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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

ARE moral and religious beliefs capable of proof? Professor Sir Henry JONES asks that question in his Deansgate Lecture, first delivered in Manchester, and now published, along with two other lectures, in a volume entitled *Social Powers* (Maclehose; 2s. 6d. net).

The answer is 'No.' 'It would be difficult,' says Sir Henry JONES, 'to ask a question which would raise a more unanimous "No!" Believers and scoffers, agreeing in nothing else, are rivals in the emphasis of their denial. "Religion may be true, or it may be false," they will say; "but it is certainly not capable of proof."'

And Sir Henry JONES agrees. His own 'No!' is as emphatic as that of any believer or scoffer. He delivered the Deansgate lecture in Manchester in order to commend the use of the reason in religion. He commends it heartily, and he commends it unreservedly. He seems, indeed, to place quite unnecessary emphasis on the unfettered use of the reason in religion, for it is rather a rare thing now to find any one disputing it. But as soon as he comes to the matter of *proof*; as soon as he asks the question, What is the nature of proof? Sir Henry JONES is compelled to admit that moral and religious beliefs are incapable of proof. And he does admit it.

Why are moral and religious truths incapable of proof? Simply because every kind of truth is incapable of proof. As soon as Sir Henry JONES comes to consider the nature of proof, he is compelled to declare that there is no proof possible of anything on earth. It is just as easy to prove anything in religion as anything out of religion. The existence of God, for example. In that case, as in every other, you must take certain things for granted. And there is nothing to hinder any one from refusing to grant these things. Then the proof is impossible.

Descartes desired to prove certain things. He started with *Cogito, ergo sum*—'I think, therefore I am.' He expected that to be granted. But it was not granted. The very next philosopher pointed out that it was bursting with presuppositions. The 'I,' the 'think,' the 'am,' the conception of 'self,' the idea of 'thought,' the conception of 'existence,' the 'because'—there is not a single element in that supposed fundamental truth which will not be found by any thinker to contain unexamined presuppositions. If the presuppositions are not granted, the proof cannot follow. And so is it with every 'proof' in religion or out of it.

'In religion or out of it'—that is the point. And the worth of Sir Henry JONES's essay lies in

that. He does not prove that moral and religious beliefs are capable of proof. But he proves that they are just as capable of proof as the most secular and earthly things.

In religion as in everything else we must take certain things for granted. We must be allowed the use of hypotheses. It is a hypothesis that action and reaction are equal and opposite. Deny that to the physicist, and how much of his physics will remain? It is a hypothesis that attraction varies inversely as the square of the distance. Deny that to the astronomer, and how much astronomy will remain? No one dreams of denying these hypotheses. Why? Because they work. The moment a hypothesis is produced which contradicts these *and works better*, that moment these hypotheses will be abandoned.

God is a hypothesis. We must take God for granted. We take God for granted because the idea of God works. No other conception has been found to work so well, though every other conception that the mind of man could hit upon has been tried instead of it. Take away the hypothesis of God, and we have little religion left. But grant us God and we shall use reason, emotion, imagination, conscience, will—every faculty we possess, even our whole personality—in proving that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And we shall prove it.

In *The Harvard Theological Review* for April, Professor F. G. PEABODY bids us consider whether it is possible now to live the Christian life. The Christian life, according to St. Paul, is to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Can we do that? Professor PEABODY interprets the text in the ordinary way—'soberly as concerns one's self, righteously as concerns one's neighbour, piously in one's relation to God.' St. Paul laid down these three laws as practicable rules of conduct for the vicious and pleasure-loving people of Crete. Are they practicable for the cultured communities of the modern Christian world?

Professor PEABODY finds that the answer is pretty unanimously in the negative. It is offered, however, in two different ways. On the one hand, the beauty of such precepts as these is admitted and admired. But the admiration is offered from a distance. To live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world is a fine ideal of Christian conduct which any one may possibly reach in moments of profound sorrow or joy, but for everyday living is practicable only for the few. A daily life of such devotion is regarded as a Catholic layman may view the *vita religiosa* of the clerical orders. It is a counsel of perfection which few can accept, but which an unsanctified world may admire from afar.

