

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

mystery, unless the noumenal key be applied to unlock its hidden chambers and disclose its riches. Man, truly, is not all intellect, nor must intellect be allowed to thrive (as it too often does) at the expense of the rest of his nature. And, therefore, in the highest resort, the existence of God becomes a certainty to us—not so much by reasoning, as by actual experience. In other words, the supreme vision of God is granted to us through the instrumentality of our moral nature, inasmuch as morality is the condition of spiritual insight.

Other points of profound interest both to theologian and philosopher might be touched upon in connection with Illingworth's lectures; my purpose, however, will have been amply achieved if what has been said thus far induces the reader to study the book for himself. No book of this decade is more truly worth our earnest and careful consideration. The following extract from Professor Seth's recent work¹ may fitly close the foregoing comments:

"Instead of surrendering the idea of Personality, we must cherish it as the only key to the moral and religious life. It is the hard-won result of long experience and deep reflection. The depth and spirituality of the conception of God have grown with the growth of the idea of human personality. As man has learned to know himself, he has advanced in the knowledge of God."

EDWARD HENRY BLAKENEY.



ART. VI.—ENGLAND'S DEBT TO THE WORK OF THE CITY COMPANIES.

THE last farewell of our Blessed Lord to His beloved disciples was taken at a festal meal. And the duty of feasting² and rejoicing at fit seasons is one which will only be repudiated by the morose, the dyspeptic, the fantastic, the scornful, the pessimistic, the fanatical, and the inhuman. However frugal and austere a man's habits may be in the ordinary hours of his

¹ "A Study of Ethical Principles," by James Seth (1894).

² Feasting has no necessary connection with excessive eating. It appears to include the following elements, or some of them:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hospitality. 2. Good company. 3. Choice music. 4. Lights and flowers. 5. The artistic element in food and drink, however simple. 6. The artistic element in plate, glass and china, or more careful preparation than usual. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Temperance. 8. Conversation. 9. Short appeals to good feeling on public institutions and objects. 10. Thanksgiving. 11. Charity. 12. Absence of care. |
|---|---|

home and of his business, there are occasions when it is good for him to relax and make merry with his friends. It is a check to self-righteousness, it prevents artificiality and priggishness, it promotes mutual understanding and good humour, it brightens the monotony of life, it reminds us that we still belong partly to the earth with all its citizenships and obligations, as well as to the kingdom of heaven. In the Revelation the joys of the unseen world are depicted under the figure of "the marriage supper of the Lamb," "the marriage supper of the great God." More than once our Lord describes the future blessedness under the same figure; the marriage supper of the King's Son. He Himself with great significance performed His first miracle at a wedding feast, and showed His sympathy with the harmless pleasures of the kindly race of men by creating enormous quantities of generous wine. It was the custom of the Pharisees to give quiet entertainments on the Sabbath day; and our Lord Himself attended at least one of these dinners. When Matthew the tax-gatherer became His disciple, he made a great feast to bid farewell to his friends; and our Lord made no scruple about being present. In that most touching parable of the Prodigal Son, He makes the happy father say, "Bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry." He contemplated as a matter of course the occasions when His disciples would be invited to banquets, and gave them directions how to regulate their conduct; they were not to push forward. He supplied His followers with principles for their own entertainments: they were not to forget the poor. The early Christians had friendly and festive gatherings; St. Jude complains of those unworthy members who were spots in their feasts of charity. St. Paul allowed the Corinthians to attend entertainments given by unbelievers: "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake." There is nothing in the least grim, dismal, rigid, or unsociable about simple, genuine, unspoiled Christianity.

We cannot but remember how large a part the duty of feasting took in the ancient dispensation and revelation of God to His people. There was the Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of the New Moon, the Feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Purim, the Feast of the Dedication, the Feast of the Sabbatical Year, and the Feast of Jubilee. These were real occasions of abundance and rejoicing. At the dedication of his temple, for instance, "Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two-and-twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. . . . And at that time

Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, . . . seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away ; and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David His servant and for His people Israel." Simple reasonable enjoyment is not the sum of existence, but it is certainly one aspect of human life, and one that if we wish to be complete we cannot with safety altogether neglect.

