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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.

THE BISHOP OF DURHAM believes that the Second Coming of our Lord will take place in 1920.

And no man is likely to know better. For Dr. MOULE is a good scholar and a good man. Now God does not reveal His purposes to the good man, for He expects us to use all the faculties we have in the discovery of truth. And He does not reveal His purposes to the good scholar, for He requires the surrender of every faculty to His will. He makes known His secrets to the good man who is a good scholar, to the good scholar who is a good man.

The BISHOP OF DURHAM delivered an address on the Second Coming at a meeting of Clergy and Ministers held at the Cannon Street Hotel on Wednesday morning, January 28. It is published in *The Life of Faith* for February 5. No one can read the address without perceiving that it is the address of a good man. The language throbs with devotion to the Redeemer, it meets the demands of a disciplined conscience for the closest possible approximation to truth. And the scholarship is just as apparent. It is under the heaviest sense of responsibility that Dr. MOULE has come to his conclusion.

He has come to it by the way of the Apocalypse. In the Apocalypse the length of the present æon

or 'age' is specified, now as 1260 days, now as 42 months (the same duration), now as a time, times and a-half, that is, three times and a-half, each time so measured filling 360 days. That last numeration suggests the number seven. Thus the whole length of the present 'age' is twice 1260 'days,' or 2520 years. And to know when it will end we have simply to know when it began.

Now this present 'age' is described by our Lord Himself as 'the times of the Gentiles.' In the course of what Dr. MOULE calls 'His predictive utterances in Passion Week,' Christ said, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*' We have therefore to consider when the times of the Gentiles began. And Dr. MOULE has no hesitation in saying that the times of the Gentiles, or Gentile 'Age,' began when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Babylonians, 600 years B.C.

Take 600 from 2520 and we have 1920.

Why does the author of the Apocalypse divide the period into two? He does not speak of 2520 'days,' but of 1260. Dr. MOULE believes that he is interested not only in the end of the period when Christ shall come again, but also and more immediately in the middle of it when two great events were to take place. One of these events was the

rise of Islam, a wholly new apparition, a novel faith, 'conscious of both Moses and Jesus; consciously in its development the fierce foe of both Jew and Christian; ere long the alien mistress of Jerusalem.' The other was the emergence into new 'bulk and force of the Papal monarchy, with its portentous claims, so remote from apostolic ideals. I take it as at least gravely probable that the Apocalypse foreshadowed that great and pregnant epoch, and made it the note of the opening of the second half of the "times of the Gentiles" the times, time and a-half, to run out before the consummation should be at hand.'

Now it must not be supposed that the BISHOP OF DURHAM believes that the year 1920 will see the end of the world. He is too good a scholar to make that mistake. His phrase is 'the end of the age.' It is true that our English versions, all but the Rhemish or Roman Catholic version, translate St. Matthew's phrase (28²⁰) 'the end of the world.' But the correct translation is given in the margin of the Revised Version, 'the consummation of the age.' 'As a result of the common rendering, it has been widely thought for generations that the Lord's return will bring with it a collapse of the universe. The words of His great promise do not say so. True, the material world, the glorious robe of its Creator, will one day be so touched by His will, on which its being momentarily rests, that "as a vesture it will be changed," not into nothing, but into a yet worthier glory. But the consummation of the age is another matter.'

But, although the year 1920 will not see the end of the world, the BISHOP OF DURHAM believes that it will see the Second Coming of Christ. 'And physical and spiritual events of exceeding awe and holy glory will attend it.' Among them will be the resurrection of the dead, and the rapture of the living. 'We will expect,' says Dr. MOULE, 'with a hope humble but deep-founded, to see soon the hour when death shall die and the grave be buried; for "they that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Jesus" when He comes again, and

we are looking for His coming soon. Then shall we "together with them" "be for ever with the Lord."