What is the result? The result is that the Christian life is admired but not imitated. A view of it arises which is practically that of a looker-on; a conventional conformity is accepted which does not even propose to itself a genuine obedience. Certain incidents of experience—birth, marriage, and death—are consecrated to God; but the long years of work and play, of love and struggle, are ruled by motives of the world, the flesh, or the devil. One comes to live, says Professor PEABODY, on a left-over piety, as he may live on an inherited estate, without much thought of its origin or responsibility.

On the other hand, and with increasing emphasis, the Christian ethic is rejected as inconsistent with the demands of modern life. 'We hear much,' says Professor PEABODY, 'of the alienation of the working-classes from religion, and new ways are bravely devised to reach the masses and to preach the Gospel to the poor. But this defection of the wage-earners, serious as it may be, does not compare in significance with the intellectual neutrality or indifference of great numbers of the privileged and thoughtful.'

He quotes Professor Huxley's letter to Charles Kingsley: 'Understand me that all the young

men of science whom I know are essentially of my way of thinking. I know not a scoffer or an irreligious man among them, but all regard orthodoxy as you do Brahmanism.' That was fifty years ago, and it was Professor Huxley. But Professor PEABODY does not seem to think that that is far from the truth even to-day. 'A man of science, not long ago, when asked his conclusions about religious problems, answered, "We simply do not think of these things at all."'

What are we to do? Two courses are open to us, and we may choose between them.

One way is to discover that the rules of conduct which Christ laid down for His followers in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, and which St. Paul summarized in his letter to Titus, were rules for a state of society wholly different from ours, and therefore they are not applicable to us. This discovery is supposed to be the great accomplishment of modern scholarship. Jesus was an apocalyptist. He expected the speedy end of the world, and He expected it in catastrophe. He legislated accordingly. If the world is just about to be destroyed, what is to hinder men and women from living soberly, righteously, and piously? They may not have to keep up the practice long, and there are urgent reasons for maintaining it in the meantime.

Have we realized how completely this argument cuts away the foundations of Christianity? Professor PEABODY has realized it. The Gospels, at least the Synoptic Gospels, are no longer applicable. The only form of Christianity that we are concerned with is the doctrine of the Epistles—theoretical or mystical theology, within the reach of only the keenest intellect or the most fervent feeling. If our Lord believed that the end of the world was at hand and laid down His rules of conduct in view of that event, then in every effort we have made to understand the Sermon on the Mount and to follow Christ we have vexed ourselves in vain and spent our strength for nought.

The other way is to understand Christ. Professor PEABODY recommends this way. He thinks it probable that even His disciples did not always understand Him. He thinks it possible that some of the things which they report of Him were never spoken by Him, or were spoken quite differently. 'Jesus above the heads of His reporters,' he takes to be, after Matthew Arnold, a wise canon of criticism. But let us see to it that we understand Christ as *well* as His disciples understood Him.

Now it is quite clear to Professor PEABODY that our Lord's disciples never could have supposed that He spoke literally and universally when He said, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,' or when He said, 'Sell that thou hast and give to the poor,' or 'Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.' For they, like their Master, were Orientalists, and this, which is an Oriental way of speaking, was quite familiar and intelligible to them. It is we that confuse Oriental imagery with universal principles; it is we that single out the teaching of non-resistance as the core of the Gospels; it is we that then speak as if to follow Christ were to retreat from social obligations in the name of One who gladly shared them and was called a friend of wine-bibbers and publicans. It may be heroic, but it is impracticable discipleship and historical perversion. 'It mistakes the occasionalism of the Gospels for universalism. It pictures Jesus as posing before the glass of the future, proclaiming in every utterance a universal law, when in fact He is primarily concerned with the individual case immediately before Him, and is applying universal laws to the interpretation and redemption of that single life.'

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow lotus land to live, and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.

