
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

doctrine of verbal inspiration is simply untenable. God will not have us rest in any worship of the letter. But is that a loss? Nay, rather, it is a glorious gain. For we are driven by these discrepancies into the region of the spirit, where such things matter nothing at all.

They matter, of course, to the historian and the literary critic. In certain cases they may even matter immensely to them. It is through patient and vigilant attention to such things that it has become possible to detect the sources underlying our present narratives, to trace the reaction upon them of varying types of mind, and so to understand, better than ever before, the real course of events and the real development of mind alike in Israel and in the early Church.

But most of us are neither historians nor literary critics. We are, or strive to be, religious men, whose business is to walk not by the letter which killeth, but by the spirit which giveth life. What we are concerned with is to capture, if we can, the faith by which those men of the olden times lived —their faith in God's gracious purpose for the world and for themselves, that faith which shines through all they wrote for those who have eyes to look beyond possible historical inaccuracies to the radiant purpose which inspired and controlled their story.

In the paradoxes and contradictions of Scripture there lies, as we have said, a positive religious value. They bring us out of the stifling atmosphere of barren logomachies into a 'large place' where there is room to breathe. They oblige us to shake off our bondage to the letter, and to stand upon our feet, emancipated men, who rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ made us free.

A St. Andrew's Day Sermon.[1]

By the Reverend Professor J. F. McFadyen, M.A., Kingston, Ont., Canada.

'Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation.'—Gn 12[1].

1. Our text tells us that this Abraham was an emigrant, one who had been called by God to leave his country. The new drama required a new stage. A new chapter in the training of mankind, a chapter big with import, was about to begin. Abraham and his descendants were to pass through a long and stern course of discipline. But first there must be an absolute break from the old associations. The new teaching cannot flourish in the old soil. The new wine requires new bottles.

The writer 'to the Hebrews' draws a beautiful and touching picture of Abraham's great act of faith: how, when God's call came to him, he obeyed and went out from his native land, not knowing whither he went, knowing nothing save that God was calling him. Though he was living in the land of promise, yet he lived in it as a foreigner and a stranger. He and his might have gone back to their old home; yet they saw the glory dimly and afar off, and believed they were where they were because God so willed it. They lived the weary, restless life of the dweller in tents, here to-day and gone to-morrow, now pitching and now striking their tents; yet all the time they were looking for a city, a city where they might rest, a city with houses and walls and solid foundations, all planned and built by God. The Hebrews believed it was at a great price, the price of exile, that the fathers of their race had won for them their inheritance. The Old Testament is in large measure a book of exiles. Think for a moment of the precious treasure of story and of psalm, of prophecy and prayer, of which the world would have been robbed had there been no exile in Egypt, no exile in Babylon. In the story of Israel it was true, as it is so often true, that they learned in suffering what they taught in song.

[1] Preached in St. Andrew's Church, Toronto.

Doubtless the people who saw this trek into Egypt saw in it nothing but a party of emigrants squeezed out of their homes, or seeking better conditions of living in a new land, or leaving their country in search of adventure. But the Hebrew mind, which had a wonderful faculty for piercing into the truth of things, saw in this movement the hand of God. The people of this continent are emigrants or the children of emigrants. Did we and our fathers just happen to come here, or shall we say that God called us from our country because He had a mission for us? We sometimes call Canada 'God's own country.' But no country is God's country, save as we make it so. One Hebrew tradition saw in the arrival at Canaan an improvement in their own social position, saw in the land of their adoption 'a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olives and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it.' But even in that same tradition there was a solemn warning lest their hearts should be lifted up and they should forget the Lord their God. And a great prophet arose to the conception that Israel's true destiny was not to enjoy but to suffer, and in her suffering to become the servant of mankind. If Canada or any land is to become God's own country, it must be for some better reason than the creature comforts we find in her.

