
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.

AGE is proverbially conservative. We may, however, have to revise this estimate; for, in the theological world at least, some of our old men are among the most progressive spirits of our time. Canon Sell, of Madras, is devoting his well-earned leisure to the writing of books designed to instruct the Indian clergy in the modern approach to the Bible. And another octogenarian, Canon J. M. WILSON, of Worcester, preached before the University of Cambridge on the 18th of May a sermon on *The Universities and the Presentation of the Faith To-day* (published at 1s. 6d. by the Cambridge University Press), which pleads in a very winsome way for a real reform in the presentation of the Christian faith, more particularly to elementary schools, and shows the contribution which the Universities may make towards this most desirable end.

Some men close the windows and doors of their minds, he tells us, to any new light and fresh air from heaven at about the age of twenty-four, and talk for the rest of their lives of principle and consistency. Canon WILSON is assuredly not among such. The highest consistency, he reminds us, is consistent and persistent growth.

Sixty-five years ago, when he took his degree, there was a practically universal belief in the verbal inerrancy of the Bible; now that has been almost universally abandoned, and the view then held of miracles related in the Old Testament has been tacitly abandoned, while the view of New Testament miracles has been very seriously modified, as have also been the Transactional Theories of the Atonement. But has the presentation of the Christian faith to the young in our schools kept pace with this general advance of theological thought? That is the question.

Quite clearly, Canon WILSON reminds us, all is not well with Christendom. Never was the faith defended with more assiduity or ability, and seldom perhaps has the response of those outside the Church been so feeble. Neither the masses nor men of science seem to think that we of the Church deserve much attention. Why is this? It is, he thinks, in part because the ecclesiastical presentation of spiritual truth has been at fault. We have taught theology before ethics, and that a theology only reached by the Church after centuries. We are still too fond of beginning our Bible syllabuses for schools with the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood. What we need above all things is to revise our presentation of the Christian Faith, and in this task the Universities may render help of inestimable value.

Dr. WILSON, however, is a kindly critic, and he gladly admits that much good has been done;

much may be wrong, but all is not wrong. The recently published selections from the Bible for the use of children and schools, in which three of the most distinguished Cambridge scholars have co-operated, show that the Universities are fully alive to their obligations. And the Canon tells a delightful story of an interview he had with Dr. Pfleiderer in which that great scholar admitted that in the matter of welcoming the new light thrown by scholars upon the Bible, the English clergy were well in advance of the German clergy. Practically all the Divinity Professors at British Universities are themselves clergy: and they have carefully mediated approved results to their pupils. 'There is no other country,' Dr. Pfleiderer said, 'so happy in having such leaders: so continuous, so capable, so free, and so trusted.'

Still there is much room for improvement, and in two or three directions Canon WILSON points the way. His first suggestion is that Christianity should be taught as 'The Way.' That is what it was felt to be at first, and that is what it essentially and for ever is. It is a noble standard of active life, and presented thus, it will best conciliate and attract those that are without. Sir R. Baden-Powell, 'our greatest English Educationist,' has understood this to perfection.

Again, nothing should be taught which will later have to be unlearned—nothing, for example, which is inconsistent with God's later revelations to the world. In this connexion the Canon modestly ventures the interesting suggestion that our children 'should not read the stories of Genesis and Exodus, and Old Testament history, till they can read them with as little harm as we read about Jupiter and Juno and the stories in Homer,' and to these he later refers as 'crude beginnings.' Here we take leave to differ from the Canon. There are certainly episodes in the Book of Judges—*there* are the really 'crude beginnings'—with which we should not wish to acquaint our children prematurely, and tempers which in no case we should wish to see them emulate. But if the critics are right, there is much in the Book of Genesis which is far enough from the period of 'crude beginnings,' and surely even the youngest child would be not only delighted with, but helped by, the exquisite story of Joseph.

We are quite in agreement, of course, with Dr. WILSON'S essential contention, that we must not retain in our own minds or form in the minds of our children, 'mental images' of God which are unworthy of the truly Christian thought of Him. Very excellent and aptly put is the suggestion that, in all good teaching, the miracle of Pentecost must be repeated, and that the clergy must so speak that every one shall hear their message 'in his own tongue wherein he was born.' They must cultivate understanding sympathy with the younger generation, with their thought and with their speech—a generation which has surely 'earned our reverence and love and trust.' So will the prophecy of Malachi be fulfilled, and the hearts of the children be turned to the fathers.

