
A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

They probably spent all the summer months in traversing Cyprus, preaching everywhere, and did not reach Paphos before the autumn. It was by that time impossible for them to reach the Ægean by a sea voyage on account of the persistency and frequent violence of the Etesian winds which blew from a north-west quarter out of the Ægean sea all the autumn. It was difficult and dangerous for even well-found vessels like the Alexandrian ship which conveyed Paul from Myra to attempt to round the promontory of Cnidos at that season. The coasting craft which frequented Paphos, though sufficient to carry the Apostles across to the mainland, would certainly not have ventured to face the risk of encountering those adverse winds and stormy seas. There were in all probability only three courses open to them, to turn their faces homewards, to linger along the coast of the Levant, or to strike across by way of Perga and Antioch into the great land route which led to the western coast. They chose the last and boldest course; and though their enterprise was cut short half-way by the illness of one Apostle, their courage was rewarded by the addition of three Galatian churches to the kingdom of Christ, and they were enabled to plant the banner of the cross firmly in the centre of Asia Minor.

F. RENDALL.

FEW THINGS NEEDFUL.

"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."—*Luke* x. 41, 42.

THE Lord Jesus was on His last fatal journey to Jerusalem. Many forcible and beautiful sayings are connected by St. Luke with this period. Often it is not easy to be sure that the connexion is historical; but we may assume that even in the Evangelist's time a strictly historical arrangement

would have been impossible. There is, however, something more important, and even for us, so long after the time of Christ, not unattainable, viz., to endeavour to understand the sayings in relation to the general position of the Master, and to apply them in no narrow or mechanical way to the circumstances of our own time.

The setting given by Luke to the above saying is singularly beautiful. Jesus had just uttered the immortal parable of the Good Samaritan, which gives a classic example of what we may call the life of active piety. Luke now supplements this imaginative picture by a narrative which he gives as historical, exemplifying that kind of piety which is sometimes said to prefer contemplation to action, but which is more correctly defined as that which declines an activity not based on deep personal conviction. As they went on their way southward, Jesus and His disciples arrived, probably towards evening, at a certain village where it was natural for travellers to halt. Here there dwelt a woman named Martha, who honoured Jesus as a divinely sent Teacher and a Benefactor of the people, and, having a house of her own, she gave Him a hospitable welcome. She is stated to have had a sister residing with her, whose name was Mary, but we are not told by Luke whether the two sisters formed the entire family, or whether there was also a husband or a brother; nor does the Evangelist say how many of the disciples were allowed by Jesus to accompany Him into the house. At any rate, the Master found encouragement to discourse concerning the kingdom of God, regardless of the claims of nature for physical and mental repose. And there was one fresh, and, no doubt, enthusiastic disciple, seated, as was fitting, at Jesus' feet, who drank in His words. That disciple was Mary.

The preparations for the meal were now being hurried forward, probably in another apartment, and Martha—as

the mistress of the house—was nothing less than "distracted," as Luke reports, "with much ministration." She was solely intent on showing respect to the great Teacher in the traditional manner, which regarded the abundance and variety of dishes as essential to a feast of honour. But, like so many other people with a keen sense of propriety, Martha felt aggrieved when her sister ventured to deviate from social tradition. She came up (ἐπιστᾶσα) to Jesus and said, "Sir, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to minister alone? Bid her therefore help me." How does the Master meet Martha's request? Our texts differ. The Cambridge editors give this as the best supported reading of His answer, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but there is need of few things, or of one; for Mary has chosen the good part, one which will not be taken away from her." The received text, however, to which Tregelles and Tischendorf both adhere, gives the central words in a different form, which by familiarity has become so dear to us that we would gladly leave it uncriticised, "Thou art careful and troubled about many things: but there is need of one thing," that is, of only one thing. My own conviction is that this reading is incorrect, and that it probably originated in that quasi-æsthetic sentiment which appears to have dictated not a few early alterations of ancient texts. It is, in fact, from the point of view of Christian supernaturalism, strictly true that only one thing is needful; by supernaturalism I mean that form of piety which delights in minimizing the claims of the present world and directing the attention of the Christian almost exclusively to those of the world to come. And if this form of piety was really recommended, absolutely recommended, by Jesus, it appears to be inconsistent in a Christian to devote time and energy to making the present stage of existence cheerful and beautiful. The present world being only a passage to that