That is not true about God. It is the direct contradiction of the truth. God is near. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. He takes an interest in us, and in all that concerns us. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. The very hairs of our head are all numbered by Him.

Our subject this month, as we continue the notes on the life of Christ before He came into the world, is His life after the Creation. It is a subject upon which there has been something more than an evolution in our day, a revolution rather. For before our day it was understood that God had finished His work of Creation in six days, or some other definite period of time, and had then sat down to enjoy the rest of a long-continued Sabbath. Now we know that the Creation was not finished in any definite space of time. We know that it is not finished yet. We understand, as those who went before us could not understand, what Jesus meant when He said, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'

The doctrine of Providence is therefore inseparable from the doctrine of Creation. And inasmuch as the act of Creation in all the length and breadth of it—we agreed to use the word 'act' for provisional convenience—was and is an act of love, so also we know that every step in the continuance of that act, every thought of God for every creature of His hand, is a thought and an act of love. We know (to turn the Apostle's words as he would gladly have turned them) that all things work together for good to them that recognize the hand of God creating them and give His hand room to work.

Now we have seen that the Creator is Christ. That, indeed, is the secret of our assurance that all is the outcome of love. The Preserver is Christ also. That follows inevitably, and is demonstrated by the same arguments. We have simply to keep in mind two facts. First, all intercourse with this world is held through the Son of God. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' The other fact is that this Son of God is Jesus of Nazareth. There is nothing of which the writers of the New Testament are more convinced. They assume the identity always. They base everything in all their doctrine and in all their life upon it.

If, then, the Preserver of the world is Christ, we may look for materials with which to write the life of Christ after the Creation of the world in all authentic history. We may look for them in the Old Testament. And at once we observe this striking fact, that whatever is said of Jehovah in the Old Testament is given to Christ in the New. The very name is transferred. The Greek translators of the Old Testament often use the word 'Lord' of God; the writers of the New Testament adopt the name at once and apply it to Jesus Christ.

Did St. Paul hesitate to attribute the acts of Jehovah to Jesus? What else does he mean by that highly imaginative figure of the Spiritual Rock which followed the Israelites through the wilderness? That Rock, he says, was Christ. And what else does he mean when he sends home his warning against stubbornness by saying, 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents'? Some later scribe of the Epistle misunderstood, it seems, and inserted 'the Lord,' and the Revisers have accepted his ignorant emendation. But it makes no difference. The Lord is Christ.

And what else does St. John mean throughout the whole of the Prologue to his Gospel? That Prologue is simply a history of Christ before He came into the world. The evangelist begins at the beginning. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' That is the first step in the life of Christ—His life before the creation of the world. Next, 'All things were made by him, and without him was not any-

thing made that hath been made.' That is the second step—His life at the Creation. Then follow several sentences of which the very purpose is to tell us how He lived and what He did after the Creation. 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men.' 'There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world.' He was there always, at the entrance of every man into the world; He was there to give him life and light. More than that, 'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.' There are too many proofs of that in the history of ancient Egypt, in the history of Babylon, Greece, and Rome, and in darker histories even than these. Not only so; 'He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not,' a truth of which the Old Testament is evidence throughout. This is the third step—the life of Christ after the Creation of the world. One step remains and only one. St. John takes it immediately, 'And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.'

How great is the advantage of this to the preacher! How great is its advantage to the foreign missionary! We claim uniqueness for Christianity among the religions of the world because it alone has a Redeemer. We have a greater claim than that. The Redeemer is Creator and Preserver. We say that we are carrying back to the East the Christ who came from the East originally. It is a pretty argument and has its weight. But in very truth the Christ has never left the East. He is the light that has lighted every man that ever came into India or China. He has been in India, He has been in China, all the time, though India and China knew Him not. And when He came into the world as Redeemer, though He came perforce into visibility in one little city of it, He was there and then in every city of all the world, Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer.

Has He ever made His presence known in the world? Surely He has made His presence known in the natural things of the world. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.' If the things of Nature could not make His presence known, there would have been less appropriateness in His using the vine and the corn-seed as the symbol of His ways of working.

