

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

ONE great need of to-day is the voice of a Prophet, a Word of God out of the midst of the smoke and flames of the world conflict. You will hear such a word in the little book of sermons by Canon F. R. BARRY, *I Heard a Voice* (Christophers; 1s. net). These four sermons were written and delivered in conditions of critical danger, the second on the night when the preacher saw his home in flames, and the others amid similar experiences.

The sermons have the note of urgency, as all prophecy has. But they have more. They bear a great testimony to truth that is made alive by the events of our time. They contain a Word of God that comes to us from one who speaks it out of profound conviction and a sense of its deadly necessity for our people. No one can read these sermons without being deeply moved by the passion, sincerity, and appeal of the preacher. It is impossible in a brief summary to reproduce this impression, but we will do our best to say what the message of this little book is.

The first sermon is entitled 'The Word of God,' and its burden is that God speaks to us always. We are often indifferent to it. We cease to hear it. But we are brought back to it by life. To-day we are facing real things. We are returning to an absolute loyalty which is the secret of our strength. We are listening to a Voice which, unless the Bible is a vast mistake, is speaking in the storm and the battle. It is the voice of the living God who is at work in the events of history, working out through these His righteous purpose.

No insurrection of the power of evil dethrones Him. He speaks in judgment, and in warning that material power alone can avail nothing as the foundation of a human world, with hope and promise that in the heart of sacrifice we may find the triumph of a Resurrection. Sacrifice? The heroism of poor folk in London, and other towns and villages, will be an epic while our race endures. But it is more than that. It is the token of the presence and the power of God in the hearts of ordinary men and women.

But let us realize that to-day there is a war within the war. The conflict in Europe runs back into the eternal background, the unseen realm of spiritual reality. The whole moral order is involved. It is the conflict of ultimate loyalties in the souls of men, the conflict between good and evil, literally between God and Satan. We are beginning to understand the language of the New Testament to-day. We know that what they had in mind was something horribly and intensely real, the spirit of anti-Christ, the Man of Sin 'who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God and worshipped.'

And in particular we are beginning to understand 'that haunting book which we call the Book of Revelation.' It comes startlingly alive to-day; and the obscene horror of aerial warfare fits into its sombre apocalyptic imagery. It was written, remember, in a concentration camp. The naked power of a Totalitarian State was trying to root out the Christian Church as the home of spiritual

freedom. It was not content to hold men's earthly loyalties; it wanted their souls too, which belong to God. And in this Totalitarian paganism John saw the contemporary embodiment of the cosmic battle between Light and Darkness, Truth and Lies, Slavery and Freedom, the Hope of Christ and the despair of anti-Christ.

But this is the theme of the whole Bible. It is also the innermost meaning of history. There is an ultimate conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Beast. Nazi-ism is a symptom nearly as much as it is a cause. It is thrown up out of the dark depths of mass-resentment; into it has been poured all the revengefulness and hate and cruelty of frustrated men who have failed to find the true end of living, who have sought and found in a perverted loyalty the satanic substitute for true religion. The fight against this is in the end the 'War in Heaven.' That is the real battle, and the victory in that battle is the condition of peace.

This is a point on which Canon BARRY insists with tremendous earnestness. The real war is in the soul of man. It is in the soul that the victory must be won. The war has got to be waged on two levels—in the world of history and in the world unseen—in the actual clash of armies and in the secret places of the soul.

And therefore to win this war means not merely to defeat the aggressor's hosts. That must and will be done. But it means more—the positive creation of a social order ruled by the faith of Christ. That is surely the Word of God to Britain. 'The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever,' prophesied the Apocalypse. And it is our part to see this realized. Because the victory is in the soul, because it is the 'war in heaven,' therefore it is the victory of righteousness and justice and that peace which comes only when the will of God in Christ is done. It is this which alone will ennoble and redeem this conflict.