which is to come, contemplation of the glories yet to be revealed is the ideal occupation, and Martha deserved severe censure for letting anything prevent her from listening to Him who could speak as never man spake concerning these glories. Only one thing was needful, and that the poor troubled hostess had neglected.

To say that a reading cannot be the original one exposes me to the charge of critical subjectivity: I am not dismayed at the prospect. The text of the Old Testament is a colossal example of the subjectivity of editors and scribes; that of the New, though doubtless much better, cannot be considered free from specimens of the same quality. There is no advantage in preferring the ill-regulated subjectivity of ancient scribes to the trained subjectivity of a methodical modern critic. The words "or of one" are analogous to many similar and unexpected insertions which are plainly marginal notes, and the original reading, according to my judgment, ran thus, "there is need of few things."

It remains to interpret the strongly marked antithesis between the many and the few things. What is the unexpressed substantive? Did the Master really say that He had only expected to be entertained with a few dishes? Many Greek and some modern interpreters have supposed so, but surely such a saying as this was not striking or significant enough to be preserved by tradition. The "few things" must be those of which our Lord speaks in the Sermon on the Mount, and of which He says that they are not to cause us any anxiety; He refers to the relatively few material necessities of a modest human existence. According to this view, the first part of the reported speech of Jesus is not at all a censure of Martha either for preparing so many dishes or for not seating herself at His feet, but simply a gentle reminder that man's earthly wants are few, and that, having a Father in heaven, we need not be careful for these to the point of anxiety, the application

of which principle, with tactful consideration, Jesus leaves to His entertainer. And the "many things" about which Martha is so unwisely anxious are neither the dishes of the feast, nor food and clothing in general, but all the complicated prescriptions of social custom among the Jews at that time.

As for the second part of the traditional saying, it is important to notice that, according to the Codex Bezæ, it constitutes almost the whole of the Lord's saying, which becomes, as this manuscript presents it, "Martha, Martha, thou art disturbed; Mary hath chosen the good part, one which will not be taken away from her," with which the Sinaitic Syriac palimpsest very nearly agrees. Now, I willingly admit this reading to be the product, not so much of literary, as of moral or religious criticism, the reference to a few things as necessary having probably been a stumbling-block to many minds, and yet I think that, upon purely literary grounds, the omission of either the first or the second part of the saying is fully justifiable. I mean that what Jesus said after "Martha, Martha" was, probably, given variously by tradition, sometimes in this form, "Thou art careful and troubled about many things; but there is need of only few things"; and sometimes in this other form, "Mary has chosen the good part, one which will not be taken away from her," where the phrase "the good part" means, not "the food which is truly excellent —the food of the spirit," but a share in the kingdom of God, respecting which the Psalmist enthusiastically says, "The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

To decide between these two sayings is beyond the critic's capacity. Neither of them would we willingly miss. The first seems to open a window in the heart of Martha, the second in that of her sister, and both Martha and Mary are typical persons. Not only now, but always,

it was Martha's temptation to be anxious about many things of purely conventional value, and to forget that, if the first objects of her aspiration were righteousness and the kingdom of God, all needful things of earth would be "added unto" her. At the same time we need not doubt that, with whatever inconsistency, Martha (according to the narrator) was indeed a seeker of the true righteousness. See with what affectionate concern Jesus speaks to her. He knows that she is "distracted" in a fuller sense than she herself thinks; she is trying to serve at once God and social tradition, and while Jesus appreciates her desire to honour Him, He regrets the superfluous and injurious anxiety which it involves. She is not far from the kingdom of God; why should she not actually enter into it?

