
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

Shadow and Substance.

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III.

The eternal reality itself has expressed itself in the temporal order, and that progressively until a consummation, not exclusive of progress objective and subjective, has been reached in Christ. So far our study of the Epistle has brought us. Our next step must be to try to answer the question: How has the eternal reality God—as finally manifested in Christ—dealt with all that in the temporal order, in which it so manifests itself, contradicts and challenges its supremacy? The problem of Creation and the problem of History bring us to the problem of Evil. (1) The writer of the Epistle does not, as does Paul (in the generally accepted interpretation, which has been recently called in question) in Ro 8, deal with the question on the cosmic scale, but only on the human. He finds that man has not secured the dominion over the creature that befits his dignity as but a little inferior to the Creator. 'Now we see not yet all things subjected to him' (2^8). Man's unfulfilled promise, however, he sees fulfilled in Christ, and for mankind fulfilled through Christ. 'But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings' ($2^{9.10}$). In one of the previous studies the soteriological significance and value of this passage was dealt with, and must now be taken for granted; we return to the study of it as a theodicy, the Cross as the justification of the ways of God to men. (2) In dealing with the problem of evil, it is often assumed that there are only two alternative solutions, *pessimism* or *optimism*, but a third, *meliorism*, has been suggested, and it is that which is presented to us. The writer does take the world and life seriously; sin, pain, sorrow, death, dread of judgment are real to him; no Christian Science vagaries would find any countenance in him; but he is no pessimist. The eternal reality for him is not a blind striving will, or an unconscious; but the personal God—good, wise, holy, and, despite the appearances, almighty, belief in whom belonged to his Jewish inheritance, which remained unshaken by his acquisition of Gentile philosophy. For him, however, the reality of evil forbade the easy and shallow optimism, which constantly finds refuge from doubt and question in Browning's words: 'God's in His heaven, All's right with the world,' although Browning's poetry as a whole expresses no such philosophy. The writer saw a great deal wrong with the world, and needing to be righted. To say that the world is the worst of all possible worlds must to the serious, earnest mind seem often much nearer truth than to say that it is the best, although to say either shows an intellectual arrogance not to be desired, as what do we know about possible worlds? and the actual world is all we know. The most we can say, and it is enough for thought and life, is this, that we see that the world is being made better; and we hope that it will yet become the best we can conceive or desire (whether the best possible or not matters not to us). This attitude is *meliorism*, and it is the writer's. But meliorism may rest on the common vague belief in human progress, which there is so much in the world to contradict and challenge. Or it may be built on surer foundations, such as the writer in this passage lays for our faith.

(3) In dealing with his solution we may observe (i) first of all that he does not try to escape the difficulty, as recent newspaper correspondence has suggested it should be escaped, by surrendering the almightiness of God. The method adopted by God in bringing many sons to glory, is in the writer's judgment not incongruous, but appropriate for the omnipotent, for Him 'for whom are all things, and through whom are all things,' who is both final purpose and ultimate cause of all reality, with no force or fate distinct from Him, independent of Him, capable of resisting and conquering His will. That man's will can refuse and resist God's will the writer admits; but that conflict is in the ethical and not the cosmic realm. He does not invite us to abandon the first article of

the Apostles' Creed, 'I believe in God the Father almighty.' To abandon that belief is to surrender all security that the problem shall be solved at all. His implicit argument here may be made more explicit. For the solution of a problem essentially moral and religious, the means must be as the ends. God's physical omnipotence cannot bring many sons to glory: that can be accomplished only by making the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. God's almightiness would be here irrelevant, even in the proper sense of the word, impertinent. God's goodness and wisdom direct, and are not controlled by His power.

(ii) *Secondly*, the writer here concentrates on the moral and religious problem, how men sinners can be made sons of God, and how so made they can be brought to the fulness of their life as the sons of God, as sharers in God's glory, His manifested perfection. This does not indicate any indifference or insensitiveness to physical evil, to pain as distinct from sin, but is a putting of first things first, as it is in the realm of the conscious, intelligent, voluntary, and personal, that the problem most presses, and the solution lies nearest. That problem solved, the other may be approached more hopefully and bravely. Further, the way in which that problem is solved, the recognition of the function of voluntary and vicarious suffering in man's salvation, leads to the conclusion that pain itself is not wholly evil, but subserves good.

