
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.

THERE is a volume of war sermons which goes by the name of *The Beautiful Thing that has Happened to our Boys* (Greenock: McKelvie; 2s. 6d. net). The author is the Rev. Charles ALLAN, M.A. We have seen nothing that Mr. ALLAN has published before. If this is his first book, we cannot be wrong in saying that he owes it to the war. No man could preach with this intensity but one who had felt the terror of the time and had been able by a supreme effort of faith to enter into peace.

To one of the sermons is given the title of 'Take it Seriously.' The text is found in the First Epistle of St. Peter: 'The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer' (1 P 4^7). It is a text which, like many other texts in the New Testament, is laden with a sense of crisis. But what did St. Peter mean when he said, 'The end is at hand'?

If he meant that the end of the world was at hand, he made a mistake. That was a common opinion among the early Christians. If St. Peter shared it, he misunderstood his Master. Christ had issued a warning against that very error. 'Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars,' He had said, but He had added, 'see that ye be not troubled; for the end is not yet.' It was a time of crisis, assuredly. Great things were about to happen. But they were only the beginning of travail. The happenings were not the convulsions of a dying world, but the birth-pangs of a new era, the ushering in of a new order of things.

It may be, however, that St. Peter did not mean that the end of the world was at hand. It may be that he was only expressing in a vivid way his presentiment that great changes were afoot, that the order of things with which he and his fellow-Christians were familiar was passing away; that they were called therefore to witness for God in a great and fateful time. At any rate, that was the way in which Christ sought to guide the thoughts of His disciples and to prepare them for the dark times ahead. And 'I am sure,' says Mr. ALLAN, 'He would speak to us in the same way now.'

We are hearing of wars and rumours of wars. We are in the very heart of the greatest, the most ruthless, war of history. 'But we are on the wrong tack if we allow ourselves to think or speak of it as "the end of all things." We may be quite sure it is not that. And it is just because it is not that, that we feel the flower of the young manhood of the nations throwing themselves into the conflict are making no useless sacrifice.'

For if the end of all things were at hand, what purpose would be served by their sacrifice? They

are dying that the world may live, that honour and freedom may not perish from the earth. They are giving themselves for God and for the future of the world, that the Kingdom of God may come and the world be worth living in.

And with that comes the message to us. 'Take heed,' says St. Peter, 'to yourselves.' 'It was the one thing to say. In circumstances like these we men and women have great need to take heed to ourselves. If indeed the world were fated to perish in blood and ruin it would matter comparatively little how we bore ourselves. But if we are called to take a hand in the making of a new time, then right thought and right conduct become a matter of infinite moment. For new epochs are not made mechanically or from without, but in the souls of the men and women of the generation that ushers them in. And whether the thought and purpose of God are to be realised in any generation will depend on whether the men and women of that generation are ready to grasp these thoughts and purposes and to put heart and mind and will at the disposal of the Spirit of God for their realisation.'

And how? First by sobriety. That is to say, by being serious, by being in earnest. Not by being gloomy or despondent. St. Peter does not mean that. For out of gloom no great things come. But by being in earnest. 'Said Hector Macpherson, drum-major, 93rd Highlanders, in the Crimean war, to a chaplain who had asked his advice as to how to work among the troops: "Look round you. See the pickets of Liprandi's army. See yon batteries on the right, and the men at the guns. Mark yon trains of ammunition. Hear the roar of that cannon. Look where you may, it is all earnest here. There is not a man but feels it is a death struggle. We are all in earnest, Sir; we are not playing at soldiers here. If you would do good, you must be in earnest too."'

'If we would do good.' What good can we do? We stand 'against a background of awful tragedy and amid a world in tears.' And grief is a lonely thing. The heart knoweth its own bitterness.

On seas where every pilot fails,
A thousand thousand ships to-day,
Ride with a moaning in their sails
Through winds grey and waters grey.

They are the ships of grief. They go
As fleets are derelict and driven;
Estranged from every port they know
Scarce asking fortitude of Heaven.