A lecture on *The Pilgrim's Progress* delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain by Professor J. W. MACKAIL may seem to some to be little short of a portent. Yet Professor MACKAIL is but following in the footsteps of Macaulay and Froude, and more recently of Mark Rutherford and Sir Charles Firth. He believes that if *The Pilgrim's Progress* is 'less largely read now than it once was, this is a temporary obscuration, in which, from time to time, all classics share.' To dissipate the obscuration he delivered his lecture, which is now published by Messrs. Longmans (3s. net).

He defines a classic as 'any product of literature or art to which we find ourselves continually returning, and which we continually find on returning to it even greater than we had realised.' The claim of *The Pilgrim's Progress* to possess this quality hardly needs vindication. Returning to it Professor MACKAIL finds it greater than ever. 'The first thing perhaps to notice is the author's

certainty of touch, the completeness with which he has his mechanism in hand. The really accomplished artist may be known by the way in which he begins. The first half-dozen lines of *The Pilgrim's Progress* give an example of a perfect beginning. In these few words, as in a few strokes by some master of etching, the atmosphere is made, the movement is launched, the effect is got for the whole narrative.'

'But even more remarkable is the skill with which he brings it to an end.' When the pilgrims went in at the Gate, 'then I heard in my Dream that all the bells in the City rang again for joy.' 'This by itself would be a fine conclusion, and perhaps almost any one else, even were he possessed of narrative instinct and dramatic power of a high degree, would have stopped here. But Bunyan with a more subtle and accomplished art goes on.' He has a glimpse through the Gates of the glories of the City. 'And after that, they shut up the Gates: which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.' 'Notice,' says Professor Mackail, 'the beautiful cadence of these last words. They give the quiet ending which was insisted upon by Greek art, and which is so conspicuous in Milton at the close both of the Paradise Lost and of the Samson.'

'But even this is not all, for to Bunyan art is not everything, art indeed is nothing. He is an artist only because he cannot help being one. He has had, throughout, the sense of his message resting on him heavily, and the sort of happy ending which would suit comedy or romance will not satisfy him here. And so by instinctive force of genius he triumphantly transgresses all rules, and knits up his work, before letting it go, with the most tremendous passage in the whole book.' This is the passage which tells of the rejection of Ignorance, a passage often criticized from the literary and artistic standpoint, but of which Professor MACKAIL says, 'Alike for substance and for style this cannot be surpassed in his, or indeed in any, writing.'

The lecturer discourses charmingly on Bunyan's extraordinary power of characterization, his sensitiveness to nature and power as a landscapist, the largeness of his dramatic sympathy, his humour, and the like. But, he concludes, 'Bunyan was more than an artist; and *The Pilgrim's Progress* is more than a work of art. The "similitude of a dream" is also the clear vision of one who had probed life to its depths. It is the statement of and the appeal to truths which, under whatever form they may be expressed from one age to another, are unchangeable: that there is but one way; that the difference between right and wrong, between good and evil, is fundamental; that the laws of God are inflexible and inevitable; that ignorance, so far from being a venial error, still less a flaunted merit, is a vice and a sin, the root of all other sins and vices. Implicit on every page is the doctrine formally laid down a generation later by Bishop Butler: "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be; why then should we seek to be deceived?" That is a truth which, simple as it seems, has continually to be restated.'

The two subjects that are responsible for the production of more books than any others at the present time are the Newer Psychology and its applications and the religious training of youth. It is a good thing that there should be much writing about the latter subject because of its vital importance. If a new world is to be evolved after the confusions of our time it will have to be done by those who are now children in our schools. And if it be true that only the Christian religion has the inspiration necessary for this great achievement, then these children must be trained in the Christian faith.

How is this to be done? This is the question that is agitating so many minds. And it is because this question is urgent that religious education is becoming so acute and so widely discussed a problem. It is a problem to which the best

brains in the churches should be directed. It is more important than half the matters that are so keenly debated in Church Assemblies. It is more important than finance or union or questions of administration. It is *the* question of the day.