We have given but the bare, bald figures. The article itself is full of interest, psychological and exegetical. If the BISHOP OF DURHAM enters upon the prophetic office he does so with as real a reluctance and as irresistible a sense of the divine call as any prophet of ancient Israel. And before the conclusion is reached every step of the argument is tested, the Bishop's well-tryed exegetical ability working hand in hand with his reverence for the very letter of Scripture.

An important and even momentous book has been published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton under the title of *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith* (3s. net). The author is the Rev. David S. CAIRNS, D.D., Professor of Dogmatics and Apologetics in the United Free Church College, Aberdeen.

The book contains four lectures which were delivered in Cambridge. Each of the lectures must have occupied an hour in delivery. Once more we are reminded that brevity is not one of the essential things in a lecture or sermon that will be listened to. What are the essential things?

The first and most essential of all is to be in touch with the audience. Most preachers ought to begin there at once, without throwing away a single sentence, for the audience is well known to them. The stranger has to feel his way for a little, but if he is a lecturer or a preacher of discernment he knows that his words are mere sound signifying nothing until he and his audience come together.

Another essential thing is matter—plenty to say, with frequently occurring illustration and occasional anecdote. A third is clearness of arrangement, much care being taken to see that the conjunctions introducing a new paragraph are the right conjunctions. 'And' can never be used for 'but,' or

'but' for 'and.' The last essential to a really telling sermon or lecture is the possession of such a singular felicity of style as Professor CAIRNS commands.

The subject of these lectures is—what shall we call it? Speaking to Cambridge undergraduates, Professor CAIRNS calls it 'The Christian Interpretation of the Riddle of the World.' And he is wise to let his audience see at once the line of thought it is his purpose to pursue. The Riddle of the World is there. If you are for a moment out of touch with him because the phrase is not familiar to you as an expression of the presence of evil in the world, he explains his meaning without delay, and uses other expressions, one or other of which is sure to come straight home to your mind or your experience.

The Riddle of the World is there. And you cannot get rid of it by rejecting the Christian interpretation of it. There are, however, other interpretations besides the Christian. Accordingly, the first point to make is that no other interpretation of the Riddle of the World is more satisfactory than the Christian interpretation. With great fairness, but also with great firmness, Professor CAIRNS shows that no interpretation has ever been offered that can compete with the Christian interpretation.

What is the Christian interpretation of the presence of evil in the world and all our woe? It is Christ. Without a moment's unnecessary delay Dr. CAIRNS comes to Christ. Faith in God may hold you loyal, but faith in Christ makes you victorious. Professor CAIRNS is most careful to show that we must come to God at last. But he is thoroughly assured that we can come only through Christ.

And he means the human Christ. An earnest and forceful declaration of his own belief in the Godhead of Christ is made when the time comes. But it does not come till the very end of the book.

We must get to God, and the way to get to God, Professor CAIRNS tells us, is to study the life of the historical Jesus as we have it in the Gospels.

We have said that Professor CAIRNS uses illustrations, and does not despise anecdotes. Sometimes his anecdotes have a personal reference. And then they are so inoffensive and so effective that we are encouraged to follow his example. It was our fortune once to read Row's *Jesus of the Evangelists*. We have not read it again, and cannot say now what is the intrinsic value of the book. But the reading of it then made an impression that is not yet obliterated from our mind. Nay, it is as strong to-day as it was at the beginning. What was the impression? It was that the Jesus whom we find in the Gospels, whom any one may find by simply reading them, brings us to God. Not as a teacher might bring a pupil to an understanding of God. Not even as the law was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. It was that Jesus Himself stood for God, that you could not come to Him, pass by Him, and then come to God, but that you really and truly found God when you gave yourself in faith and love to the Jesus of the Evangelists.