(iii) The solution here offered, in the third place, brings before us illuminative principles. The Author of salvation is Himself made perfect for His saving ministry to men by His sufferings. He learns a sympathy which does not fall short of self-identification with man by sharing man's suffering to the uttermost. He learns an obedience which amounts to a self-identification with the saving will of God through His sufferings. Personality is perfected both manward and Godward by pain. This suffering is not only voluntary in love to God and man, it is vicarious. 'He tasted death for every man.' The sinless suffer that the sinful may be saved. Not only is personal character perfected, but social function is fully discharged in suffering. By that suffering an end that makes it more than worth while is achieved; 'many sons are brought to glory.' If we ask, Why does not God choose some other way? surely we dare not press the question, when we recall that it was the Son of God, 'the effulgence of His glory, the express impress of His substance,' who so suffered. The way which God has chosen as His own way is not one that man can refuse to tread and so scorn God's companionship. This is the writer's meliorism, his contribution to the solution of the problem of evil in the world.

IV.

(1) The light that is thrown on the problem of evil by the Cross of Christ is not its primary purpose; its primary purpose is to deal with sin. It is because the writer shows how the sacrifice of Christ deals with a universal need in a universal way that we may speak of his *universalism*. It is true that his main argument in the Epistle deals with the relation of Christ, His sacrifice and His salvation, to the Jewish ritual; but apart from accidentals, in essentials his reasoning is applicable to all religions and their provision for dealing with man's sense of sin and desire for forgiveness and deliverance. Temple, priest, altar, sacrifice, prayer, these are general features of the religion of man; in the Jewish ritual there is focused, brought to clearer consciousness and more distinct expression, what is widely diffused in mankind. The sense of sin and the desire for forgiveness may not be prominent; the sin confessed may be ritual offence rather than moral transgression; the forgiveness importuned may be escape from penalty rather than restoration of God's fellowship; but, however inadequately conceived or imperfectly expressed, it is a common human need with which the writer is dealing, and for which he declares Christ alone has found the full satisfaction.

(2) We may in this connexion recall Harnack's observations: 'Those who judged this death as a sacrificial death, soon ceased to bring any other bloody offerings to God. . . . He who looks into history recognizes that the suffering of the righteous and the pure is salvation in history. . . . No "reasonable" reflection and no "logical" consideration will be able to eradicate from the moral ideas of humanity the conviction that unrighteousness and sin demand punishment, and that everywhere, when the righteous suffers, an atonement is accomplished, which brings shame and cleansing.'[1]

[1] Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 1900, pp. 99–100.

It is from the common conviction that atonement is necessary that the writer of the Epistle starts: 'All things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission' (9^{22}). This is axiomatic with him, not a problem to be solved, or a proposition to be proved. What modern theories of atonement are concerned about, why atonement is necessary, he takes for granted, as his readers also took for granted. Where he differs from his readers is in insisting 'that the suffering of the righteous and the pure is salvation,' although he concentrates this saving efficacy of personal sacrifice in Jesus Christ, as Harnack does not. Consequently he maintains that 'bloody offerings should cease to be offered to God'; Judaism should be abandoned for Christianity, the shadow for the very image of the good things to come (10^{1}).

(3) The appearance or illusion is throughout the argument opposed to the reality. 'If Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God' ($4^{8.9}$). The readers are exhorted to 'give diligence to enter into that rest' (v.^{11}). There is this rest, because in Christ there is the real high priest; as regards His nature, 'the Son of God,' the scene of His ministry 'the heavens,' His qualifications, perfect sympathy, and perfect obedience. 'We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (v.^{15}). The qualification of sympathy is more fully stated in the words: 'Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted' ($2^{17.18}$). The qualification of obedience is insisted on with great boldness in a passage which seems to refer to the agony of Gethsemane: 'Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered' ($5^{7.8}$). It was because of this sympathy with man and obedience to God that He was made 'perfect through sufferings,' enabled in His sacrifice to 'taste death for every man,' and thus to become the 'author of salvation . . . in bringing many sons unto glory' ($2^{9.10}$). What gives the reality to the priesthood is that it is no external office, inherited, usurped, or granted by favour, but it is an inward vocation and qualification in experience and character.