The virtue of hospitality is comparatively easy amongst scanty populations, in small towns and rural districts where the inhabitants are known to each other. It is not difficult there to gather together kindred souls who will sharpen wit, improve intelligence, and knit hearts in kindness and unselfish affection. But it is quite the reverse in large and crowded communities. There, persons living next door or in the same street may remain for years, for the whole of life, complete strangers. "Hospitality," said an acute observer, the French essayist, Montesquieu, "is most rare in trading countries, while it is found in the most admirable perfection amongst nations of wanderers." The fact is, that in a great mercantile community private individuals are necessarily so much engaged in their own pressing concerns that they have neither time nor inclination nor opportunity for bringing all and sundry together to their board. And yet even a man who has perhaps exceeded in this line of warm-hearted friendliness is not without his beneficial effect upon society : "Let the hospitable man, the man of the most generous liberality, who has mingled freely and profusely with those around him, who has bestowed the time upon others which might have been more wisely employed upon himself, reflect upon all he has done, and say how far he has profited by it. Has his life not been a series of disappointments ? If so, let him not regret, for hospitality has an inherent value ; it is the choicest gift in the bounty of heaven, and is associated with countless benefits and priceless boons which heaven alone has power to bestow."¹ "There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality which cannot be described, but is immediately felt, and puts the stranger at once at his ease, breaking through the chills of ceremony and selfishness, and thawing every heart into a flow."² It is obvious that in any large civic community such an admirable virtue, if it is to have an adequate effect and to bring together under the wholesome ties of a common social influence the worthiest, most substantial, and most eminent of her sons, cannot be discharged even by the most patriotic

¹ James Ellis.

² Washington Irving.

individual, but must be undertaken by some great public body or organization.

Now, in a community of congregated cities numbering no less than five millions, how could this binding social tie of large and distributive hospitality be better supplied than by the great City Companies? What ingenious scheme could have been devised by the wit of man superior to that of associations of grave, intelligent and responsible citizens, with immemorial traditions of dignity in the past, and property at first small in value, but constantly increasing in a direct ratio with the growth of the City itself? Besides the august Corporation of London itself, there are seventy-six City Guilds or Companies. Of these twelve have considerable properties used with spirit for public purposes, and thirty-six have halls for social purposes. The twelve great Companies are the Mercers, Merchant Taylors, Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, and Clothworkers. The trust and corporate income of the whole has been estimated at between £750,000 and £800,000, and the capital value of their property at £15,000,000. Of this the income that has to be spent regularly on fixed trusts is reckoned at £200,000, and their corporate income at upwards of £500,000. The contributions of existing members are between £15,000 and £20,000 a year. Admirably are these great sums disbursed. Of the £200,000 which forms the charitable or trust income, £75,000 a year is spent on almshouses and the relief of poor members, another £75,000 on education, and £50,000 on well-chosen charitable objects of a general character. Many of the charities of the Companies are for the benefit of the inhabitants of provincial towns and villages where their estates are situated. The cost of the hospitality annually given by the Companies is estimated at £85,000. Much of it is paid for out of fees. That is no large sum for a community so gigantic and unprecedented as London. The hospitality is as varied and as widely distributed as it is handsome and dignified; and I believe no banquet is given without great numbers of the poor being benefited by what remains.¹ And, further, the lead in Technical Education has been set by the Guilds. The Merchant Taylors have always been distinguished by their care for their own great classical school. The sister company of the Mercers has with no less zeal nurtured St. Paul's School, the noble foundation of Dean Colet. The Clothworkers' Company has promoted the establishment of

¹ This by no means mere "crumbs" and "scraps;" but the meats and dishes which were not required by the guests. The recipients would have been most uncomfortable if they had been invited to occupy seats at the tables, and much prefer this method of sharing.

Yorkshire College at Leeds, where instruction is given in the manufacture of woollen goods, and similar institutions at Bradford, Huddersfield and elsewhere. The excellent City and Guilds of London Institute has been formed for the advancement of Technical Education. It has a Technical College at Finsbury, and a central parent institution at South Kensington. The Corporation of London has the famous Guildhall School of Music, the best managed institution of the kind in the world, with more than 3,000 pupils. None of these great civic duties could have been performed, had there not been wealthy civic corporations to undertake them, and wise and experienced men of business to devote their time, knowledge, and public spirit to their conception, direction and management.