2. But Abraham was called on to leave, not only his country, but also his kindred and his father's house. As the Israelites conceived it, the forward march of the world was to be at the cost to Abraham of separation from kith and kin. That is the pang of progress. Some nations seem born to be the leaders of mankind, whether in commerce or colonization, or in the things of the spirit. And their leadership means that their young men go forth generation after generation leaving behind them those who love them more than life. It is not only in the sphere of missionary enterprise that Western courage and inspiration, Western knowledge, experience, and skill, have been freely placed at the disposal of the Orient and of Africa. But we sometimes forget how often Western services to other continents have been rendered by men and women at whose hearts was gnawing the dull pain of longing for loved ones in the far-off homeland.

We, too, the sons of Scotland, belong to a race that has known more than most, how wide the world is and how bitter are its partings. It is no accident that the Scottish song which, almost more than any other, has captured the heart of mankind, is a song of reunion after long years of separation. Burns found 'Auld Lang Syne' a stave of stupid and bacchanalian revelry. He added two verses and made it one of the sweetest and saddest songs in any language. Who that has a heart at all has not been moved almost to tears, as he sang those haunting words that tell of the returned emigrants' wistful looking back to the dear and happy friendships of childhood, long since sundered and never to be quite re-knit:

> We twa hae run aboot the braes,
> And pu'd the gowans fine;
> But we've wandered mony a weary foot,
> Sin' auld lang syne.
> We twa hae paidled i' the burn,
> Frae mornin' sun till dine;
> But seas between us braid hae roared,
> Sin' auld lang syne.

That is the price a nation with a world destiny has to pay for its greatness. Far more to-day than when these words were written, do they come home to the heart of the Scottish people. Since Burns' time, Scotland has seen more than a century of colonization and commercial expansion, of foreign political responsibilities and missionary enterprise. These have carried her sons and daughters from her shores by the ten thousand till now there can hardly be a household in the land that has not its exiles. With full hearts to-night we join in spirit with our brethren who in many a strange and far-off quarter of God's world, sometimes in little groups, sometimes in large gatherings, but always with pride and enthusiasm, are this week sparing a little from their other pursuits to think of the dear little land in the North Sea that was once their home or the home of their fathers; to thank God for His great goodness to her and to breathe a prayer for her welfare.

3. But Abraham's call was not merely to leave his country and his kindred, but to go out into a land that God would show him. The land into which Abraham was going was unknown to him; it was not unknown to God; his future was dark to him, but God had it all mapped out; God knew the way he was taking. There were dark moments in the history of Israel when it seemed as if God had forgotten them, as if the hand of God was against them. There were times when the saints of Israel felt they had to reason

with God, to remonstrate with Him, when the heathen seemed to have right on their side as they cried: 'Where is now your God?' But God always vindicated Himself, and as we look back on the story, can we not say of every part of it: 'He hath done all things well'? Truly they were in a land that God had shown them. All the way God was guiding them and teaching them, and men to this day turn for inspiration to Jewish psalm and Jewish prophecy.

Can we imagine any faith that will so deliver us from all pettiness, so enrich our thought of ourselves and exalt our standards, as just this faith that it was God who called us from our home, that we are in a land that He has shown us, that for us as a people God has a mission? The history of our people has been a chequered history. We have known victory and defeat, sunshine and shadow, poverty and plenty, civil achievement and civil disaster; but through it all can we not say that in the long run we have not shut God out of our national life; that, however feebly and mistakenly, we have on the whole acknowledged God, and God has abundantly directed our ways?

Perhaps we have dwelt too much in the Old Testament and too little in the New, but the Old Testament has appealed to us. We have loved the psalms with their strength and their tenderness, their sense of the unseen, their wrestling with God, their triumph over doubt and despair. We not only love the psalms, but we have found the Gospel in them, the Gospel of God's redeeming love. Our sturdy forefathers have afforded mirth to many because they had an instinctive dislike of hymns. At last in the seventies of last century they were induced to allow hymns in their worship.

The Hymn-book survived for nearly a generation when it was replaced by the Scottish Hymnary. For a number of years now, there have been grumblings about the Scottish Hymnary, and proposals to revise it. My edition of Hymns of Praise I notice is dated 1918. Perhaps from twenty to thirty years may be taken as the period of the effective life of a hymn-book, but the psalms live on. The psalms were not written by chronic invalids, as so many of our hymns seem to have been.