(4) For the same reason the sacrifice is a real sacrifice, as no animal offering could possibly be. 'It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins' (10^{4}). God does not desire them, nor can He have any pleasure in them (v.^{8}). It is obedience alone that can and does satisfy God (v.^{9}). The writer does not link the two ideas of sympathy and obedience as giving its value to the Cross as closely together as our thought might desire. By His sympathy Christ so identified Himself with the lot of man, all the consequences of his sinfulness, that death for Him had the darkness and dread sin gives to it. By His obedience He so identified Himself with the will of God, that in submitting to death He approved in accepting it as the judgment of God on sin. Intercession accompanied sacrifice in the priest's mediation; and Christ, too, offers the real intercession. 'Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us' (9^{24}). As He presents an adequate sacrifice, so He possesses an immediate contact with God Himself; and thus too He secures a complete salvation: 'Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them' (7^{25}).

(5) The reality, in contrast to the shadow, of the priesthood, the sacrifice, and the intercession, is reflected in the Christian experience. Believers may 'draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that *they* may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need' (4^{16}). Whereas the Levitical sacrifices could not so cleanse as to leave 'no more conscience of sins' (10^{2}), by the obedience of Christ in His sacrifice believers 'have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (v.^{10}). They can now draw near to God 'with a true heart in fulness of faith, having *their* hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and *their* bodies washed with pure water' (10^{22}). 'As an anchor of the soul,' they have a hope 'sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil' (6^{19}). For them Christ

is thus 'the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises' (8^6). There is much in the detail of the argument that now sounds unfamiliar to us, but the conclusion is one that has universal significance, that Christ meets a universal need in a universal way, because in His sacrifice and salvation all is personal, ethical, and spiritual, appealing solely and wholly to the moral conscience and religious consciousness of mankind.

Literature.

THE SCHOLAR AS PREACHER.

'The Scholar as Preacher' series could scarcely have been representative without a volume by the Rev. Alfred E. Garvie, D.D., Principal of New College, London. For Dr. Garvie is unquestionably both a scholar and a preacher. He is a scholar in order that he may be a preacher; he preaches as only a scholar can preach.

The title of the volume is timely. It is *The Master's Comfort and Hope*. The sermons it contains are all based on texts taken from Jn 13^{31} to Jn 14^{31}. In short, it is a connected series of sermons on the great comfortable chapter of the Bible, the resort and consolation of all mourning and anxious people in all the generations of the Christian era.

And how admirably Dr. Garvie expounds his text and applies its wealth of consolation. As the dedication tells us, he has learnt in suffering what he utters in sermon. If we were compelled to select a sermon for special approbation, we think we should select the twelfth. Its title is 'The Power of Prayer in Christ's Name.' The text we need not indicate.

THE STUDY OF CHRISTIANITY.

Under the editorship of Dr. Gerald Birney Smith, Professor of Christian Theology in the University of Chicago, a volume has been prepared to which contributions have been made by many of the best American scholars, and of which the purpose is to guide the student of Christianity, or of any aspect of Christianity, to the nature of the subject and the best literature upon it. The volume has been issued in this country by the Cambridge University Press. The title is *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion* (12s. 6d. net).

In every case the description of the subject to be studied, whether the Old Testament or the New, whether Early Christianity or Mediæval, whether Systematic Theology or Practical, is well done; in most cases it is a triumph of masterly condensation. The lists of literature could, of course, be criticised: who ever saw a list that could not? But the lists of literature also are the product of real scholarship and breadth of outlook.

THE IDEA OF GOD.

'There can, at least, be no doubt that the twentieth century opens with a very remarkable revival of general interest in philosophy; and, as I have tried to show, it is not the least hopeful sign of this movement that the impulse has come not so much from the professional philosophers as from men of science, in virtue of insights reached and problems raised in the progress of scientific thought. There is, doubtless, as always where a movement spreads to wider circles, much crude statement and wild theorizing by philosophically uninstructed writers. But there is a hopefulness even in the determination expressed in so many quarters to be done with academic tradition, and to discuss the universe from its foundations entirely without prejudice. There is a new spirit abroad in the philosophical world, a freshness of outlook, a contagious fervour, a sense of expectancy, which have long been absent from philosophical writing. The greater part of the nineteenth century was, philosophically, a period of reaction and criticism, an age great in science and in history, but suspicious of philosophy, distrustful of her syntheses, too occupied for the most part with its own concrete work to feel the need of them, and otherwise prone to take refuge in positivism or agnosticism. The philosophy of the century was in these circumstances mostly in a minor key, critical and historical