No! do not hail them. Let them ride
Lonely as they would lonely be.
There is an hour will prove the tide:
There is a sun will strike the sea.

'We may not hail them,' says Mr. Allan; 'we know that the great Comforter will do His work. But we can pray for them; we can show by our demeanour that we understand. We can at least be nobly serious while others suffer vicariously for us.'

And we can do something in face of the future. 'It is simply appalling to hear people speak, as they do, of the return to the *status quo*, calmly acquiescing in the thought that what has been must be again, *in time*. Assuredly it may and will if we do not bestir ourselves. For we are God's co-workers, and if we fail Him everything is lost and all the sacrifice and suffering will be in vain.'

The other demand that St. Peter makes upon us is watchfulness unto prayer. He bids us 'watch as the sentry does against surprise and sudden danger; lest the enemy of the souls of men take us unawares, and the Christ in this hour of a new Gethsemane should come and find us sleeping; lest when God speaks there should be none to hear. Watch, for the new age is at the door. Be alert and expectant; for a great day of the Son of Man draws nigh.' And he bids us watch unto

prayer—'not resting in the human only, but calling in the divine: blending our wills with the living Will that is energising at the heart of the Universe and seeking to find entrance into, and a channel of expression through, our yielded minds and hearts.'

'With fine insight one of our great captains of industry said that "there are problems in the spiritual and social world which are like some of our metals: altogether refractory to low temperatures. They will only melt with great heat and there is no other possibility of melting them." They will not yield merely to "the coldness of intellectual power, although intellectual power may be a tool, an instrument in the hands of the spiritual life."' 'Christian people have a citizenship on earth as well as in heaven, and there is need to call in by faith and prayer help from that higher world We need the high temperature for the refractory metals. And without prayer — earnest, believing, importunate prayer — the temperature will not come.'

Our Lord denounced the Pharisees and spared the Sadducees. Yet the Sadducees as well as the Pharisees made open attempts to destroy His reputation; and it was they that brought about His death. Why was He so severe upon the Pharisees, and so lenient with the priests?

The answer is that it never was a personal matter with Him. That the priests who were Sadducees should endeavour to catch Him in His words gave Him little disturbance. He could answer them and turn the opportunity into an everlasting lesson. And even that they should compass His death was a small thing in comparison with the guilt of the Pharisees. As the Assyrian was once the rod of God's anger, so the Sadducee worked out the will of God in the death of His Son. The Son of Man went as it was written of Him, and although no doubt the woe unto that man by whom He was put to death rests upon them, yet the sin of the death of Christ is not to be compared with the sin of thwarting the gospel.

It is not easy for a Jew to understand this. And so it is not surprising that Mr. Jacob MANN, of the Jews' College, London, writing in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, should express his astonishment that while the chief priests 'were greatly opposed to Jesus and took a prominent part in his trial,' yet 'the priests as a class are very seldom mentioned in the sayings attributed to Jesus.' Mr. MANN'S conclusion is that the priests are mentioned, or at least referred to oftener than we have supposed.

He thinks that they are referred to in the story of the poor widow who cast two mites into the Treasury. For it is well known that the priests despised the insignificant gifts of the poor and spoke contemptuously of the value of a pigeon or a meal offering. There are some Rabbinic parallels to the story. Commenting on Lev. 2^1, Rabbi ISAAC says, 'Why is the "soul" mentioned in connexion with a meal-offering?' His answer is: 'Who brings such a sacrifice? A poor man. I [that is, God] account it to him as if he sacrificed his soul before Me.' There is elsewhere an anonymous story of a woman who once brought as a sacrifice a handful of flour. 'The priest abused her, saying, "Look what these women offer up! What remains there for eating and what for sacrificing?" The following night this priest had a vision in a dream, enjoining him not to despise such an offering, because it is regarded as if the woman had offered up her life.'

But the strongest example offered by Mr. MANN is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. He holds that the lawyer to whom that parable was spoken was not a lawyer of the Pharisees, but a lawyer of the Sadducees.

