

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 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

Entre Nous.

A PSALM.

'It is quite true that Cromwell's action not unfrequently jars with Christianity as we in this nineteenth century understand it. But, as I have said, his religion and that of the Puritans was based largely on constant, literal, daily reading of the Old Testament. The newer criticism would have found no patron in Cromwell. Indeed, I believe that its professors would have fared but ill at his hands. He himself lived with an absolutely childlike faith in the atmosphere and with the persons of the Old Testament. Joshua and Samuel and Elijah were as real and living beings to him as any people in history, or any of the persons by whom he was surrounded. His favourite psalm, we are told, was the 68th—the psalm that, even in the tumult of the victory of Dunbar, he shouted on the field of battle before he ordered the pursuit of the retreating army. But it always seemed to me that another psalm, the 149th, much more closely reproduces the character, the ideas, and the practice of Cromwell: "Let the saints be joyful in glory . . . Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgement written: This honour have all his saints." It is not a comfortable or patient or long-suffering creed, it is true; but, remember, it is the creed that first convulsed and then governed England—the faith of men who carried their iron gospel into their iron lives.'¹

A TEXT.

Ezekiel xviii. 2.

'Habitual drunkenness on the part of a parent or of the parents may produce modifications, and may be followed by dire results in the offspring. Is this not evidence enough of the transmission of modifications? Certainly not to those who wish to think clearly. (1) There is some evidence that thorough poisoning of the body may cause deterioration of the germ-cells of either parent; (2) the intemperate habits of the parent may be the expression of an inherited lack of control, and

¹ Lord Rosebery, *Miscellanies*, i. 97.

it is this lack that is transmitted to the offspring, where it may find the same or some other expression; (3) drunkenness on the mother's part may mean serious enfeebling of the general vigour of the child during the period of ante-natal partnership; (4) some children get alcohol as part of their food from the days of suckling onwards. The question is not easy. A belief in the transmission of modifications was perhaps expressed in the old Hebraic proverb: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'—a proverb which the prophet Ezekiel with great solemnity said was not to be used any more in Israel (Ezk 18²). Now, if 'setting on edge' was a structural modification, and if the children's teeth were 'set on edge' because of what had happened to their fathers in direct consequence of eating sour grapes, there would have been a presumption in favour of a belief in the transmission of this acquired character. It would still be necessary, however, to be very careful in our conclusion—to inquire, for instance, whether the children had not been in the vineyard too. If, as Romanes said, the children were born with wry necks, we should perhaps have to deal with an indirect result of the parental indiscretion, and not with any direct representation in the inheritance of that particular modification which was produced in the parents as the direct result of eating sour grapes.'²

SOME TOPICS.

Heaven lies about us in our Infancy.

'One girl I have christened "Topsy," and I only wish you could see her when she is in one of her tantrums, which she has at frequent intervals. With her flashing black eyes, straight, jet-black hair, square, squat shoulders, she looks the very embodiment of the Evil One. She is twelve, but shows neither ability nor desire to learn. Her habits are disgusting, and unless closely watched she will be found filling her pockets with the contents of the garbage pail—and this in spite of the fact that we are no longer dining off one herring. She says that her ambition in life is to become like a fat pig! Last night, when the children were safely tucked in bed and I had sat

² J. Arthur Thomson, *The Control of Life*, p. 101 f.

down to write to you, piercing shrieks were heard resounding through the stillness of the house. A tour of investigation revealed Topsy creeping from bed to bed in the darkness, pretending to cut the throats of the girls with a large carving-knife which she had stolen for this purpose. To-day Topsy is going around with her hands tied behind her back as a punishment, and in the hope that without the use of her hands we may have one day of peace at least. Poor Topsy, kindness and severity alike seem unavailing. She steals and lies with the greatest readiness, and one wonders what life holds in store for her.'

The book is called *Le petit Nord: Annals of a Labrador Harbour* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s. net). It is a record of a year's stay at the place so called as head of a children's hospital. But who was head we are not told. We know only that two authors' names are on the book, Anne Grenfell and Katie Spalding, and that Anne Grenfell is the wife of the famous Dr. Grenfell of Labrador. The story is told in letters home. Lively and amusing the letters are, but tragedy is never far away from comedy, especially in Labrador.

A Valuable Breed.

The author who signs himself 20/1631 is probably easily identified. He makes no other attempt to conceal himself. The Prime Minister is one of his (not very intimate) friends. He discourses familiarly about Mr. Balfour and many other parliamentary and famous men. The whimsical signature seems used to give him leave to say all that comes into his head on *Some Personalities* (Murray; 15s. net), and he says it. This is his experience as a Civil Servant:

'If anyone would know with how little wisdom the world is governed he need only enter the Civil Service of the British Empire. I entered it by the open door of competition with some thousand more suitable candidates, and was appointed to the General Register Office in Dublin. The Registrar-General of Ireland had applied for the services of a French scholar to correspond with foreign bureaux, and when the news of my appointment reached me I happened to be on a tour in France. I applied for permission to complete my journey, and you would have thought the Registrar-General would have been only too glad for me to improve my knowledge of the language. That only shows your ignorance

of the Service. I was commanded to repair to my post within a fortnight. I found the foreign correspondence in the hands of a senior clerk who had no idea of relinquishing his functions; and after spending some months in a cellar among the records of mortality, I was entrusted with the compilation of statistics.