A few words may be said as to the history of the Merchant Taylors, one of the twelve great Companies, merely as a specimen of the others, from their earliest mention in 1267 A.D., and their first charter in 1326. Six centuries and a quarter of usefulness and public spirit present no mean record. Even the site of their present hall, from which has emanated so much benevolence, they have possessed for more than five and a half centuries. "Hospitality and benevolence are two virtues which never appear to such advantage as when they are associated together." From earliest times they have been actuated by religious motives and principles. In 1361 they obtained their chapel on the north side of St. Paul's, dedicated to St. John Baptist, for daily service, and prayers for the preservation of the members of the fraternity. In 1406 they became patrons of a City Parish.¹ As early as 1415 land was entrusted to them for benevolent purposes. In 1455 Pope Calixtus granted the chapel of their hall the full privileges of celebrating Communion. Their almshouses are as early as 1415. In 1555 the great college at Oxford (St. John's) was founded with which they are so closely connected, with thirty-seven fellowships attached to their own school. In 1561, the twin foundation of the school was inaugurated. In 1618 they were entrusted with another school, that of Great Crosby, near Liverpool. In 1825 the almshouses were rebuilt at Lee, in Kent, and now contain thirty-two widows and daughters of freemen of the Company.

It should, I think, be widely known that in 1874, of their own accord, the school was enlarged to twice its numbers, so that it has since had a minimum of 500 pupils, and removed to a more convenient situation at the Charterhouse. It should be clearly known that the entire cost of that great school is borne out of the corporate funds of the Company, as was the

¹ St. Mary Outwich.

purchase of the Charterhouse, and the necessary outlay on rebuilding; that the Company expend a sum of £1,000 a year in supplementary exhibitions and scholarships to those obtained by their scholars at the universities; that the school costs the Company between £7,000 and £8,000 a year; and that, in addition to all this, they spend money when required on their schools at Great Crosby, which since their enlargement contain 400 boys and 250 girls; nor should it be forgotten that they contribute more than £200 a year to the Merchant Taylors' School at Ashwell. Who would venture to say that these are not wise and good works, for which we may well be grateful to God, and which could ill be spared to our city and country?

I spoke of the efforts of the City for technical education. We may well express our obligation to the court of the same Company, who, since 1889, have contributed annually at least £2,030 to the City and Guilds Institute. And all the friends of knowledge amongst our working classes must rejoice to know that the amount which they have expended on education generally in the last twelve years has averaged 28 per cent. of the corporate income.

For other kind deeds the Christian Church is indebted to them; the large number of pensions to poor freemen, and widows and daughters of freemen; to whom also, when required, grants are made of sums for present relief; and the numerous and generous donations to charitable institutions, hospitals, convalescent homes, works of public beneficence, and cases of great distress. Very admirable, too, and justly famous are the two convalescent foundations at Bognor, one, out of trust funds, with fifty beds, for men recovering from accidents or illness in the London hospitals; the other containing thirty-six beds for ladies in reduced circumstances. Nothing could be on a more generous scale than this: it is supported entirely out of corporate funds; convalescents are entertained for three or four weeks; no charge whatever is made; even the expense of travelling is included.

We recognise with the keenest and warmest sympathy that the Company, like some of the others also, have always been supporters of the ancient branch of Christ's Church in this country, through all its varying fortunes and vicissitudes. In their early days we are told that all their proceedings were opened with prayer, and a minute of 1564 shows that the first prayer was for Church and Queen. Amongst their other contributions to churches and for church purposes, they must be heartily thanked that within the last two years they have voted the noble sum of £3,500 for the restoration of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, a church replete with varied wealth of

associations, of which they became patrons instead of their original parish; and for the foundation of a scholarship for the choir school of St. Paul's Cathedral, as their acknowledgment of the vitality of the present cathedral life and an encouragement to the choristers, when they have for a few short years been delighting the citizens with their voices, to pass on to a higher education.

It is the urgent duty of all of us, whether in our corporate or individual capacity, to be ever more sincere in cultivating public spirit, philanthropy and the spirit of self-denying love. Our ideals should ever be higher, our objects wider.

God loves from whole to parts: the human soul
Must rise from individuals to the whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
His country next, and next all human race;
Wide and more wide the o'erflowing of the mind
Takes every creature in, of every kind:
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And heaven beholds its image in his breast.¹

It is from the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ alone that true philanthropy has sprung, and ever will spring. Wipe out that spirit from the earth and the dominating selfishness of previous ages returns. Extend the knowledge and reception of that Divine spirit throughout our country, and throughout the earth, and each in turn becomes paradise; the kingdom of heaven is established amongst men.

Once o'er this painful earth a Man did move,
The Man of griefs, because the Man of Love.
Hope, Faith, and Love at God's high altar shine,
Lamp triple-branched, and fed with oil divine.
Two of those triple lights shall once grow pale,
They burn without, but Love within the veil.
Nothing is true but Love, or aught of worth;
Love is the incense which doth sweeten earth.
O merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware,
Love is the only coin that passes there.
The wine of Love can be obtained of none
Save Him who trod the winepress all alone.²

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.

¹ Alexander Pope.

² Archbishop Trench.