One thing that endears the Old Testament to the Scottish people is the atmosphere it breathes of being the book of a Highland people. Like the saints of the Old Testament, we have learned what our hills can do for us and what they cannot do. Few psalms have gone home to the heart of the Scottish people like the 121st:

I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
from whence doth come mine aid.
My safety cometh from the Lord,
who heav'n and earth hath made.
Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will
he slumber that thee keeps.
Behold, he that keeps Israel,
he slumbers not, nor sleeps.

Yes, our hills are not an invincible protection against our enemies. In the long run our safety comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Yet the hills are God's, and under God our hills have often guarded us from our enemies. And the same hills that shut us out from our enemies, shut us in with God. The dwellers on the hills are so familiar with big things that they can hardly themselves be small. As Sir George Adam Smith once said: 'No Highland people can ever be vulgar.' It was a true instinct that made our Lord climb when He was going to announce for all time the programme of the Kingdom of God.

So far as we can judge ourselves, we put in the very forefront of Scotland's message to mankind the old, old command: 'Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God.' As a people we make no claim to genius or to any but the humble virtues; but these two things we believe our past history has taught us and through us may teach others: the daily work, the Sabbath rest and worship.

We, the sons of Scotland, gladly acknowledge that our fathers were workers. There are few more honourable parts of our inheritance than the tradition of hard, conscientious toil, the toil that gives us the right to hold up our heads, as we walk among our fellows, with the consciousness that we have made good our claim to a place in the great human brotherhood. And now we see the traditional Scottish conception of life challenged, challenged not so much in word as in the whole attitude of multitudes. Half-consciously men have gone back to the old idea that work is a curse. Man's chief end, we are told, is to have a good time, and work is a disagreeable necessity which must be hurried through to get at the amusement which is the real thing.

There are multitudes to-day making a great and perilous experiment, trying to see what they can make of their lives without ever having prepared for them, without having acquired those habits of disciplined service whose absence makes leisure and plenty a continual snare. It may be that our fathers were inclined to make a fetish of work, to forget that the charm, the beauty, the joy of life can never be ours unless we make room for them. Yet the world is made not for idlers but for toilers. Our Lord Himself sometimes had hardly leisure for a meal, snatched with difficulty the necessary time for rest and prayer. When He wished to find a suitable picture to convey some lesson about the Kingdom it was to a worker He turned. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer, like a fisherman, like a vinedresser, a trader, a pearl merchant, in some way or other like a man doing useful work in the world. It is only when Jesus wants to picture a fool that He takes an idler as His model—a farmer who has had a bumper crop, and can think of no better use for it than to store it in huge new barns and retire on the proceeds to a life of self-indulgence. Is it not in the very forefront of the message that the Scottish people have for mankind, that work is no curse but the discipline by which our Heavenly Father, our great Teacher, fits us for life and our immortal destiny?

The command of the six days' work is accompanied by the other command of the seventh day's rest, a command not only of a rest but of a holy rest, a rest unto the Lord. There are few institutions in the Scottish national life which our critics have found more amusing than the Scottish Sunday, and surely there are few of which we have less reason to be ashamed. To one who has lived for years in a non-Christian country, it is a great experience to come back and renew one's acquaintance with the Scottish Sunday: to note the noisy pursuit of mammon and pleasure stilled for a day, the quiet of the streets, the clang from many a steeple, harsh, perhaps, to a foreign ear but with a music of its own to those who understand; to see the well-dressed throngs making their way to the house of God, to join in the Shepherd psalm, or 'O God of Bethel' with those who have inherited the same traditions as ourselves, to hear God's word expounded with sense and reverence.

We need each other in our worship; need each other as we thank our Father for our common blessings, ask His forgiveness for our common sins, and His help in our common temptations. Have we not all known what it is, in some great Christian congregation, to join in one of the Church's hymns of praise to God, to find our hearts swelling with a new gratitude, to find new wonders in God's love, because we had caught a spark from the great fire of love and gratitude that was all around us?