Mary, on her side, was not an unloving sister, even though she cared far less for social custom. If she did not spring at once to help her sister, it was because of the peculiar circumstances in which she found herself. Like Martha, she honoured in Jesus of Nazareth a Teacher come from God; but, unlike Martha, she also considered that now or never was her time to penetrate into the Master's secret. We cannot doubt that it was of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus discoursed to Mary, and that He enjoined, on the one hand, absolute devotion of the heart to God, and, on the other, a fearless confidence that God would so rule and overrule the affairs of life that nothing really needful should be wanting to His children. It was not selfish in Mary to seclude herself for a time from earthly business. She realized intensely what Jesus said, that the kingdom of heaven was near at hand, and that men should be on the watch lest its appearance should find them unprepared. She hungered and thirsted after this kingdom, and placed herself under the influence of its Herald and Revealer in order to receive in her degree that rich foretaste of it which He Himself enjoyed. She chose

that best of portions—to reign with God for ever, and the Master recognised this. Jesus (if we adopt the second of the two sayings) would not let Martha blame her sister; His new disciple had shown that strength of imagination, that capacity of realizing the future, which is the basis of the higher prudence. Soon there would be no more hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness; soon the children of the kingdom would be called in to the coronation feast of the King. Then, what comfort would it be to those left outside to remember that all social traditions had been duly deferred to, and that no religious teacher had passed their door without being invited to partake of a feast of honour?

"Few things are needful"; "Mary has chosen the good part." Both sayings are closely connected with a fundamental idea of the Master. The first relates to the time before the visible establishment of the kingdom; the second points forward to that greatest of events. It will be clear, then, that we are not to account for the former of the two sayings (with which I am now chiefly concerned) by the remark that the speaker had the confined views of life natural to a village carpenter. Indeed, Nazareth was near enough to busy and luxurious Gentile cities for Jesus to have been affected, both as a man and as a teacher, by the materialism of the age, had He been other than He was. On the contrary, the saying is in a high degree characteristic, and has the nature of a protest; it well expresses the moderation of the Master's attitude towards material things. He was neither an ascetic like John the Baptist and the Essenes, nor a Sadducæan voluptuary of the type described in the second chapter of Ecclesiastes. He did not refuse the company of the rich, nor absent Himself on principle from the cheerful feast, and He announced a kingdom of God which was soon to be set up on a purified and glorified earth. No; the clear-sighted Master avoided the falsehood of extremes. He could neither have said, "Many things

are needful," in the sense of an ignoble materialism, nor yet, "One thing only is needful," in the sense of a one-sided, even if noble, spiritualism.

And why, according to the Master's idea, are few material things needful? Because the inheritance of the kingdom is for persons of a certain character, which character must be formed during the period of probation and education, and because to be burdened with material possessions which do not promote this result, and the use of which is limited on every side by social convention, is to be deprecated. It remains true, however, that a few material things are needful. Without the daily bread, gained by honest toil, without the human and humanizing relations of the family, how should we gain those elementary moral qualities which, though not distinctively Christian, are yet essential in Christ's disciples? And without a certain number of painful experiences, proving that it is not in a man to direct his own steps, and without a certain number of blighted hopes and the moral reaction produced in a man by the humiliating discovery of his moral failures, how should those more advanced spiritual qualities show themselves, which can be said, on the authority of Jesus Christ, to entitle a man to the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven?