Canon BARRY develops this further when he goes

on to deal with the freedom which is everywhere set down as the issue at stake in the world. This freedom, he says, is not merely the absence of restriction. It is a creative quality of living which may be proved in discipline and hardship and which may be realized, we are beginning to see, within a self-disciplined community of mutual service and responsibility. We are finding a new positive ideal of a social order fashioned by free men as part of a world order of free peoples. It demands brave constructive social building to embody the vision which is being granted to us. And that is not a task for the future, 'after the war.' It is part of the war; we must be at it *now*.

For if we are 'called to freedom' this is what we stand for. In everyday speech we refer to it as Democracy. But what we mean by that is a great deal more than a system of government. What we mean is an attitude to life, an ideal of manhood, a religious faith. That is what Hitler cannot understand. Nobody can understand Britain who does not know that the things we care for most, the things we will die for rather than surrender, have been nurtured and sustained by Christianity. Our tradition is woven out of many strands; but it is woven upon a Christian background, and when it is torn away from that it dies. We might retain a political democracy which would be quite as soulless and sterile, as blind to the real needs of men, as any Totalitarian collective.

And therefore we must concern ourselves now with the things that count. We cannot make free nations out of unfree men. And to make free men we must use the instruments at our hand, which are Christian education and the Christian Church. Canon BARRY makes a strong appeal for a national education that is really religious. 'Are you content that your children should be educated with no knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, armed with no philosophy of life but a half-baked belief in natural science and with no ideal beyond trivial pleasures? What kind of a Christian country shall we have then?'

And with equal earnestness he pleads for a new

loyalty to the Church. The spiritual, he says, is nearly meaningless until it is expressed in the material. Spirit must make itself a body through which it can act upon the world. That goes very deep into Christianity. And that is the real meaning of the Church. It is a great Society; it is nineteen hundred years of stored-up history; it has its roots deep in a common life. We shall not keep true religion alive in England by listening to addresses on the microphone; only by enlisting in its army, only by joining in its serving company.

If politics are not to degenerate into a mere struggle of naked power, the greatest need of Democracy is a living Church. It is the one thing in God's providence which can heal the hurt of a world racked by war, and gather torn mankind back into unity. Not since the collapse of the old Christian empire has it been offered a mission so magnificent. Is the Church ready to rise to this? to be alive enough to care more for bringing people *in* rather than for shutting them out? to be Christian enough to see the one big thing that unites us and the little things that divide us? If out of this war we do not find Christian unity, then God help the churches—no one else will.

Dr. C. Ryder SMITH, formerly Professor of Theology in the University of London, who has written a number of books of expository theology, offers his readers a study of the Atonement in his recent work, *The Bible Doctrine of Salvation* (Epworth Press; 7s. 6d. net).

This book is the product of the author's own study of the Bible, which has been long and intimate. There are no references to other books on the Atonement, nor is the author's doctrine of the Atonement compared with the doctrines, such as that of Anselm, that have appeared in the history of Christian thought. The doctrine which he seeks to uphold is what he calls a 'societary,' by which he means what is usually called a 'corporate,' doctrine.

Finding the chief Old Testament contribution in the Prophets, he makes much, in support of the 'societary' doctrine, of the large and varied use in the New Testament of the Servant Songs of Isaiah, more especially the fifty-third chapter. There is evidence, in quite a number of the New Testament books, as he has little difficulty in pointing out, that this last of the Servant Songs became part and parcel of Christian thought.

In He 9<sup>28</sup> we read of 'Christ' being 'offered to bear the sins of *many*.' In He 13<sup>30</sup> we read of 'the God of peace' having 'brought again from the dead . . . that great shepherd of the sheep.' In 2 Co 5<sup>41</sup>, a verse which belongs to the greatest of Paul's passages about the Atonement, it is written, 'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.' In Ro 4<sup>25</sup>, where Christ is spoken of as 'delivered for our offences,' there is a direct reference to the fifty-third of Isaiah; and Dr. Ryder SMITH finds also a direct reference in the connexion in Ro 4<sup>25</sup> of justification with resurrection.