'I was in charge of the emigration statistics in the year when 100,000 souls left Ireland out of a population of less than 5,000,000. Apart from adding up that miserable sum, most of the work I had to do appeared to me a waste of time and stationery. I began badly with the invention of a new method of checking the figures which effected a saving of time with an increase of accuracy. This brought me a reproof from my superior official, and an order to return to the old-fashioned way. I got my own back, I think, over a humorous item in the agricultural statistics. These were sheets filled up by the constabulary once a year, and purported to be a faithful account of the crops raised and the live stock kept on every holding in the country. One year the Registrar-General, in a burst of enterprise, decided to add three new columns to the returns, dealing with the butter, the poultry and even the eggs. This inquiry was sprung on the long-suffering peasantry without any warning; and if you know anything of Ireland you may easily imagine the sort of information the constabulary were likely to extract from a small Connemara holder with an uncertain memory and a strong desire to see the peeler off his premises. Many of the constables seemed to have filled up the columns as Mr. Weller spelt, according to their own taste and fancy, without going through any useless formalities. I was malicious enough to compare the total of poultry with the total of eggs in one district, and to draw my chief's attention to the surprising fact thereby disclosed, that every cock, hen and chicken in that part of Ireland had laid six eggs a day for an entire twelvemonth. The breed must have been a valuable one; it was before the days of intensive culture, too. My detestable zeal broke the Registrar-General's heart, and that return never reached the foreign bureaux.'

The Tower of Babel.

'Ukepenopfü was the first being. Her descendants are very many. Instead of dying she was translated into heaven. Later on her descendants

thought to communicate with her by building a tower up to heaven, up which they would go and talk to her. She, however, knowing their thoughts, said to herself, "They will all expect presents, and I have no presents for so many men. The tower must be stopped before it get any higher." So she made all the men working at the tower to talk different languages, so that they could not understand one another, and when one said bring a stone, they would fetch water or a stick, and so forth, so that all was confusion, and the tower abandoned, and hence the different tongues of the various tribes of man.

'There was once a country under a powerful chief with great armies and the people thought they would mount up to heaven by building a ladder of wood. So they builded a stair, and made the stair very high into heaven. Now the men who were up at the top asked for more wood, and the men who were below made answer, "There is no wood; shall we cut a piece from the stair?" So the men at the top not understanding what they said gave answer, "Ay, cut it." So they cut it, and the ladder fell, and great was the fall thereof, and they that builded it were killed.'¹

Trusteeship.

The best missionary book that we have had for a long season is entitled *China and Modern Medicine* (United Council for Missionary Education; 5s. net.). The author, Mr. Harold Balme, F.R.C.S., D.P.H., Dean of the School of Medicine in Shantung Christian University, tells the story of the victory which the medical missionaries in China have won, the way they have won it, and the use they mean to make of it. He tells also the secret of the success. The secret is trusteeship.

'There is a second great ideal which, while not perhaps entirely confined to modern times, may also be claimed as one of the greatest contributions which western medicine has had to offer to the world. This is the conception of trusteeship, in relation both to medical knowledge and to the care of the sick.

'The doctrine of mandates, as at present understood, is a direct product of those newer ideas of international responsibility which have found their expression in the League of Nations. But the application of this doctrine had a much earlier origin in respect to individuals. It sprang into

¹ J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 265.

being on the first occasion that a physician taught that all medical discovery, and all knowledge as to the causation and treatment of disease, were the common heritage of every practitioner of medicine, and not the private monopoly of the discoverer himself. And when one begins to consider the implications of that teaching—particularly against the background of those countries where no such doctrine has ever been taught—the immense potentiality of such a truly Christian conception at once seizes the imagination.

'Think for a moment where medicine would be to-day if Jenner had set up a private consulting room for the practice of vaccination, and had never made it possible for others to share in his discovery. Think of the appalling and unnecessary suffering that hundreds of thousands would have endured if Morton and Simpson had appropriated to themselves the sole right to the administration of anæsthetics, the secret of which might well have died with them. Where would surgery be if Joseph Lister had not made his antiseptic principles freely accessible to one and all? Where, indeed, could we point to any triumphs of modern medicine, had it not been for the fact that this conception of trusteeship has been the dominating ideal of every medical investigator of modern times?

'Nor was it only in the realm of medical discovery that this new ideal became operative. In spite of certain regrettable exceptions, the sense of trusteeship has gradually become the fundamental conception governing the attitude of physician and nurse towards their patient, with the result that everything connected with the sick man—his health, his life, his very confidence—is regarded as a sacred trust, for which his doctor is answerable to God and to his fellows. It is around this central thought that the whole of our modern system of medical and nursing ethics has been built up. Hospitals and dispensaries, Red Cross Societies and asylums, have all alike been organized as an embodiment of this creed. And the faithful work of every conscientious physician and nurse has been an exposition of this underlying sense of personal responsibility for the patient's welfare.'