What then? Then the Christian interpretation of the Riddle of the World becomes the interpretation which Christ makes of it. For as soon as we clearly see and firmly believe that Christ stands for God, we turn to Christ and put our question to Him. We say to Him, What is the meaning of so much pain and suffering, of so much mischief of every kind in a world of God's making? We put it again in this way. We say, Had not you yourself as the Son of God something to do with the making of the world? You made it very good. But you made it leaving an opening for the entrance of sin. And after sin came sorrow and death, so that now the very meaning of such a world is a puzzle to us, we cannot comprehend it.

Can we really go to the Gospels with such a question and receive an answer? The answer is

the Christ of the Gospels Himself. He does not need to open His mouth to answer our question. He has only to live and die and rise again. Because that is all done for our sake, for the sake of each single individual of us. It is all done for our sake by God. So great an interest in every single individual of the human race does God take that He spares not His own Son but delivers Him up to the death. Does He do that for things? Does He do that for animals, for birds? Does He send the Son of His love to die for sparrows? He has a great regard for sparrows, not one of them falls to the ground without Him. But we are of more value to Him than many sparrows. For we have the freedom of the will, we have the choice of right and wrong. Us He made, not for mechanical obedience but for the immensely, immeasurably greater thing called love. That is the Christian interpretation of the Riddle of the World.

But when we have solved the Riddle of the World, satisfied with the Christian interpretation of it, we have entered upon a journey, the end of which is far hence and very glorious. We have found Christ, we have found God, we have found a Father who loves us and lives for us. We have found a God who in Christ died for us. And dying with Him we have entered into the enjoyment of sonship. We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ Himself.

We have not followed Professor CAIRNS very closely, but we have indicated his line of reasoning. We do not think that any one will read his book without concluding that it is the most persuasive argument for the truth and finality of Christianity that has appeared in our day.

Is it possible to say that Christ was sinless although He inherited original sin? The Rev. Stewart A. McDOWALL, B.D., Chaplain and Assistant Master at Winchester College, believes that it is possible.

Mr. McDOWALL has been giving himself for

some years to the great purpose of reconciling evolution with orthodox theology. He has already written a volume on *Evolution and the Need of Atonement*, another on *Evolution and Spiritual Life*, and he has recently published a third volume on *Evolution and the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Cambridge: at the University Press). It is in the last volume that Mr. McDOWALL discusses the possibility of our Lord being born in original sin like the rest of us and yet being sinless.

His solution is really a very simple one. Original sin is not sin. Whatever we inherit from our ancestors we do not, says Mr. McDOWALL, and cannot, inherit sin. We may inherit weakness of will, we may inherit a propensity towards sensuality, pride, sloth, and any or all of the other things that flesh is heir to; but we cannot inherit sin, for sin is the conscious misdirection of the will, the free choice of evil, where the choice of good was in our power.

But what is the advantage of saying that Christ inherited original sin—that is to say, a propensity towards sin? The advantage to Mr. McDOWALL'S mind is very great. It makes Christ human. It makes Him a real man. It gives reality to His temptations. Most and greatest of all, it makes it possible for Him to become really and truly an atonement for our sin.

For in the first place it made Him one with us. That seems to Mr. McDOWALL to be essential to His atonement. And in the second place it made Him experience the great mystery which we call dereliction, that shutting out from God, or from the enjoyment of God's favour, which drew from Him the most awful cry that has ever been uttered on earth. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

It is time to recognize the presence in our midst of a new religious movement. It has not yet attained to the name of Church. Its title

for the present is the Society of Free Catholics. But it has a considerable membership, and still more considerable sympathy. And it possesses an official organ, *The Free Catholic*.

It has scarcely been possible until now to give an account of the movement. There has been no adequate or authoritative exposition of it. Now, however, a volume has been published by Messrs. Allen & Unwin of which the title is *The Coming Free Catholicism* (5s. net). The author of the book, the Rev. W. G. PECK, is, we take it, a United Methodist, and in that fact lies the significance of the book and the movement.

Why is it necessary to start a new religious movement? Mr. PECK's answer is, the breakdown of organized Christianity. The churches have failed. They have all failed together. Mr. PECK believes that he knows why they have failed, and that Free Catholicism, understood and acted upon, is able to restore the Church of Christ in this land to its original glory and destined power.