Certainly the gospel of such needful things as these—simplicity in our mode of life, righteousness (which in the Jewish sense includes brotherly love) in our dealings with others, and deep humility towards God, based on the conviction of a judgment to come—needs to be preached as much in this as in any preceding century of the Christian Church. But it is not of this gospel that I wish now to speak, but of another, which is, indeed, its natural complement—the gospel of simplicity in theology. Few things are needful in theology, but these few things are needful indeed; and if, through the value that it sets on a historical

connexion, our Church has come to possess a somewhat over-developed and somewhat inharmonious theology, no pains should be spared by thinkers and students to recover those first principles of Christ's gospel, by the light of which we can hope to reinterpret our faith to the new generation. And there is no reason why the special obligations of clergymen should make them backward in performing this duty. If we are no longer expected to believe everything in the Bible in the same simple, unthinking way as our forefathers, surely creeds and articles too can only be accepted subject to all the limitations which God's progressive education of the human spirit imposes upon them. Surely it must be recognised that the real normative influence on Christian thought is, or ought to be, exercised by those simple but deep first principles of which I spoke, though we cannot be forbidden to enrich our interpretation of them by the infusion of any congenial truth which God may have revealed to His children outside of the Bible.

The task thus laid upon us Christian students is no light one. But if we regard it in perfect simplicity as laid upon us by One who, together with the task, can give the strength to perform it, we shall not, even as individuals, and still less as a society, fail of some success. The difficulties, indeed, are endless—difficulties in the discovery and comprehension of the first principles, difficulties in their reinterpretation and development. But, as St. Paul said, "Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel," so Christian students may say, "Woe unto us if we prepare not the way for a second spiritual coming of the Messiah in the hearts of men." It is our complicated theology which conceals from so many men the beauty of true Christianity. If in these latter days the Christian Church has been privileged to win no slight success, our rejoicing is tempered by the thought that, but for our persistence in a needlessly obscure presen-

tation of spiritual truth, the success of the Church might have been far greater.

This view of the duty of Christian students has been expressed more or less distinctly by not a few theologians. It needs, however, to be constantly expressed anew, and by whom can it be expressed more fitly than by the authorized teachers of our universities, which can no longer be described as the homes of lost causes and ideals tried and found wanting? And it needs also to be supplemented by a corresponding view of the duty of thoughtful Christians who are not in a special sense students of religion. Could they not give more sympathy than they do to straightforward investigation, and show more interest in the progress of the study of religious origins than they at present do? Ought they to allow us students, out of an ill-directed loyalty, to fetter ourselves in the pursuit of historical truth by a too constant reference to theological formulæ or to the supposed necessities of apologetic? Surely our primary considerations ought to be the love of truth and loyalty to Jesus Christ. Surely apologetic ought to accommodate itself to facts, and not facts to apologetic. Surely the only thing that is permanently valuable in a religious formula is its underlying principle, and this principle cannot have force simply because long ago it was adopted by some church assembly. It has to be tested periodically by its consistency with those really fundamental principles, which the larger Church derives, not from scholastic theology, but from the fountains of spontaneous and natural expression in the New Testament.

It may appear to some as if the tendency of this exhortation were to draw students away from the investigation of the Old Testament to that of the New, and within the New Testament field to concentrate their attention too exclusively on religious doctrine. Such is far from my intention. Religious doctrines cannot be rightly under-

stood apart from the facts of history and experience amidst which they have grown up, nor can we all at once distinguish between the facts which have a close bearing on religious doctrine and those which have not. The society of investigators of the sources of Christianity which is gradually arising cannot afford to allow itself to be altogether absorbed in what is sometimes technically called Biblical theology. Our most pressing need, as investigators, is to obtain somewhat more knowledge of the historical scenery of the great spiritual drama of the first Christian century. We must apply the varied methods of modern criticism to the New Testament records of facts; and since a training in these methods is necessary, and the training ought to be gained in a field less dimmed by excusable and even honourable prejudices, it is in the Old Testament literature that the critic must seek the most important part of his training. For the sake of the New Testament, therefore, I would urge all our best theological students to take not only a general survey, from a distinctly critical point of view, of the Old Testament literature, but to give a somewhat thorough and special study to some parts of it. What I now propose to them is not reading for examinations, which unhappily do almost as much harm as good, but reading after the examinations, and not merely reading (for books by themselves are not enough), but coming into close contact with men who are actually engaged in critical work. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a well-read or erudite man is competent in virtue of his erudition to pronounce on critical questions. Book-learning is good, but it is not easy to "wear it lightly like a flower," and in England, where the examination system is still, alas! without its necessary counterweight in an organization of advanced teaching and study, it is specially difficult to make good use of erudition. Personal intercourse with critical scholars is absolutely essential to advanced theological students, and

these scholars must not all be men who work in the same groove, must not be all of one type, must be free to be cautious, but free also to be bold.