For there is no reference to a Pharisee in the parable. The men who passed by on the other side were a priest and a levite. And only a priest

or a levite would have done it. They did it because they must not be defiled. Looking hurriedly at the man who had been left half-dead, they concluded that he was wholly dead. Now the priest dare not touch a dead body by reason of the prohibition in Lev. 21^1, while the levite had to keep himself clean for the service of the Temple.

With the Pharisees it was all the other way. It was one of the first duties of a Pharisee not to let any one lie unburied. When the Sadducees demanded where they found this duty enjoined on a priest, they answered by saying, rather helplessly, that the probibition in Leviticus excluded the case of a body found accidentally by the wayside. The duty became a standing contention between them. It seems therefore to Mr. MANN simply impossible that Jesus could have been reading a lesson to the Pharisees in this parable. It was the Sadducees that needed it, and it was the Sadducees that got it.

Well, it is something to find an earnest scholarly Jew studying the Gospels so carefully. And it is something to hear him say that the details of this parable exactly agree with all that we know from Jewish sources of the place and circumstances. 'From Taanit *27a* we learn that Jericho was largely inhabited by priests. That Jericho and its neighbourhood had sycamore-trees (Luke 19. 4) is also corroborated by Pesaḥim 4. 9, where we are told that the people of Jericho used to engraft their sycamore-trees during the whole eve of the Passover, even in the time of the day when in Jerusalem the Passover lambs were just sacrificed in the Temple.'

Is the morality of a man one thing and the morality of a nation another? We know that Treitschke thought so. And we know the consequences. But it is a common belief among ourselves.

The heroine of a recent and very popular novel hears of a rare flower in a Dutch garden. She resolves to steal it. Not for herself. She would scorn to do such a thing. For her family, to pay a debt of honour contracted by her father. She goes to Holland, lives with the family owning the bulb, sees it, and refuses to steal it. Why? Because she had begun to take an interest in the Dutch family. Yet, immediately after, the same well-born Englishwoman steals a national secret from the Dutch, and has never a qualm of conscience.

Is it not obvious that if she had come to know the Dutch nation as well as she knew the Dutch family she would have been as unable to steal the explosive as she was unable to steal the flower? But the whole question is not answered by that example. The question that demands an answer is not what an individual should do, but what one nation should do to another nation.

That question is taken up by Mr. A. C. BRADLEY. There is a volume of lectures, delivered at Bedford College for Women in February and March 1915, and afterwards published under the title of *The International Crisis in its Ethical and Psychological Aspects* (Oxford University Press). In that volume (which has already been noticed) there is an essay by Mr. BRADLEY on 'International Morality.' There are differences, says Mr. BRADLEY, between the duty of a State and the duty of an individual. And he lays stress on two in particular.

The first difference is that the individual is governed by the customs, public opinion, or laws of the country in which he lives. When he transgresses he is called to account, and, if necessary, he is forcibly prevented from transgressing further. There is no law superior to the nation. If the nation transgresses—what does it transgress? the terms of the Hague Convention, the Treaty of Paris, the Declaration of London? If it transgresses any or all of these, who is to call it to account? And if it persists in transgressing, who is to prevent it? There is nothing to be done,

thinks Mr. BRADLEY, but for the nations to go to war.

The other difference is that the individual may allow his interests to suffer, but the State, acting as trustee for the people, cannot allow the interests of the nation to suffer. As an individual you are ready to shorten your life for some worthy object, or even to throw it away for the life of another. 'Asked to justify your conduct, you might answer perhaps that your life is but one of forty million English lives, that what you lose others gain, and that there are plenty to take your place. But England, your State, *is* forty million lives. For it to surrender *its* interest, to make itself poor, weak, or maimed, is to do that to forty millions, many of them children. How then can it have the same duty that you have; and how can its normal primary duty help being its duty to itself?' It is obvious that the nation as a nation cannot always do that which an individual may do. And if we regard the State or government as the trustee of the nation, it is equally obvious that it has not the freedom to do with the affairs of the nation that which a member of the government may do with his own.

