
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.

If it is possible to put into a single sentence the fundamental difference between the Roman and the Reformed Churches this might be the sentence: The Roman Church holds that some Christians are called by God to a higher degree of holiness than others, the Reformed Church believes that all are called alike to the highest possible holiness. In face of that difference all other differences are of small account.

This conclusion will be reached, if it has not been reached already, by the reader of a remarkable volume of *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* which has been published by Baron Friedrich von Hügel, LL.D., D.D. (Dent; 15s. net). The idea that some are called to a special and quite distinct degree of nearness to God runs through the whole book. In the last address of all, an address delivered to an audience composed mainly of Anglican Churchmen, it is stated and illustrated with great intensity of speech and with great variety of illustration.

Baron von Hügel believes that in the separation of some to a higher life of holiness than others is to be found the strength of Roman Catholic religion. 'It expresses,' he says, 'my very deliberate, now long tested, conviction that, be the sins of commission or of omission chargeable against the Roman Catholic authorities or people what they may, in that faith and practice is to be found a massiveness of the Supernatural, a sense of the World Invisible, of God as the soul's true home, such as exists elsewhere more in fragments and approximations and more intermittently.'

Can we agree? We do agree. We say that to find a saint we must go to the Roman Church. We do not consider what a saint is or ought to be. We take the Roman definition and example. All we consider is the fact, undeniable and unmistakable, that the Roman Church makes what might be called a specialty of saints, and that the Reformed Church does not.

But the culture of the saint is not all gain. For many a day it went on unhindered. Fostered indeed it was by every influence that an all-powerful Church could bring to bear upon it. It enjoyed what gardeners call intensive cultivation—the most intensive the world has ever seen. And what was the result? Baron von Hügel tells us. 'With the decay of the Middle Ages, from about A.D. 1300–1450, and then on into the (first Christian then Pagan) Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation, men largely grew weary of the monastic ideal; and, influenced as much by the atomistic and sceptical late mediæval philosophy as by the many complications brought in the course of the ages by the exempted position

of the great monastic corporations, they at last determined to dig up the very roots of all and any monasticism.'

There were reasons. There were good reasons. Baron von HÜGEL does not deny them. But he does not dwell upon them. He dwells upon the price that the half of Europe, the Reformed half, paid for 'this apparently quite simple return to the supposed utter uniformity of call for all men as described in the Gospels.' What was the price?

First of all, 'alongside of the dissolute houses,' certain monasteries were suppressed 'that were still centres of the most beneficent devotedness.' Secondly, the call to every follower of Christ to follow fully was found in 'an unlovely subtlety of interpretation of those Gospel records which, when taken quite unsophisticatedly, tell a very different tale.' Thirdly, and chiefly, that very distinction between a higher and a lower call, which means so much to Baron von HÜGEL, was lost sight of.

'The distinction here meant'—let us understand him clearly—'was all-pervasive during the Golden Middle Ages—say from A.D. 1050–1270—especially in Aquinas and in Dante; the distinction, not only between Good and Evil, but between Good and Good, between Natural Good and Supernatural Good. Thus bodily cleanliness, honesty in buying and selling, submission to the police and due tax-paying to the State, a fair amount of courage, too, in war—this and the like, with a dim sense of God—the God of Honesty—in the background, all this was held to be indeed from God, to be necessary, to be good. But it was (or would be, did it anywhere exist thus, quite unmixed with Supernature) only Natural Good. And such a simply Natural Goodness would, for survival beyond death, merely conceive or desire this Natural Goodness, with the dim background of God, to continue for ever, less suffering, offences against this rational code, and death. We have here, for a spiritual landscape, a parallel to a great plain—say that of Lombardy—with its corn; we could now add its potatoes. Bentham amongst recent Englishmen, and Confucius amongst the great ancient and non-European moral and religious leaders, represent this sane and sensible, but dry and shallow outlook.'