And this reminds me of a danger, of the existence of which, with all earnestness, I would venture to warn younger students. It is one to which we in England are particularly liable—in England, where it seems so natural to substitute one traditional authority for another, and to avoid reopening difficult questions. When a forward step is taken by some scholar slightly bolder than ourselves—a step which involves reconsidering, correcting, and supplementing critical theories and even critical methods which have been supposed to be established, when, in short, the prevalent critical tradition is threatened, it is very tempting to condemn that critic from our own narrower point of view without any adequate consideration, and to forget that even non-Christian moralists recognise the virtues of fairness and generosity. But let me warn younger students that this would be a most shortsighted and injudicious policy. For no greater service can be rendered to critical students than to force them to correct or supplement their methods, and to expand their theories; and in England, as I have said, this service is peculiarly needed. Far too much is said in these days about the assured results of criticism. There are such results, most certainly; but many of the points which the last generation of critics thought itself to have settled, at least so far as was possible, need, perhaps, to be unsettled again, and treated by new methods. Besides this, a quantity of new problems are rising up, for which, upon the old principles of criticism, no solution is possible. I venture to urge younger students not to pass these things by with supercilious contempt, nor to bring the cant expression, "sober and moderate criticism," into the field as a weapon against forward-moving investigators.

The danger exists; it would not be the part of a friend to

conceal it. It is natural to wish to approach the multitude with as large a packet as possible of well-ascertained critical results, and of such results as admit most easily of adjustment to the traditional orthodoxy. Stoning, metaphorically speaking, has often been the lot of those who have been accused of destroying the indispensable shelters of faith. But truth is a severe mistress, and a comparison between her claims and those of the multitude will not give a scholar the same inward satisfaction as a course of straightforward consistency. To be a historical investigator of the sources of Christianity is as much a vocation as to be a missionary to the heathen. The right course for the investigator is not to adapt himself, except in non-essentials, to the multitude, but to take the multitude into his confidence, and to show them how natural, how interesting, how illuminative the conclusions and even the tendencies of progressive criticism are, and how they continually throw us back more and more on the first principles of Jesus Christ. The destruction of old theories is only the painful preliminary to the reconstruction of far better ones. Those who witness from outside the differences of critics are prone to misunderstand them. Sometimes they contrast two sorts of critics—moderate and advanced—to the disadvantage of the latter; sometimes, with unconcealed joy, they represent criticism as a falling house, divided against itself. Equal ignorance is shown in both cases. Moderate criticism, if such a thing there be, exists solely by its capacity for moving on; and in answer to the gibes of the adversaries of all criticism, we may quote the words of John Milton, spoken with reference to the divisions of Protestants:—

> Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches; nor will beware, until he see our small, divided maniples cutting through at every angle of his ill-united and unwieldy brigade.[1]

[1] *Areopagitica* (1644).

The hope of the future is in the increased co-operation and better mutual understanding of critical students of all schools. If in Germany there has been till lately a want of scholars—half critics and half church theologians—who can mediate between scholarship and the Church, in England there is still, perhaps, an inadequate supply of fearlessly progressive investigators, who, without wilfully hurting the least progressive Churchman of our own day, work primarily both for truth and for the Church of the future. Shocks must be given, unwillingly given, because the truth respecting Hebrew antiquity is becoming more and more different from what we have supposed. Some critics may be more advanced than others, but this is simply because they are so constituted, or have had such peculiar providential leadings, that they deliberately choose the more difficult and painful course. All critics are advancing; all have their special work from God. There is, perhaps, only one real hindrance to their friendly co-operation, and that is the new distinction which is being drawn by some non-critical theological writers between critics who will adopt their own asserting or defining language on supernatural facts or experiences, and those who, in no spirit of opposition, but through having caught a glimpse of something more satisfying to the complex needs of human nature, hesitate to do so.