Those are Mr. BRADLEY'S differences between the individual and the State. In an article in *The Calcutta Review* for the current quarter, Dr. G. F. BARBOUR looks into them. He is very tender towards Mr. BRADLEY. He goes with him all the way that he can go. When he parts from him he parts with respectful sorrow. But he parts from him.

In the first place, he recalls this most momentous fact, that the obligations of one nation towards another do not begin with the Hague Convention or any other human agreement. There is a law for nations beyond the nations themselves, older in time, greater in majesty. That eternal law of righteousness, on which the Universe is hung, is the real international arbiter. And it uses force. The nation that transgresses may continue its transgression for a time. So may the individual malefactor. But sooner or later the law of righteousness catches up with it and lays it by the heels.

In this respect, therefore, the nation and the individual do not really differ. The individual may be caught sooner, but the nation will be caught. The individual may do incomparably less mischief before he is laid low, but when the nation's chastisement comes it is incomparably more awful and more enduring. The German nation, in the hands of its military authorities, has done great harm to Belgium and to Serbia. On the 23rd day of February 1916, Mr. Asquith in the House of Commons spoke of it, and said: 'We shall never sheathe the sword which we have not lightly drawn, until Belgium—I will now add Serbia (loud cheers)—recovers in full measure all, and more than all, that she has sacrificed; until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression; until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed on an unassailable foundation; and until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed (cheers).'

Why did the House of Commons receive that declaration with cheers? There lay at the back of these cheers the fervid assurance that the wrong done by one nation to another will not go unpunished. And the assurance rested fundamentally on the universal and divine law of righteousness.

The other difference which Mr. BRADLEY finds between the individual and the nation is the difference between a private person and a trustee. Now it is evident that this difference is a real one. It may be true that a man cannot always do what he will with his own. It is also true that he can do a great deal more with his own than he can with that of another. But the question is, Does this difference involve a difference in morality? Dr. BARBOUR brings it to the test in three par-

ticulars. The particulars are Truthfulness, Generosity, and Self-sacrifice.

The first is Truthfulness. There is a Christian precept, a mere *obiter dictum*, you should say, of one of the Christian apostles, that we are to speak the truth in love. The addition 'in love' is peculiarly Christian. The obligation to speak the truth is universal. Does it lie on the conscience of the individual only? Does it not also lie on the conscience of the State or government? The diplomatist says No. And his historian acquits him. At a critical moment in the struggle for Italian unity, Cavour agreed to surrender Savoy and Nice to Napoleon. But he dared not tell his nation so. He dared not tell the British statesmen, Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, who were working in the interests of Italian unity at considerable personal and national sacrifice. He denied that any such agreement was in contemplation. Yet his biographer, William Roscoe THAYER, a disinterested American citizen, defends his conduct. Would Cavour have lied in his own interest? Mr. THAYER does not believe that he would. As trustee for the Kingdom of Piedmont he lied again and again, and is acquitted. 'The duty of maintaining a false face towards his English supporters wrung Cavour's heart. To confide to them, however, meant to lose Emilia and Tuscany; because Napoleon would not have consented to their annexation unless he were to be compensated elsewhere; and if the English government had known in January what every one knew in March, it might have conjured up a coalition against which Napoleon would not have dared to move.'

What does Dr. BARBOUR say to that? He does not say that the duty of the individual and the duty of the State are identical. Yet he does not admit that the State should ever be compelled to lie. He does not admit that there is one code of morality for the individual, and another for the State. If the government is trustee for the nation, that is a greater obligation than the obligation of a private individual. The government ought therefore to be more careful in entering into obligations.

He takes the case of a treaty. Treitschke says that all international treaties are signed with the stipulation: *rebus sic stantibus*. A State cannot bind its will for the future with respect to another State. It therefore concludes all treaties with that silent reservation. Does Dr. BARBOUR agree? Who could agree, with the glaring horror of Belgium staring him in the face? It might be answered that things never do remain as they are. Upon which Treitschke would shrug his shoulders and say, Quite so: a treaty therefore will be observed only if it is convenient for the State to observe it.