Baron von HÜGEL would recall us to the distinction maintained throughout the Golden Middle Ages. To some he offers decency, to others devotedness; to some homeliness, to others heroism; to some simple justice and average fairness, to others genial generosity and overflowing self-devotion; to some the Alpine Uplands—the edelweiss and the alpenrose—to others the Lombard Plains with their corn and their potatoes.

In one of the Manuals of Fellowship of the Epworth Press (6d. net), Mr. W. R. MALTBY discusses *The Meaning of the Resurrection.*

To some good Christian people now, the meaning of the Resurrection is that there was no resurrection. Mr. MALTBY is not one of them. He does not see how you can continue to speak of a resurrection if nothing rose. He believes that Jesus was laid in the grave in the body, and in the body rose again from the dead.

But he recognizes the difficulty of the Resurrection. He feels it as sharply as any of us. More than that he sees that it was a difficulty to Jesus Himself. And the same difficulty. To us the difficulty lies in the fact that it is a miracle. That it was a miracle was precisely the difficulty which Jesus encountered in dealing with it.

For His supreme purpose was to keep His disciples in touch with Himself. The Old Testament saints desired above all else to keep in fellowship with God. It was this desire that gave them their belief in immortality. They could not bear to think of death as the end of all the joy they had in God's companionship. They came to

see that death would only open the way to a fuller access and freer enjoyment.

This was the desire of the disciples with Jesus. And this was His desire with them. But there was a difficulty. The fellowship of Jesus with His disciples had been in the body. They had seen and handled Him, as one of them afterwards expressed it. And death had severed that line of intercourse. The death of their Master's body had interrupted their fellowship with Him. They could not simply, as the saints before them, go on enjoying the fellowship of the spirit, for the fellowship of the spirit had been ministered to them through the fellowship of the body. It was their dependence on the body for fellowship that made His death so utter a prostration.

The difficulty was twofold. If He returned to them in the spirit they would certainly be unable to enter into the fellowship. For it would be a fellowship of which they had no conscious experience, and in such a state of disillusionment as His death had thrown them into, they would be quite unable to begin an untried experience. On the other hand, if He appeared suddenly among them in the body, as one who had risen from the dead, their consternation would probably prevent them from recognizing Him. It would certainly make it impossible for them to feel that their former intercourse with the loving human Master they had known was to proceed calmly and confidently as before.

Two things Jesus had to do for them. He had to convince them that their fellowship was still to be with the very man whom they had known and loved. And He had to lead them away from dependence on His bodily presence into a fellowship of the Spirit. The Resurrection was necessary for both purposes. But the miracle of the Resurrection stood in the way of both.

For in the first place, they had never been able to entertain the idea of His death and resurrection. When the death came it was a great shock to them. When the resurrection followed it was nothing less than a consternation. Such experience as they had had of His power to raise the dead seems to have done nothing to prepare them for seeing Himself risen again. There was the utmost danger that if He appeared suddenly among them in His risen body they would be unable to receive Him as the very Master with whom they had gone in and out in the days that were past. Yet He must be the same. A spirit, without flesh and bones, would not be the same. He must appear to them in the body. But He must be careful how and when He appeared. Mr. MALTBY follows Him in the steps He took.

One scene will be sufficient. There was a report that the tomb was empty. Peter and John heard of it, and they ran both together. 'John is describing one of the greatest moments of his life, and every detail of that morning scene is stamped for ever on his mind. As we follow him to the climax he makes it clear how the truth came home to him.

'"There lie the clothes; they have fallen a little together, but are still wrapped fold over fold, and no grain of spice is displaced. The napkin, too, is lying on the low step which serves as a pillow for the head of the corpse; it is twisted into a sort of ring, and is all by itself. The very quietude of the scene makes it seem to have something to say. . . . 'All that was Jesus of Nazareth has suffered its change and is gone. We—grave-clothes and spices and napkin—belong to the earth and remain.'" John came expecting to find a violated tomb, but no human hand has wronged this place; only the hand of God has been here to do right by His only-begotten Son. The grave-clothes lying undisturbed, and the napkin in that place and in that shape—these broke the truth to John's mind. He saw and understood, and turned away to his own home to wait for what might come next. Jesus saw both Peter and John later that same day, and they were ready for Him when He came, and were not merely stupefied by overwhelming surprise.

