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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](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

## Entre Nous.

### SOME TOPICS.

#### Many Mansions.

'In my Father's house are many mansions.' How will this do as a modern translation?—'May we not think of the Universe, the all-embracing organism, as a social community, built up no doubt of many sub-communities, each of which is a world in itself, yet being in some sort the fatherland of us dwellers on earth, in that as conscious beings we are numbered among its citizens and can play our parts accordingly, if we will but rise to the level of our high calling and take up the burden of our infinite responsibility?'

Mr. Edmond Holmes has written a book on *The Cosmic Commonwealth* (Constable; 5s. net). The Cosmic Commonwealth is just 'my Father's house.' And (following Jesus again) he makes the secret of understanding and appreciation to be a true conception of God. Mr. Holmes is a critic of 'feudal Christianity,' but he seems to be at one with Christ.

#### Feudal Christianity.

What is Feudal Christianity? Says Mr. Holmes: 'We have been the victims of an unworthy conception of God. We have thought of God as the supernatural Creator, and therefore as the autocratic Ruler of the Universe. And we have gone on to think of him as the fountain-head of irresponsible authority; as the Overlord of a feudal hierarchy which is secular as well as spiritual; as the guarantor of the "divine rights" of kings and princes—and multi-millionaires; as the arbitrary dispenser of property, power, position, and privilege, and all the other "good things" which the feudal magnates and their modern successors have claimed for themselves and denied to their fellow-men.'

#### The Call.

'A young Church member was aware of the urgent claims of the mission field, and contemplated responding to a call if she received one from God. She frequented missionary meetings and heard the earnest plea for more workers, but still she waited for the call.

'One day when visiting a friend the subject of missions arose, and the friend asked if she had never thought of becoming a foreign missionary.

"I have," she replied, "but I am waiting for the call."

"Why, how presumptuous some people are!" exclaimed the friend. "Do you expect the Almighty to send an Angel to give you a special call from Heaven?"

'The girl saw her mistake, accepted the call that had been sounding in her ears unheeded for some time past, and became an earnest worker for Christ in Africa.'

The anecdote is told in *The Supreme Crusade*, by Constance Morison, B.A. (R.T.S.; 3s. net), a book which contains an earnest appeal to the follower of Christ to be loyal to the Lord who bought him and give himself for service and sacrifice, as our lads gave themselves in the great war.

#### The Lily of the Valley.

A volume of *Stories for the Nature Hour* has been published by Messrs. Harrap (5s. net). It contains tales and parables of flowers and insects and birds and winds and clouds, selected by Ada M. Skinner and Eleanor L. Skinner, from authors living and dead, together with a few by the editors themselves. They are all imaginative and wholesome—just the kind of story to be told to the children, and to be the means of training them in the exercise of their imagination. One of the shortest is a Legend called 'The Lily of the Valley' by Albert Bigelow Paine.

'Once when the Little Child of Bethlehem was playing He grew very tired and thirsty, and His playmate was very thirsty too. So Jesus ran to the well for a cup of water and hurried back with it without stopping to drink. But His playmate was greedy, for he seized the cup and drank it all except a few drops at the bottom; then he gave the empty cup to Jesus, who took it and let the last few drops fall on the grass, when suddenly, from where they fell, there flowed a little clear stream of water with lilies of the valley blooming along its bank.'

#### The Three Crises.

'A wise old man who had a characteristic habit of long and careful introspection, but who had never become morbid as a result of his expeditions into his interior life, was once discussing his experience with a friend whom he deeply trusted.

"There were three decisive crises in my early life," he said. "The first was when I made up my mind to be loyal to the very highest demand which came to me. Out of that decision came a sense of ethical urgency which has enriched my whole life. But something torturing came out of it too. For it was not long until I was caught in the coils of so involved a sense of ethical responsibility that I was completely bewildered. My head was dizzy with the noise of buzzing loyalties. Then came that crisis in my life when I learned the deepest secret of all. There was a reinforcement outside my own life whose help I could claim. The very meaning of my hesitation and confusion and incompleteness was that my life was to be lived with God, and not apart from God. He became the greatest fact of all, and trust in Him my most defining experience. Then for a little while I was so possessed by the rapture of this new relationship that I did not see its ethical implications. I was so busy trusting God that I did not feel the deep necessity of doing His will. I was brought to a sharp halt. I saw that I was using religion in such a way that my very character was endangered. Then came the third crisis. Now I faced the practical responsibilities of a great trust. I saw that I must depend upon God as if that were the only experience in the world. I saw that I must live as carefully as if I were depending upon myself for moral peace. At that moment I found the way in which ethics and religion unite to produce the full life."

That story is taken from a new book by Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, the President of the North-Western University, entitled *The Eyes of Faith* (Abingdon Press; \$1.50). It is a remarkable book, quite as strong and stimulative, with all its popularity, as the same author's Cole Lectures.

#### SOME TEXTS.

When a man claims to have discovered *The Inner Meaning of the Four Gospels* (Daniel; 3s. 6d. net) he has to come with good credentials. For the presumption is that he is a faddist. Mr. Gilbert T. Sadler, M.A., LL.B., is a scholar—so far good and going a long way. But when he tells us, as he does at the very beginning, that he no longer believes in the existence of Jesus, he throws himself out of court. We know what his scholarship comes to. Then we almost expect an exposition like this—

Lk 11<sup>29-33</sup>.—"We cannot imagine any Jew openly declaring himself to be greater than Solomon and Jonah. If he *were* greater, he would not say so. The verses are Christology, not a history of what was said by a man Jesus. The wooden, uneastern, unimaginative Commentaries never perceive so simple a truth. They treat the Gospels as history. They assume (but do not prove) that a man Jesus lived. Their days are numbered, however, useful in many respects though they have been.'