He made Himself known in conscience also, as He makes Himself known still—in conscience,

> God's most intimate presence in the soul,
> And His most perfect image in the world,

as Wordsworth says. He did on earth what He had been doing all through the world's history. He touched the conscience of Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. He even touched the conscience of the woman of Samaria, till she said with awe, 'Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.' So had He been touching the conscience of man and woman all through their history.

But even as He came into the world, the world knew Him not. The world was aware of His presence, but it knew Him not so as to rouse itself and respond to Him. Is it not so still?

> We heard His footfall on the vacant stair
> The whole night long. We lay awake in bed
> And heard Him climb;—but those who slept instead
> Smiled and assured us that He was not there.
>
> We had our own important things to care
> About—place, profit, and the daily bread;
> And then the street so thundered in one's head—
> And often life's a commonplace affair!
>
> Yet then we heard Him! we, not they, were right;
> We heard Him—Yes, though now we sleep by night
> Almost as soundly as we sleep by day,
> We waked, we heard Him, heard—and nothing more.

Has He not also made Himself known in a sense of restlessness? 'Thou hast made us, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we find our only rest in Thee.' Augustine touched a string that vibrated before and after. Job felt it long before and cried, 'O that I knew where I might find him.' John Byrom felt it many days after:

My spirit longeth for Thee, within my troubled breast,
Although I be unworthy of so divine a Guest.
Of so divine a Guest, unworthy tho' I be,
Yet has my heart no rest, unless it come from Thee.

And then there are what we call the theophanies of the Old Testament. He was seen by Moses and Isaiah before He came into the world, as He was seen by St. Paul after He left it. There is that mysterious person, the Angel of Jehovah. We must not introduce the incredible. We must not go back to the unscientific age of interpretation. But we may safely follow Professor DRIVER, who says that the Angel of Jehovah is a self-manifestation of Jehovah. He identifies Himself with Him; He speaks and acts with His authority; and He is spoken of by others as 'God' or 'Jehovah.' It is true, He is also apparently distinguished from Jehovah, which DRIVER explains by quoting DAVIDSON—'the mere manifestation of Jehovah creating a distinction between the angel and Jehovah, though the identity remains.' Yes, there is some uncertainty. But the great occasion upon which the Angel of the Lord appears is one in which He acts most like to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the occasion of the Sacrifice of Isaac—an event in which Christ was certainly deeply interested. And when He says to Abraham, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad,' we admit at once that that is just what Jesus Christ might have been expected to say.

But, seen or unseen, He has all the while been at work on His creation. He stood at the beginning, saw the whole, and said, 'Very good.' So, at a later stage, He stood on a high mountain and saw all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. He did not then say, Very good. But He was greatly drawn to the vision. He had come to do that which once again would enable Him to say, Very good.

The Value of the Subconscious: In Reply to Critics.

BY THE REV. W. SANDAY, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D., LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

I SUPPOSE I ought to feel quite crushed by the judgement passed upon me—somewhat magisterially—by Dr. Garvie in the April number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, when he includes an experiment of mine in his collection of 'Mares' Nests in Theology.' I must say in passing that I cannot accept his representation of my views as at all accurate. He first exaggerates them, and then denounces his own exaggeration. He uses language (such terms as 'relegates' and 'dismisses') which I would not use, and the point of his attack really turns on these expressions. Under these conditions I do not feel crushed; and I cannot help thinking that other criticisms, which affect me more, really go off to a large extent on side issues and do not touch—or at least do not adequately and finally touch—the heart of the problem.

I shall not attempt now to answer my critics in detail. I have done so in part in the pamphlet *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves* (printed separately, and also bound up with copies of *Christologies Ancient and Modern*). But the kind of answer that I wish to give at present is a brief restatement of the whole position. I am in hopes that this may be done at once more simply and more guardedly, avoiding such terms as 'subliminal consciousness' and the like which have tended to excite a not always relevant opposition.