sinner while He hates the sin. But that is a shallow psychology which regards the sin as something merely separate from the sinner, which he can lay aside like a suit of clothes. My sin is the wrong direction of my will, and my will is just myself so far as I am active. If God hates the sin, what He hates is not an accretion attached to my real self, it is myself as that self now exists. . . . He loves me, even while I sin ; but it cannot be said too strongly that there is a wrath of God against me as sinning ; God's will is set one way, and my will is set against it." To overcome this hostility, Divine immanence is not enough. It is necessary that God should enter into the course of human history, and this came to pass in Jesus Christ. It follows that the Cross is much more than an example of patient submission to wrong, or an heroic exhibition of self-sacrifice. A reconciliation was to be effected without loss of the majesty of the moral law. Forgiveness, which is much more than remission of penalty, and nothing short of the establishment of new relations between God and man, was not to be effected without cost to God. How great that cost was, how awful the impact upon God of the sin of the world, was revealed by the Cross. It was in fact a propitiation in the sense that it fulfilled the aspirations previously expressed in propitiatory sacrifices. " In so far as the term propitiation represents something objectively accomplished in and by God apart from our forgiveness altogether, and even apart from our sins except in so far as these are part of the cosmic evil, to that extent it is the word that carries us farthest into the mystery of the Atonement " (p. 262). It will not be easy to most readers of the *CHURCHMAN* to reconcile this statement with scriptural teaching concerning propitiation. But I quote the words as evidence that the Atonement to Bishop Temple is something more

than a light passing over of sins. Speaking of the parable of the Prodigal Son he remarks, "We must consider not only what our Lord said, but also what He did."

I must content myself with drawing attention to two valuable chapters on the Godhead of Jesus Christ and the Person of Christ (Chapters VII and VIII) which form a necessary part of the Bishop's argument, and, if I am to fulfil the promises at the beginning of this paper, at once mention one or two passages, which readers of the *CHURCHMAN* will specially appreciate. Bishop Temple is at his highest level whenever he touches on Prayer. Thus (p. 41): "The real significance of prayer lies in the fact that it is the effort and attitude of the soul which makes possible the unity of the human spirit with God: it is therefore itself the supreme aim of human existence. Only when it is experienced and valued as itself the goal of life, is its secondary quality, as producing results beyond itself, fully operative. For it is only then that the human spirit reaches the maturity of its powers; it is only then that the infinite sources of omnipotence can play upon the world through human instrumentality." And again (p. 43): "Not as mere appreciative intelligences do we pray, but as children who want to be with their Father, as friends who must mark off certain times to enjoy the company of their Friend. This Father is the composer of the music of the spheres; this Friend is the author of the tremendous drama of history. To enter into His mind is to be on the high places to which art aspires; but it is to be there in company. This method only leads us to its goal as we become one in moral character with God, for this is partly the meaning and partly the result of being in the company of God. Only the pure in heart can see Him; only by longing for Him do men become pure in heart; only by His own impulse do men begin to long for Him. Prayer is a correspondence with the impulse of God to draw us to Himself." Let me quote also a passage towards the close of the book: "God is Love. But we miss the full wonder and glory of that supreme revelation if we let the term Love, as we naturally understand it, supply the whole meaning of the term God. There is a great danger lest we forget the Majesty of God, and so think of His Love as an amiability. We must first realize Him as exalted in unapproachable Holiness, so that our only fitting attitude before Him is one of abject self-abasement, if we are to feel the stupendous

marvel of the Love which led Him, so high and lifted up to take His place beside us in our insignificance and squalor that He might unite us with Himself. 'When I consider Thy heavens, even the works of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars that Thou hast ordained—what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?' It is a defective Christianity which has no use for the *Dies Irae*." There are other passages of a yet more intimate character that I have not space to quote, if I am to present, as I suggested, some points of view less familiar, as I think, to Bishop Temple.

To us it is not without significance that the Bible begins with an individual and ends with a City. The individual precedes the Society. Is not this after all the historical and the scientific order, and must not our philosophy at least find room for this order? I lay the more stress on this, as I find Bishop Temple's conception of Humanity as more than an aggregate of individuals, as a unit, each member of which is actually linked with the whole, far from easy to understand. Thus I find on p. 214: "The Humanity which consists of human beings is a real unity, wherein each of them is linked to every other in a nexus of mutual determination." Of families, tribes, nations, the statement is true, but there have been centuries of human history in which large groups of mankind could not be said to be "linked to the rest in a nexus of mutual determination." There was, till the discoveries of the Western hemisphere, no sort of nexus of mutual determination between the inhabitants of the two hemispheres: the same is true of large portions of Africa, for very many centuries. These races were as separate from the rest of mankind as if they had been inhabitants of other planets. These facts have theological implications of a very real nature. It is noteworthy that the two great impacts of Predestinarian doctrine coincide, the first with the barbarian invasions of Europe, and the second with the discovery of America. Men were forced to think of whole nationalities outside the range of the Cross, and to take some account of them in their theology. We may dislike the explanation that was offered and may quarrel with it. But I do not find that Bishop Temple's view of Humanity solves the difficulties that history presents.