There are also references to the Servant Songs, and in particular to the fifty-third of Isaiah, in the Fourth Gospel. There the concepts of suffering and victory, which are the ruling ideas of the last of the Servant Songs, are seen to be associated. In three passages (Jn 3<sup>14</sup> 8<sup>28</sup> 12<sup>32, 34</sup>) the phrase 'lifted up' occurs. In two of the three passages the name 'Son of Man' appears with the term 'lifted up,' and in the third the writer thinks that he has written, 'If the Son of Man be lifted up,' when he has not done so (Jn 12<sup>32, 34</sup>). This shows how closely the two ideas of the Son of Man and 'lifted up' went together in his mind. And we may confidently say that John identified the Son of Man with the Servant. So that under the Johannine terms 'glorify' and 'lifted up' the same two ideas of triumph and suffering combine as in the last Servant Song.

The societary or corporate idea is here held to be fundamental in the Bible doctrine of Salvation. It is implied throughout the Bible that God has made man to live in fellowship with Himself. At

first outwardly conceived, God promising to give prosperity to Israel if Israel will obey Him, this fellowship is ultimately expressed only as 'eternal life,' which is to 'know'—to be intimate with—God. There is only one thing that can mar the fellowship. This one thing is sin. But God cannot leave a sinner to his sin. The Father still craves fellowship with His children. He therefore sets Himself to save them. To save men from sin the Saviour must, at one and the same time, be sinless and experience what is meant by sin. This is what fellowship demands of a Saviour.

The societary doctrine, as our author goes on to say, being in terms of fellowship, knows nothing of a God who waits in anger, or even waits aloof, for some one else to do something. He 'sends' the Son, and He welcomes the sinner. There is an antinomy involved here, and this must be freely allowed.

For the rest, the societary theory is no doubt inadequate, as earlier theories have been, but it is claimed for it that as being essentially psychological it is in line with the dominant thought-forms of to-day and is looking in the right direction. It has also the merit, like other psychological theories, of returning to the New Testament way of approach to the doctrine of salvation.

No one can travel far in the regions of philosophy without coming up against the problem of Time. Mysterious Time, it flows on unceasingly, but what does it flow through or past? Is its flux only a delusive appearance without reality? Is it simply *Maya* as Eastern thinkers affirm? Or is it an essential element of the real world, and, if so, in what relation does it stand to that which is eternal?

Such questions are not of yesterday. They perplexed the minds of the ancient Greek philosophers, and at a later time Augustine confessed that, while he knew what time was, yet if asked to define it he could not. Within recent years the problem of time has been approached from a new angle, in accordance with the latest speculations of mathe-

maticians and physicists who now co-ordinate time with space and declare physical reality to be a space-time continuum. It is in harmony with the spirit of the age to base philosophy upon the findings of physical science, and so a consideration of the relation of time and eternity sets out from a study of the clock-time of the physicist in its relation to space.

The speculations of Mr. J. W. Dunne in his two books, 'An Experiment with Time' and 'The Serial Universe,' have recently brought the subject before the popular mind. He argues that, as in dreams the mind of the dreamer escapes for the time being from the limitations of the present and can roam freely through the past and even in some cases forecast the future, so it may be assumed that at death the soul finds permanent escape from the limitations of the body and gains such a mastery over time that it is able to range at will through the past and the future, reviewing all experience. According to this theory the past and future both exist, being spread out like a great film ribbon along which the emancipated soul is able to pass at will 'with the velocity of light.'