Our fathers were right. We cannot live without God. God has been very good to the Scottish people, and we have some qualities that make for worldly success; but if as a people we have achieved anything that was worth achieving, it was surely at least in part, because we have never imagined that the material things of life are the whole of life, because our fathers taught us to pierce beneath the show of things and to see the invisible, taught us above the hoarse cries of the battlefield, or the shrill bartering of the market-place, to hear the still small voice.

Our religion is too cheap in our day. In the early days of my ministry, in the closing prayer of the service, I used almost automatically to add the petition: 'Take us to our homes in safety.' One day I heard a young lady member of my congregation speak jestingly of this petition. Till then I had never seen the full force of it. The congregation with which, as a child, I had worshipped, had inherited the traditions of the Covenanters, among their other traditions this petition: 'Take us to our homes in safety,' a tradition born of the days when men did not worship God in snug pews, but stole out singly or in little groups to the hillside and posted sentinels while they worshipped, never knowing, as they praised God, whether they would ever see their homes again. The tradition of our Sabbath rest and our Sabbath worship has come to us stained with blood and dimmed with many a tear. Surely for our people, of all people in the world, the first day of the week should be a Sabbath to the Lord our God.

Burns' cotter lived a life that to most of us would seem repellent, perhaps even sordid, with its tiny cottage, its homely fare, its poverty and drab monotony, the children working for hire as farm drudges. And yet it is not only to the poet's eye that life was greatly lived even in that humble home. For there was love:

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:

The laughter of little children was there :

Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise an' glee.

The farmer and his family toiled and were not ashamed :

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And, weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

The labourer's cottage, lowly as it was, was a home :

His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking care beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Yes, and God was there :

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They round the ingle form a circle wide ;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride ;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare ;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care ;
And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

'From scenes like these,' says Burns, 'old Scotia's grandeur springs, that makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad.' Yes, and the sons of Scotland will still be great as God counts greatness wherever they surround themselves with scenes like these.

Literature.

THE CHURCH AND HISTORY.

THREE books have just appeared dealing in different ways with the same point. One is *The Preaching of Christ,* edited, and partly written, by Dr. T. R. Glover (Kingsgate Press ; 2s. 6d. net and 1s. 6d. net). It consists of addresses delivered at the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union. Dr. Glover (he is entitled 'M.A.' on the front page, but surely he is more ?) was president of the Union, and delivered an address on 'Turning-Points in Christian History,' which was followed by eight other addresses by selected men who had previously met in conference to talk over the subject. Dr. Glover's own contribution has all the qualities which make his writing so suggestive and informing. He selects four great crises in the Church's history when it was saved from danger by the appearance of a God-sent man, and he points out the lessons we can learn from these occasions. The men suggest the situation. They were St. Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Wesley. Dr. Glover points out that all of them were men of scholarship, and he says very plainly that the Church will never experience a revival if scholarship and science are ignored or refused. But he draws wider lessons for the Church of to-day. He sees in these four men experiences which have to be repeated in us, first a recognition of the power of evil, then a vision of the deliverance in Christ, and finally the central place of the Cross. The rest of the addresses hammer in these nails.

The second book is the Fernley Lecture for 1924, *Early Christianity and its Message to the Modern Church,* by the Rev. R. Martin Pope, M.A. (Epworth Press ; 5s. net). This also is an appeal to history. The writer traces certain fundamental characteristics of the early faith, then describes the challenge which this early faith threw down to its environment, and finally shows what Christianity was on the different sides of its life, in worship, in belief, in ordinary existence, in the army and under persecution. At each stage of his argument he stops to indicate the parallels with the modern time and the lessons we have to learn from the early days of Christianity. The historical part of the book is well done. It is based on real knowledge, and, if we find the brush on the big side and the painting broad, and a trifle vague in its effects, this is hardly to be wondered at with so much to be shown on a restricted canvas. The ordinary reader will learn a great deal about the pagan surroundings of Christianity and of what it meant in these days to be a Christian. In his final chapter, 'The Message of the First Three Centuries to the Modern Church,' the writer selects three points, Simplicity, Self-Renunciation, and Service, and he has a good deal