All the Churches have failed. 'In England,' he says, 'the claim of the national Church to represent the nation had long been precarious, for the Free Churches, in their days of power, had claimed a large share of the English people's allegiance. But the Free Churches had been falling of late years into a condition not unlike decay. At the time of the war's outbreak they were without adequate leadership, without any clear consciousness of their own meaning; and they had long since ceased to exercise any real power in the national councils. Individual Free Churchmen rose to high office in the State, but the Free Churches grew gradually weaker.'

'A few years ago there was a widespread belief that the ideal of social service could replace the abandoned religious faith as a positive and constructive basis of human loyalty. The belief is already stale and old-fashioned. Social reform as a religion is not a success. As an enterprise of

Christian men it may have a great future, but as a substitute for Catholic Christianity it is a ludicrous failure.'

The result is that 'whereas the grandfathers worshipped Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word, the grandsons imagine they are paying Him a compliment by reckoning Him with Proudhon and St-Simon as one of the early Socialists. Yet doubtless it is a healthier thing to listen to Mr. Philip Snowden or Mr. Ben Tillett than to sit at home listening to a music-hall dirge from a cheap gramophone, or reading reports of Divorce Court proceedings from an evil Sunday newspaper. These are the chief alternative occupations of the poor on the Lord's day.'

But Mr. PECK does not believe that that is the end. There is no visible return yet of the multitudes to the Church. He thinks it probable that many things must happen before this takes place. 'Beneath the surface, however, there certainly is an awakening sense of spiritual need, and this can be judged by the growth of superstitions and the importation of foreign cults which we have witnessed of late. Indeed, most articles of the Catholic Faith find acceptance in one quarter or another, provided only that they are disguised under a new label. The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting and the communion of saints return as spiritualism. The miracles of healing and all the traditions of the holy wells come back with the Christian Scientists. God the Father is received as the latest discovery of Oriental poets. Mr. H. G. WELLS has announced a new religion with God the Son as the sole object of faith. And God the Holy Ghost is now the Life Force. It would be easy to mock at these fugitive and confused shadows of the Faith; but in spite of much intellectual pride and sheer wrong-headedness accompanying their profession they do bear witness to the yearning of men, and taken together they cry aloud that the full Gospel of the Church is the one satisfaction craved by the human mind and heart.'

The full Gospel of the Church—that is what the Society of Free Catholics claims to supply. Let us see how the claim is made good.

We see at once that in the title Free Catholicism both words are given their full significance. The value of the word 'Free' comes from the history of Protestantism, the value of the word 'Catholic' is attached to the Church of Rome. Free Catholicism, then, is the recovery of the Roman Church, but stripped of the evil that is in it—stripped especially of its spiritual tyranny, the one real gain of the Reformation.

For Mr. PECK does not think that the Reformation accomplished very much. 'The Protestant theory is that in the sixteenth century the Church was subjected to a severe but salutary surgical operation which cut away certain mortifying limbs whose decay threatened the life of the Body of Christ. But somehow the mortifying limbs lived on, and at the present day they seem to possess as much vitality as the rest of the Body.'

More than that they are the Body. 'For it was not the reformed Churches which preserved the sense of centrality and continuity. They have never lost a certain clumsy and uneasy air, probably due to their self-conscious provincialism and to their position as innovators. The Roman Church has marvellously retained its unity and has managed to keep alive in its members a tenacious faith in the Church. The Protestant sects became a ludicrous mob and the Protestant Faith fell into bewildering confusion.'

This is plain speaking for a United Methodist. But it may be worth our while to submit to it.

We do not require to follow Mr. PECK as he traces the history of religion in this land from the Reformation to the present day. It is a history of failure, he says, or at any rate it has ended in failure. And the most complete failure of all is the failure of what is known as 'Liberal Christianity.'