Dr. BARBOUR offers this example. Great Britain repeatedly gave the assurance that her occupation of Egypt was only a temporary expedient. 'At first the undertaking to depart when order had been established was doubtless sincerely given; yet it was a convenient and politic declaration at the time, and it was renewed after it must have been quite apparent that both our imperial interest and our moral responsibility for the good government of Egypt itself made an early evacuation well-nigh impossible. Finally, in 1904, the British and French Governments in the first "public articles" of their Convention stated that they had "no intention of altering the political status" of Egypt and Morocco respectively; but in the first "secret article" of the same treaty they proceeded to arrange on what terms changes should be made "in the event of either Government finding itself constrained, by the force of circumstance, to modify the policy in respect to Egypt or Morocco."'

Dr. BARBOUR might have gone to Germany for an example, but that example is better. It is better for us. What is the lesson of it? The lesson is that the greater our responsibility for fulfilling an obligation the more careful must we be in entering into it. 'This undertaking about Egypt,' says

Dr. BARBOUR, 'which originally was only at the worst somewhat rashly entered into, led in the course of twenty years to something not unlike deliberate evasion.'

The second test to which Dr. BARBOUR brings the question of national morality is more difficult. It is the test of Generosity.

By generosity he does not mean simply the giving of gifts. The word may cover that. A nation may, through its government, send assistance to another nation in distress, as after an earthquake or in a famine. But such assistance is usually rendered either privately or by public subscription. As a rare and daring act of generosity a government may even cede certain territory to another State. One of the most familiar examples is the cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece by Mr. Gladstone. But it is evident that acts of generosity such as these can be done only when the State is strongly convinced of the justice as distinct from the generosity of its action.

By generosity here Dr. BARBOUR means willingness to go to the help of another nation that is oppressed. Did not the Emperor of the French do this when he made war on Austria on behalf of Victor Emmanuel and the liberation of the Italians? It may at least be argued that he did. Had he the right to do it? *He* had the right, because he was an autocrat, and in doing it he risked his own reputation and throne. He was not, properly speaking, a trustee for the nation. When he saw the dead lie out on the fields of Magenta and Solferino, he was deeply distressed, but he was not troubled about the rightness or wrongness of his action.

With a democratic government it is otherwise. A democratic government cannot make free with the persons or property of the nation, whatever may be the necessity. But the nation may declare its approval. Then there is no difference between the action of the State and the action of the individual. 'Nor is there any nobler rôle possible in our modern world than that of the leader of a free people, who sets before them two paths and persuades them to tread the higher even if it leads to the sacrifice of some material gain.'

The third test is Self-sacrifice. It is the most difficult of all. No doubt generosity, in all its higher reaches, involves sacrifice. 'But national self-sacrifice is the last virtue which we could look for on the theory that the primary and dominant object of government is the well-being of the governed. Yet there is a sense in which sacrifice is the soul of all virtue. If fidelity to one's word, or justice, or generosity, do not involve some element of self-abnegation or personal loss, we say in ordinary speech that there is "no virtue" in them. Even duty would lose its characteristic meaning if it could always, or generally, be performed without loss or pain. So those who seek to rule out sacrifice from the roll of national virtues cut deep into the very conception of national morality. If veracity and generosity are duties, and if there is merit in fulfilling them, that merit must be won at some cost of sacrifice.'

Is there an example? Who will ask the question? 'Not the least remarkable thing in the action of Belgium in August 1914 was the swiftness—nay, the immediacy—of the resolve to resist at all costs. Kant has a far-reaching distinction between the "hypothetical imperative" of prudence, which depends on some deliberately chosen object of pursuit or maxim of interest, and the "categorical imperative" of duty, which suffers no deliberation and can be evaded only by the betrayal of that which is highest in our nature. That there is a "categorical imperative" in the life of nations, and that it overrides all the ordinary maxims of prudent statesmanship, was never more clearly shown than by King Albert and his advisers in those fateful hours. They knew that they were trustees for their country; but, faced with two conceptions of trusteeship—that of material interest and that of freedom and honour—they unhesitatingly chose the latter.'