Two books have just appeared dealing with various aspects of this subject. One is called *Winning the Children for Christ*, and is edited by 'Two University Men' (Thomson and Cowan; 4s. 6d. net). It has chapters on 'The Mind of the Child,' on 'The Formative Years of Life,' on 'The Normal Religious Development of Childhood,' on 'The Church and the Child,' 'Child Conversion,' and on practical points like the conduct of children's meetings. It is an excellent book of its kind with specially good chapters by Professor MACKENZIE on 'The Formative Years,' and by the late Rev. W. D. MILLER on 'The Sunday School Teacher as Evangelist.'

The other book is on *The Sunday School in the Modern World*, edited by Mr. D. P. Thomson, M.A., Mr. J. Kelly, and Mr. C. Bonner (James Clarke; 6s. net). It is partly historical but mainly concerned with practical matters, and no side of Sunday School life and activity is left unnoticed. Among the writers are Principal GARVIE, Principal CLOW, Dr. THISTELTON MARK, Mr. E. H. HAYES, and Mr. G. H. ARCHIBALD, names which are associated with the most recent advances in this department. It is needless to say that on every point of importance there is a great deal of wise guidance.

On every point except one. It does not yet seem to be realized sufficiently that the really vital stage of religious education is the period just after Sunday School age. The problem of all others to which the Churches should devote their most careful attention is, what is to be done with young people between fourteen and eighteen years of age. The Sunday School is important. Nothing too strong could be said of its importance and the need of making it efficient, were it only as a preparation for these critical later years.

We read a great deal of the influence and characteristics of the adolescent period; but very little that is definite about how the Church can successfully retain the adolescent. The importance of this question from the Church point of view is that this is the age at which the drift from the Church takes place. There is no doubt at all that the churches all over the land are losing great numbers of those who were trained in their Sunday Schools. If all Sunday School scholars were kept by the Church the problem of the outsider would soon solve itself. It is the continuous drift from the Church between fourteen and eighteen that recruits the ranks of the non-churchgoing masses.

What is the reason of the drift? Why does the Church fail to retain many who have been under its instruction? Writers of these volumes would no doubt say it is because of the defects of the Sunday School. But that is only partially true. If the Sunday School were perfect as an organization the drift would still go on, though in diminished strength, in the absence of measures to prevent it.

What, then, can be done to meet this situation? This vital question is discussed by Principal CAVE in the second of the volumes referred to above. But his contribution is disappointing. He is, he says, purposely vague. But that is what no one ought to be on such a point who has anything of real value to utter. This is the only contribution in these books to this, the greatest of all questions affecting the future of the Churches, and there is little or nothing in it to help.

The very title of Principal CAVE's chapter shows how this problem is so often misconceived: 'The Transition to Bible Class and Church Membership.' It is apparently assumed that there must be a gap between the Sunday School and the Bible Class, and that the only question to be answered is, how to fill this gap. The problem will never be solved until the Churches realize that there ought to be no gap, that there should be no 'transition,' that

the years succeeding the Sunday School are the years for the Bible Class. It will be sufficient at present to leave the matter with this definite challenge. We shall return to it again, in order to develop this positive and constructive point.

A worthy Christian gentleman was recently heard to say that he had never had any difficulty with the Fourth commandment—not at least with that part of it which enjoins that 'on the seventh day thou shalt not do any work': his difficulty lay rather in the other demand, 'six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.' We imagine that this man is not alone, but that he is one of a large and goodly company. Whether man be naturally a lazy animal or not, most of us turn our aspiration more readily towards rest than towards work.

Time was—and not so very long ago—when not only men but even little children were compelled to work for more than twelve hours in the day. Those times are gone—let us hope, for ever. The working day has been gradually reduced. It has been ten hours, eight hours, in some trades seven hours, and there are those who hope to live to see it six hours or even less: a very laudable hope indeed, if the ampler leisure would be used for the more generous cultivation of the things of the spirit than is possible with long hours of manual toil.

But, whatever be our hopes of leisure, there comes to all of us the searching question of Jesus, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day?' Like everything that Jesus said, this is an arresting word. It is short, it is simple, but it cuts to the very root of things. There *are* twelve hours in every day, and into every one of them we are inevitably putting some kind of quality. We may use them, we may abuse them; but whatever we may do with them, they are there, and they carry away with them the record of good done or left undone. They can never leave us quite as they find us.