They had pondered the significance of what had come to pass, they had steadied themselves, and were ready to meet Him worthily and move on with Him to the next lesson.'

But the miracle of the Resurrection stood also in the way of His further purpose. If it was necessary for the resumption of their intercourse that He should appear to them in the body, it was equally necessary for the continuance of that intercourse that they should be weaned from dependence on the body. But there Jesus was. They knew now that it was 'this same Jesus.' Mary in her woman's swift intuition recognized Him early and at the same moment shot out her hand to hold Him. He cannot be held. It is a curiously compressed Hebrew idiom that He uses. 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended.' He means, 'Touch me, if touching is meant to assure you that it is I myself; but touch me not, if it is to be a hindrance to that fuller fellowship upon which I shall enter at the ascension.'

They all knew now that it was He. And they all desired to hold Him. In this respect also the Transfiguration was a rehearsal. They would make a tabernacle for Him on the earth. But He can no more be held on the earth in bodily form than He could be held of death. And they have to know it. So after they were fully convinced and had resumed their fellowship with Him, He led them out as far as Bethany, was parted from them, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. There was no doubt in their minds that it was He. There was no doubt that He had been taken up.

In his lecture on *The Constructive Value of the Bible* (Mowbray) which was noticed last month, Professor Walter Lock quotes the following words from Myers's *Catholic Thoughts*: 'We have to judge the Bible, and especially the Old Testament, with an Asiatic measure generally, with an antique one always. Modern Occidentalism is a wholly unjust line, if the only one; and to apply the rules of Logic to the language of Piety or Poetry or remorselessly to analyse the warm rich life of Eastern imagery and passion is but a sign of a hopeless and fruitless exposition.'

Turn to the 137th Psalm—

By the waters of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged our harps.
For there they that led us captive required of us songs,
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.
Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom
The day of Jerusalem;
Who said, Rase it, rase it,
Even to the foundation thereof.
O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us,
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
Against the rock.

What are we to do with it? There are two ways. Omit it or understand it. Dr. T. R. Glover sticks to it and tries to understand it.

Dr. Glover has published a volume of essays—*The Pilgrim* (S.C.M.; 6s. net). They are on many subjects and in many manners. But they have all the touch of the literary artist. And

better than that, though that also is good, they are all efforts to set us down beside the Oriental, whether of the Old Testament or of the New, and enable us to enter with some sympathy into 'the warm rich life of Eastern imagery and passion.' One of the essays is on the 137th Psalm.

Dr. GLOVER calls it 'An Ancient Hymn of Hate.' 'One of the happiest incidents of our late war,' he tells us, 'whether it is true or not, describes a sing-song in an English trench, and then an English soldier says, addressing two prisoners: "Our friends Hans and Fritz will now oblige with the Hymn of Hate."'

That story throws us somewhat into the situation. The Babylonians had taken and sacked Jerusalem. No modern army dare do the things which those conquerors from the Euphrates did. 'A number of the better families of the Jews were gathered to be transported to the other side of the world. The sickly were left to their fate; needless infants in arms were disposed of, the psalmist tells us how. That savage cry at the end of his Hymn of Hate is a revelation; it was his own child that he had seen so treated. With his friends and fellow-citizens he was marched northwards, following more or less the route of General Allenby. There is no other way from Jerusalem to Babylon; those who have tramped northward through Syria will best understand what that march was like. At the point where the Euphrates most closely approaches the Mediterranean they crossed the desert and marched eternally down the banks of that great river. The journey was long and tedious, but the fatigue and the hardship had this advantage, they kept men from thinking. At last they reached the place where they were to live, where their graves and the graves of their children are found to this day—Nippur. The journey was over, and they were in a new land.'