Lk 23<sup>64, 66</sup> and Jn 19<sup>52</sup>.

The discrepancy between these verses is an old and still unsolved problem. The Rev. Khodadad E. Keith, M.A., Teacher of Hebrew in the University of Liverpool, believes that he can solve it. It is agreed that Jesus was crucified on a Friday. The question is, What day of the month was that Friday? Was it the 14th or the 15th of Nisan? If Luke says one and John another day, the reason is that *the Jewish Calendar had not yet been fixed*. 'We must bear in mind that the Jewish year is a lunar year, and that the Jewish Calendar (still in use) was not fixed till about 360 A.D., by Hillel II. Prior to that date, the first day of the month depended upon the appearance of the new moon. "The beginning of the astronomical month," says Dr. M. Friedländer, "is the moment of the conjunction of sun and moon [called in Hebrew *molad* = 'birth'], when the moon is exactly between the earth and the sun. Nothing is then visible of the moon. At least six hours later a very small portion of the moon can, under favourable conditions, be seen, and the day on which this takes place is the first of the calendar month" ("The Jewish Religion," p. 364). It will be admitted that such a method of determining the first day of the month must occasionally lead to uncertainty; one section of the community might regard a certain day as the *last day of the expiring month*, whilst another section might take it as the *first day of the coming month*.'

Mr. Khodadad Keith explains all this in *The Passover in the Time of Christ* (London Jews' Society; 8d. net).

Mk 12<sup>17</sup>.

'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's.' Is there any difficulty? The Rev. Albert D. Belden, B.D., who publishes a vigorous volume of sermons under

the title of *Does God Really Care?* (R.T.S.; 4s. 6d. net), fears that it invites to a separation of things sacred from things secular, a separation elsewhere disapproved of by Jesus. 'As an isolated motto this verse has been used to sanction a false spirituality, utterly obnoxious to the spirit of Jesus. It has been used to support that point of view which shuts human life up into water-tight compartments, having no relations one with another, which says this is secular, that is sacred; this is politics, that is religion; this is business, that is morality; and which is prepared to use two differing codes of conduct for those respective activities.' Accordingly he ventures on an interpretation. 'The word translated "render" is a word meaning simply "give-back," "restore," and as such is applicable, of course, to the idea of paying tribute. If, however, it was clear that Jesus meant "pay tribute" by the words, *it is highly singular that the Pharisees did not seize upon His sanction and hold Him up to the displeasure of the multitude.* Instead we find the Pharisees silent and the people delighted! Why? Because the Pharisees could not tell what He meant, whereas the people seized on the simplest significance of the words and understood Jesus to mean—"Give back to Cæsar *all* that is Cæsar's!" "Give it back to him! Refuse to have anything to do with Cæsar! Don't soil your hands and honesty by using his coinage at all! Refuse to touch it! Give back to Cæsar whatever is Cæsar's!" They had just confessed that it was Cæsar's coinage. Bearing his image, it was the symbol of their subjection. Yet they were secretly his foes. Christ's reply, whilst its form was one with which they could find no fault, might just as well have meant "*Fling* back to Cæsar these symbols of his oppression and of your dependence."

But what, then, is the meaning of the rest of the sentence: 'and unto God the things that are God's'? Mr. Belden does not say.

#### NEW POETRY.

Edith Sitwell.

Edith Sitwell is a realistic poet. Whether her realism is philosophical or not, it is a fact. More likely is it the outcome of an exceptionally keen observation of life. Often that life is low life, and sometimes it is low enough. But still it is taken up by the creative imagination and made poetry. Near the end of the book there is a poem on the

Drunkard. It will serve as an example and illustration.

#### THE DRUNKARD.

This black tower drinks the blinding light.  
Strange windows livid white,

Tremble beneath the curse of God.  
Yet living weeds still nod

To the huge sun, a devil's eye  
That tracks the souls that die.

The clock beats like the heart of Doom  
Within the narrow room;

And whispering with some ghastly air  
The curtains float and stir.

But still she never speaks a word;  
I think she hardly heard

When I with reeling footsteps came  
And softly spoke her name.

But yet she does not sleep. Her eyes  
Still watch in wide surprise

The thirsty knife that pitied her;  
But those lids never stir,

Though creeping Fear still gnaws like pain  
The hollow of her brain.

She must have some sly plan, the cheat,  
To lie so still. The beat

That once throbbed like a muffled drum  
With fear to hear me come,

Now never sounds when I creep nigh.  
Oh! she was always sly.

And if to spite her, I dared steal  
Behind her bed, and feel

With fumbling fingers for her heart. . . .  
Ere I could touch the smart,

Once more wild shriek on shriek would tear  
The dumb and shuddering air. . . .

And still she never speaks to me.  
She only smiles to see

How in dark corners secret-sly  
New-born Eternity,

All spider-like, doth spin and cast  
Strange threads to hold Time fast.

The title of the book is *The Wooden Pegasus* (Blackwell; 6s. net).

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