That critical progress is compatible with fundamental Christianity is affirmed as earnestly by those who decline this new test as by those who take it. This is the link which unites the two schools (if schools they are), and which, should the occasion arise, would prove to the world that they have no intention of parting. What fundamental Christianity is, we shall see better when there is a fuller and more penetrating English criticism of the New Testament records. But the actual workers see already in what direction they are moving. They have found, as we Old

Testament critics have found, that the criticism of the Scriptures is a training-ground for faith. Let me enlarge the statement, however, so as to include all who, like that eminent man whose recent loss we mourn—Prof. Max Müller—devote their intellectual and spiritual energies to the comprehension of sacred books, and let me say that the study of all the great religions is a school of faith. No step in this study, apart from mere linguistic details, seems to me possible without either doubting Christianity altogether, or obtaining by degrees a rock-like faith, which is independent of the doubts of criticism. If the critical study of the literary sources of his religion has brought to any one temporary spiritual loss, it is because of an unspiritual doctrine of faith such as no critical worker of any eminence would approve. Should any of my younger readers feel spiritual danger from critical inquiries, I would bid him seek the personal friendship of some leader in the movement, and find out for himself that even critics can have a pastoral spirit, and a sound, practical theory of religion.

The few things in theology which are needful cannot here be indicated. Long and careful discussion would have to precede any such attempt. But one of them I may presume to mention to my juniors. It is not a doctrine of Inspiration. It is not a definition of Incarnation. It has nothing to do with Priesthood or with Sacramental Grace. It is this, that faith in the highest sense has for its objects neither books nor doctrines, but persons. "Believe in God, believe also in Me," said Jesus, according to the Fourth Gospel. And again, "Ye search the Scriptures, for ye think that in them ye have eternal life . . . and ye will not come to Me that ye may have life." These words, though partly coloured by the doctrines of the Evangelist, convey one of the most fundamental ideas of Jesus, who knew Himself to be the Saviour of men. The centre of gravity in theology

can never be shifted from the person of Christ. The Jesus whom we call Master is at once the historical Jesus of Nazareth, and that ideal form which becomes more and more glorious as man's moral capacity increases—the Jesus whom we can imagine moving about our streets, comforting those who mourn, healing the morally sick, stirring the consciences of the sluggish, and giving to all who see and hear fresh disclosures of truth, fresh glimpses of the ideal. Without the historical Christ the ideal Christ could never have beamed upon us. It is, therefore, our highest object as Biblical critics to revive, however faintly, the outlines of the historical picture of Jesus, and to recover the first principles of His teaching; and, next to that, to comprehend better those great ideas and those wonderful experiences of the New Testament writers which are the afterglow of that morally gorgeous sunset when Jesus of Nazareth finished the work which had been given Him to do. And in relation to that fascinating task, all that lower work which some of us are called upon to do on Pentateuch and Prophets and Psalms, and the tangled growth of apocryphal and apocalyptic literature, shine with a reflected brightness, for all of them are finger posts to Christ; and of the critics who are true to their vocation, and heed not the blame that is undeserved, it may, with humble confidence, be said that the good part which they have chosen will not be taken from them in the day when the shadows flee away and the Palace of heavenly Truth shall be revealed.

T. K. CHEYNE.

NOTES FROM THE PAPYRI.

IT is not necessary at this time of day to enlarge upon the value of the great papyrus discoveries which have appeared during the past ten years. The pioneer work of Deissmann, soon, I believe, to be accessible in English, has accustomed