Fifty years ago great expectations were formed of this movement, which endeavoured to meet the demands of science and preserve the essentials of the Gospel. But the effort broke over the Person of Christ. Liberal Christianity stood face to face with an alternative. It must give up Christ as an enigma, a remote puzzle which the modern world cannot solve; or else it must accept Him as God. Liberal Christianity could not accept Him as God. And once again the hope of the world passed into the power of orthodox Christianity.

But what is orthodox Christianity? It is the Christianity that looks upon Jesus Christ as Lord, Saviour, God. It is the Christianity of St. Paul and St. Francis, of Bunyan and Wesley. That has broken upon our minds, says Mr. PECK, 'with all the force of a great surprise, the discovery that our modern search for truth has led us back to the Catholic Faith.'

And where is the Catholic Faith to be found to-day? In the Church of Rome? Yes, in the Church of Rome. 'Cradled and reared in Protestantism as we have been, we are, moreover, forced to admit that Rome, no matter what her faults and failings, has kept that Faith. She has kept the Faith which is the foundation of social hope, even when she has allied herself with the forces of reaction. She has refused to traffic with the spirit of the age. Like the Bourbons, she forgets nothing and she learns nothing; but we felt that what she had remembered was, at the moment and for us, much more valuable than what we had learned.'

In particular she had kept the idea of the Church. Mr. PECK is not sure that Rome is the goal of his own and his friends' desire, but he is sure that there is a craving in the younger generation of Protestants for the Church, One, Holy, and Catholic. No Protestant Church in existence can meet that craving. The alternative is either the Roman Church or else a new Church, more Catholic in conception than the Roman Church,

and more ready to meet the demands of each new age of Christian progress as they arise. In short, a Free Catholic Church.

But Mr. PECK writes for those to whom the title Catholic is foreign, and not merely foreign, but offensive. Why must he use that title? The evangelical tradition is not dead beyond hope of resuscitation. Why does he not go back to the Old Protestant evangelical position and find in it a sufficient mode for the presentation of the truth he has discovered? He says it is impossible, and he gives his reasons.

The first reason is, that no real spiritual revival ever does renew the precise forms and terms of earlier movements, because in doing so it would be out of touch with the characteristic requirements of its own age. 'Evangelical Protestantism did retain the Catholic Christology, which is indeed central and vital, but it forfeited many things without which religion can no longer exert its full power, and for lack of which Protestantism itself is dying. Bunyan and Wesley certainly had the heart of the Christian Faith, but Churches, like men, can die from causes other than heart disease. Protestantism generally failed to emphasize the organic fellowship of Christian men, and its apologists have often treated the Catholic doctrine of the Church as a corruption of pure, spiritual religion. Neither Luther, Cranmer, Calvin, nor Knox preserved the organic conception of salvation which is one of the most conspicuous marks of Catholicism; but Christianity will never again flourish unless the doctrine of the Church as the corporate fellowship, outside of which there is no full salvation, receives more effective statement than Protestants have given it.'

Then, again, to return to Protestant evangelicalism would be to perpetuate the divisions of the Church of Christ. At a time when nationalism is passing into internationalism, 'and when commerce, science, philosophy, and finance are cosmopolitan, there must be one Church, and one

Church only, throughout the world. It may be a Church of rich variety, but its unity must be unassailable. The problems of our day are entirely beyond the competence of sects or denominations even to discuss. In fact, the insulation of Christian communities in denominations or in national Churches is a demonstrated absurdity which must be abolished as quickly as possible. If Christ is to have a distinctive witness amongst the affairs of men, the only possible organ is the Church—One, Holy, and Catholic.'