This most difficult and obscure subject has been dealt with in a fresh and suggestive way in a book recently published, *The Eternity of Time*, by the Rev. A. P. SHEPHERD, D.D. (Hodder & Stoughton; 8s. 6d. net). The main thesis of the book would appear to be that time is really eternity veiled from our eyes by the limitations of the flesh. While agreeing with some of Mr. Dunne's conclusions Dr. SHEPHERD has certain criticisms to make. In particular he argues that Dunne assumes the fourth dimension, which is a purely mathematical device, to be a factual reality, and thereby 'confuses space and time and spatializes time.' There is good ground for this criticism, as any one may see. The mathematicians for their own purposes have co-ordinated space and time by assuming that time may be measured by the distance covered by the speed of light in that time. But they are under the necessity, for a reason that need not here be explained, to multiply this time-co-ordinate by the square root of minus one. Now a minus quantity

indicates negation or absence, as any one in possession of minus-a-five-pound-note will understand. Also the square root of minus one is a wholly unimaginable quantity. Therefore what the mathematicians really say by their symbols when strictly interpreted, is not that time moves with the velocity of light, but that time moves with an unimaginable function of the negation of the velocity of light! A statement which leaves us in profound ignorance of the relation of time and space. Yet it is common enough in popular expositions to find time expressed in direct terms of the speed of light, and Mr. Dunne has fallen into this snare.

In his exposition of the theme Dr. SHEPHERD makes much use of the psychology of the unconscious. As we travel on in time we each of us acquire an increasing content of experience which becomes a vital part of our being. These experiences may pass from our memory but they are all securely embedded in the depths of our unconscious self. They powerfully influence our conduct and indeed may be said to make us what we are. All this, of course, is commonplace to those who are familiar with the new psychology, but it is here set down in a vivid and impressive way. Dr. SHEPHERD has much that is wise and wholesome to say about the futility of thinking that the past is over and done with. The past is as vital a part of ourselves as the present; the unconscious is as really existent as the conscious. The accumulated content of our experience, past and present, has to be reckoned with, for it determines our destiny.

At this point in his exposition Dr. SHEPHERD makes a great leap from time to eternity. 'What I postulate is that all the experience of a self is its own eternal possession, inherent in itself. It is even now recoverable by memory, through the association of ideas, and under hypnosis it can be vividly re-experienced. It will be completely available for re-experience when the self is released from its present inevitable preoccupation with the material world.' This, it will be observed, is a postulate, not a proof. It fails completely to meet the argument of the man who says that the experiencing self with all its accumulated experiences,

when torn from its environment, simply ceases to be. Dr. SHEPHERD uses the illustration of an imaginary water-plant with both a surface and an underwater life which, when fully developed, might no longer draw its life from the surface, from the sun and air. 'Its surface life withers and "dies" and the new organism moves away freely under the water, in which it had formerly only grown at a fixed rate and attached to the surface life, which had been, as it were, the matrix of its developing being.'

This may be pictorial, but it is certainly not logical. It may be helpful to the imagination, but it carries no conviction to the reason. And if it be offered as in any sense a proof or demonstration of 'the eternity of time' it can only be pronounced to be inadequate. The Archbishop of York in a Foreword makes the cautious statement, 'This book, by calling in the evidence of recent psychological study, builds a bridge from clock-time to Eternity which looks to me more likely to carry traffic than any other bridge across the chasm which I have seen.'

Can any such bridge across the chasm be built? It may be doubted. There is manifest in our day a certain hankering for some sort of *gnosis* which shall supersede faith, some scientific proof or demonstration which shall place the reality of the eternal world beyond dispute. The prevalence of spiritualism and the popularity of Mr. Dunne's books is evidence of this. But still the Eternal guards its secret, and will continue to guard it till the veil is lifted by a hand from the other side. Sir Arthur Eddington has pointed out that the fourth dimension is utterly unimaginable and that no amount of mathematical study can ever make it imaginable to us who are three-dimensional creatures. So it may be confidently affirmed that as long as we are in the stream of time the conditions of the life eternal must be to us inconceivable. The crown of the life of faith is to die in faith. Of the fathers it is written, 'These all died in faith,' and it may be safely said that no future generation will find in psychology or any other science a bridge to cross the chasm or any surer vessel in which to make the final voyage.