There is another difficulty raised in my mind by Bishop Temple's conception of Humanity. It must be noticed, because it affects the meaning which he attaches to the sacrifice of the Cross, and,

consequently, to the Eucharist. He tells us (p. 238): "In this service (i.e. the Eucharist), which is pre-eminently the Christian's means of access to the Eternal, and wherein he worships not as an individual but as a member of the Church at all times and all places, the relevant conception of Christ is not that of the historic figure but that of the Universal Man. The sacrifice of Christ is potentially but most really the sacrifice of Humanity. Our task is by His Spirit to take our place in that sacrifice." (P. 239), "We, by repeating and so identifying ourselves with His sacrificial act, become participants in His one sacrifice, which is the perfect dedication to the Father of the Humanity which God in Christ has taken to Himself." And again: "The union of Humanity with God in perfect obedience in Christ is the essential sacrifice." At first sight these passages taken by themselves suggest the idea of an impersonal humanity, of that unit which comes to self-consciousness in several focuses, of the idea that Christ is *man*, but, not in any intelligible sense as truly man, as one of us is man. The idea is corrected by other passages in the book. It is enough to quote one (p. 106): "We see One Who was born by no activity of human will, but only in the acquiescence of the Virgin Mother in the Divine Will, Who called men to such a fellowship with and dependence on God as had never been conceived, yet lived always as one Who Himself experienced what He taught," etc. It would be quite untrue to say that Bishop Temple does not specifically teach us to believe in the perfect Manhood of our Lord. But the impression which he leaves, at this point and at others, is that of personality as the product of influences (p. 152) and of the Incarnation as "the inauguration of a new system of mutual influence." For him "the self *is* the self-conscious system of experience. . . . If there is no experience there is no self; if there are other experiences, there is another self" (pp. 65, 66).

In this connexion I seem to find a view which profoundly affects my relation to God. For, while it is true that our experiences do influence our personalities, they influence different personalities in very different ways—as is manifest in the children of one family. There is also one experience common to all mankind—the experience of God, which has far from one influence upon all. The testimony of our consciences (I speak as an Evangelical), confirmed by Scripture, is that of active hostility of the natural self against God, of

indifference to Divine Love even as manifested to us on the Cross and reflected in the lives that are nearest to us and dearest : the experience which we often call " self-surrender " is the overcoming of this hostility by a Power that is not ours. In no sort of sense could we claim that it was a self-identification with the sacrificial act of Christ. For us that act stands all alone in its majesty and its efficacy—a Divine act of self-sacrifice, for us and on our behalf, in which Christ being God bore our sins in His own body being man. It is true, no doubt, that inasmuch as Christ is both God and Man, and Man Whose Manhood was sinless, Humanity was united with Godhead in that sacrifice, and that the self-surrender upon the Cross was the self-surrender of One Who is very God and very Man. But we cannot distinguish between the Divine and the Human in the Sacrifice. The Sacrifice was the Sacrifice of one Christ for the sin of the whole world, which none but He could offer : in which none but He could take a part, a Sacrifice in which the Godhead was united with the true bodily substance of a man. It was offered indeed in a moment of time. In no other way could it have been offered then, or be manifested to us now. But for God time is not : for Him there is neither yesterday, to-day, nor to-morrow. Therefore, in Heaven, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world is, and must be for ever, before the Throne until sin and death are no more. For us that Sacrifice is one Sacrifice of sins for ever, offered, once for all, for us by God Himself, and exposing for ever the emptiness of all human sacrifice for sin. We can accept the benefit of it ; Christ may call us to take up the Cross ; He does so call us ; and we fill up the yet incomplete sufferings of His Body, the Church. But with His Sacrifice we dare not identify any sufferings of our own.

It is, at root, the same conception of personality that makes it impossible for me—again I speak as an Evangelical—to accept the idea that any existing Church is the true, the ideal, Church which St. Paul describes as the Body of Christ. I can understand as Divine, and of Divine institution, a fellowship of believers actually indwelt by the Spirit of God, and gladly confess that Christ came to found such a fellowship, to be the Kingdom of God upon earth. I can also understand the necessity of the existence of communities for worship held together by visible bonds of creeds and ministries, and that it is the duty of these communities to aim at purity of

life and doctrine, and to cultivate the spirit of loving intercommunion, recognizing gladly wherever they can find it the Spirit-guided life in the members of any of these bodies. But my very faith in the unity of the Church, Catholic and Apostolic, forbids me, as I love the truth, to identify any of the aforesaid communities with the Body of Christ.

In short, I find that in the whole conception of personality, and of the relation of human personality to the Divine, with all that is therein involved of revelation and of grace, Bishop Temple's teaching, while it interests, is far from satisfying me. I am not unaware that modern thought refuses to accept the idea of "persons" as mutually exclusive beings "who have no more connexion with one another than so many marbles in a bag." It is true, as Professor Wallace taught, that "there is in each of us a potential universality," and that we all are affected, more than we know, by environment. But, for all that, each living soul is also "a point excluding others and excluded by them," and it is at this point that we most truly come into relation with God, for here are we most veritably in His image, and differentiated from the rest of creation. It is heart that speaks to heart, spirit that speaks to spirit. We may call the universe sacramental, and may behold with joy and uplifting of spirit the glory of God in His creation. But our affinity with the Creator, as history testifies, warns us of an ever-present danger of putting the creature in the place of the Creator. In that danger is to be found the degeneration of Christianity; as of every other religion. In that sense, and as witness against that danger, the Church of Christ will always have to be Protestant, until the shadows pass away, and the reality alone remains, the day when God shall be "all in All."

P.S.—This review must not be regarded as an exhaustive account of all the points, or all the grounds on which I am not in agreement with Bishop Temple's book. Such a review I could not have written without entering into controversy with my successor in the See of Manchester for controversy's sake, the last thing that I should wish to do. I have desired only to do justice to his line of thought, and to suggest the kind of criticism for which he asks in his preface.—E. A. K.