The third reason is that, while there are two spheres of life, a natural and a spiritual, Protestant evangelicalism has so concentrated upon the one sphere as to look upon the other as an outcast or even an enemy. 'Evangelical Protestantism would not admit that the "natural" elements have any rightful place in the Church. Its cry is "Jesus only." In other words, it emphasizes the one answer to the religious cravings of mankind which all Christians believe to be the sufficient answer; but in its practical institutions it gives no expression to the cravings themselves. They are human—and therefore sinful. Natural religion is tabooed; and the result is that religion has often an unnatural air in Protestant countries.' The true Catholic Church 'must recognize and sanctify all the basic and constructive factors of human life and must find due place for art, philosophy, music, and for the "natural" expression of the religious instinct.'

Our last question is, What are the elements which this Free Catholic Church intends to take over from the Roman Church? Mr. PECK gives prominence to three—priesthood, sacrifice, ritual.

'The lack of priestly consciousness,' he says, 'is one of the cardinal faults of Protestant life and worship. The majority of Protestants scowl at the very name of priest. Priesthood is regarded as a human intrusion into the divine plan of salvation, the buttress of all that is obscurantist and reactionary, a menace to liberty. And yet it is

safe to say that without it no Church could exist, and that even the Free Churches possess it. Priesthood is practically as old and as universal as the operation of the religious instinct. The gay iconoclasts who used to explain that religion was invented by priests, always found it tough work to explain how the priests invented priesthood. Mankind, with its shifting moods and its sporadic faith and recurrent disloyalty, craves objective representation, and Catholicism rightly interpreted Christianity as providing the full satisfaction for this craving. It exalts the Christian priesthood, which sanctions the priestly instinct of humanity. Christ is the High-Priest who determines the priestly nature of His Church and by whom every believer is given priestly consecration.'

But surely the Reformers accepted the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. 'The Reformers,' says Mr. PECK, 'did indeed give allegiance to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, but they never built the principle into the life and worship of Protestantism, and thus neglected one great means of balancing the dispersive individualism which has been the bane of its existence ever since. For priesthood involves organic unity. If many men can be represented by one man, that man is the symbol of a bond between the many. If the Church is a priestly body, the conception involves faith in the organic unity of the race. In our worship we enter behind the veil for the sake of all the sinful and broken humanity which exists in the world; and believing in the organic unity of mankind, we must believe that the race can never become finally derelict so long as there is a priesthood presenting in itself the needs of man before the Throne of God. But the Church's ministry thus becomes a representative priesthood. Each minister is a priest in virtue of his representative function. And while we may readily admit that the Roman conception has done great mischief, we must not forget that Rome, at any rate, has

kept the priestly office, showing here, as always, the fuller recognition of the natural operations of religious instinct.'

The next element is sacrifice. Not only has priesthood been practically ignored in Protestantism, but 'all symbolism of sacrifice has been deliberately abolished. It is held to be sufficient that Christ died once: but then, Christ's death has to be spiritually appropriated before it becomes morally effective, and why that spiritual appropriation should not be symbolically set forth it is difficult to see if we are agreed that symbolism is not essentially an evil thing.'

Mr. PECK has already said some strong things for a United Methodist. Here he says another. 'The case for the sacrifice of a Mass,' he says, 'is just as strong as the case for prayer. Christ died for us, but Christ also makes intercession for us. The sacrifice of the Mass relates directly to the sacrifice of Christ. Christian prayer acknowledges the intercession of Christ. Christ died once and He intercedes for ever. If we encourage the practice of prayer, which is the identification of the Church with the one effective Petition, and its appropriation by believers, why should we discourage the Mass, which is the identification of the Church with the one effective Sacrifice and its appropriation by believers?'

All this must be difficult enough for Mr. PECK's fellow-believers, but he is not done yet. Coming to ritual, he says: 'The belief that the Gospel is expressed in greater purity by a sermon than by a crucifix is grounded in the assumption that language is the only valid vehicle of consciousness. It is not. It does not symbolize according to a given convention of sounds. It is essentially analytical and static in its method. There are whole tracts of experience which it cannot express at all. It is as purely pictorial of reality as any rite or symbol and often sadly less picturesque.'