When at the end of the day we look it over—if it ever occurs to us to do so obvious, yet so important, a thing—we shall often be smitten with surprise to note how little we have to show for the hours that have sped away from us for ever. Are there twelve hours in any day, are there six, is there always even one, of brave work or patient fidelity, of loyal service or strenuous endeavour, of resolute purpose or honest battle? Often we could not tell at all what we have done with the hours, or what the hours have done for us. They have come, and they have gone, and that is all.

But that is not all. For if the opportunity they brought us was not marked by some real growth, some fresh insight, some new knowledge, some pettiness combated, some nobleness achieved, then our personality is just so much the poorer—it may be to an imperceptible degree, but accumulated hours of intellectual indolence and moral flabbiness will end by revealing us to ourselves some day as cynical or stunted caricatures of the thing that God designed us to be. The price of neglect has to be paid to the uttermost farthing, and it is paid in the impoverishment of our own personality and no less of the world, through our depriving it of the full measure of service which it was at once our glory and our privilege to render.

The tragedy of many a life is, that time is not felt to be a trust: it is not seen to be the stage on which issues of eternal moment are wrought out. Every hour is bearing us inexorably on nearer to the night, when no man can work: are they bringing us nearer to God, or to the outer darkness where there is weeping? Do the days leave us better or only older? Are we drifting, or marching with our faces steadfastly set towards the Holy City?

'Tis the measure of a man,' said Emerson, 'his apprehension of a day.' 'He only is rich who owns the day. The days are ever divine as to the first Aryans. They come and go like muffled and veiled figures, sent from a distant friendly

party; but they say nothing; and if we do not use the gifts they bring, they carry them as silently away.' How little does he understand of life who can ever say that time hangs heavy on his hands. No man can have more time than he needs; the longest life is not too long for the rich and solemn tasks that are laid on every one. Nor is any man's day too short; for has not God put twelve hours into it? and only for those twelve hours, though indeed for them all, will He call him to judgment?

When Jesus used these words, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day?' He meant, as the context shows, that one may walk through his allotted span, whatever it be, without stumbling, if only he keep walking in the light—the light of God's will. The efficiency of a life does not depend upon the number of its hours, but on its fidelity to the Divine purpose. The noblest life this world has ever seen was not a long one, but it was complete, 'finished,' as no other life has ever been. So, in the beautiful words of Martineau, 'may we walk, while it is yet day, in the steps of Him who, with fewest hours, finished Thy divinest work.'

The Modern Minister: His Responsibility and Equipment.[1]

By the Reverend J. M. Shaw, D.D., Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the Presbyterian College, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

I shall begin by making a dogmatic statement, which yet I believe to be historically true. It is this: that never in all the Church's history has the opportunity of the Church, and in particular of the Christian minister, been so great as it is to-day. And it is the preliminary consideration of this present unparalleled opportunity of the Church that will be the best avenue to the realization at once of the *responsibility* of the modern minister and of the nature of the *equipment* required if this responsibility is to be fulfilled.

I.

This post-war world is a world rent with antagonisms and suspicions, with distrust and hatreds, with jealousies and resentments. And what is true of the international situation is no less true of life within the several nations. In social and economic and industrial relationships we see the same spirit of antagonism and suspicion and distrust manifesting itself—classes and interests divided against each other through the dominance of the same principle of life-for-self and the selfish will-to-gain-and-possess, which is a disruptive and disintegrating principle in every relationship of life.

And yet amid all this confusion and discord and strife there is, surely by God's over-ruling providence, a widespread and growing wistfulness and expectancy Christ-wards and God-wards, an ever-widening and deepening recognition that the only hope of the world and of the coming of peace, in inter-national and intra-national relationships alike, lies in the making of the spirit and mind of Jesus Christ dominant and regnant in the life of the world. Sixty years ago and more John Stuart Mill wrote that 'the political and economic struggles of society are in the last analysis religious or spiritual struggles, and their sole solution the spirit and principles of Jesus Christ.' And the truth of that statement is being acknowledged to-day as never before and reiterated with growing emphasis, not merely by leaders of the Church, but—what is much more significant—even more insistently by leaders of the political, industrial, and financial interests of our own and other lands. Men like Lord Hugh Cecil, speaking in support of the League

[1] An address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches (American Section) held in Toronto.