And now, 'arrived in Babylonia, and sitting by the riverside, there is talk among the prisoners and their guards, for even Babylonians were human, and as they sit the Babylonians sing songs of their own land. By and by in a friendly spirit some one asks the Hebrew captives if they, too, will not sing.' It is the situation in which Hans and Fritz found themselves. Did they sing? The Jewish exiles did not. 'The whole nature of one poet rose up quivering with pain. He left the group by the waters of Babylon, he broke away from them, and out of the sorrow that surged through him he wrote a new song altogether, full of tears and memories, culminating in this crash of hatred—the one great authentic Hymn of Hate in the Bible.'

Do you not sympathize with him? The loved land, the city of the Great King, the loneliness of exile from the very God of Israel Himself, the vivid memory of the siege with its nameless horrors, the infants'—his own infant's—blood bespattering the stones—he realized it all. Then he threw himself into his Hymn of Hate. Eastern imagery and passion gave him a song to sing in a strange land, but not a song he could have sung in the midst of his captors.

We cannot sing it now, but we can strive to understand it.

In many books, and from many platforms, is now proclaimed the gospel of the teaching and example of Jesus. No other name but 'Jesus' will be found in the book, no other name will be heard from beginning to end of the address.

It is easy to sympathize with these writers and speakers. They address, we all address, an audience now that is educated. No doubt every member of every audience has something still to learn. But they have all learned as much as this, that the Universe they live in is reliable. It lives and moves and has its being under the direction of laws which may be depended on. Neglect or violation of these laws would turn it into chaos.

Now when you go beyond the teaching and example of Jesus you enter the realm of miracle. And as miracle is understood to mean violation of the laws of nature, no educated audience will have anything to do with it. So it comes to pass that their teachers stop short at the death of Jesus on the Cross. They preach Jesus *without* the resurrection.

It is easy, we say, to sympathize with them. Their 'honesty, ardour, and enthusiasm'—to quote words used of them by Mr. C. G. Montefiore—are unmistakable and admirable. But their wisdom is not so evident. For it is true, though the truth must be applied with discrimination, that the better is sometimes the enemy of the best. We feed infants with milk, but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age. To feed *them* with milk is to prevent their senses being exercised to discern both good and evil.

It is undoubtedly better that young men and women of education should be kept in touch with Jesus than that they should drift away to secularism. But that better is not so good as the best. And when we see that even the teaching and example of Jesus obtain their value from the recognition of His Person, we realize that to keep in touch with the man Jesus and lose sight of the Christ of God, is not only to let go the best for the sake of the better but to suffer the loss of the better also.

For it is quite certain that neither the teaching nor the example of Jesus is of much value if it is simply the teaching and example of Jesus of Nazareth.. As to the teaching, it is enough for the moment to observe how utterly bewildering then are those precepts with which the Sermon on the Mount is weighted, and how utterly preposterous (a very mild word) are those demands for personal allegiance which are made throughout the rest of the Gospels. But the example of Jesus demands consideration. It is considered in a book on *The Gospel and its Working*, by the Rev. P. J. MACLAGAN, D.Phil. (S.C.M.; 3s. 6d. net).

Dr. MACLAGAN is in sympathy with those who commend the teaching and example of Jesus. You read his book and for a time wonder if he is not simply one of them. But he is both a scholar and an evangelist. If not his scholarship, then his evangelism has made it impossible for him to acquiesce in the offer of the example of Jesus as a sufficient Gospel even 'to go on with.'

'It is somewhat surprising,' he says, 'to find how few are the detailed references to the example of Jesus in the New Testament apart from the Gospels. Of course, before any written Gospels were in existence, there would be an oral tradition of the life of Jesus; but for all that, or just because of that, it is surprising that in those writings addressed to the first Christians which are preserved in the New Testament there is little allusion to the earthly life of Jesus. As Professor A. Menzies has pointed out, those texts in the Epistles which refer to His example deal not so much with the events of His public ministry as with the beginning and close of His human life. In the two great passages in which Paul appeals to the example of Christ, the appeal is to His Incarnation, supplemented in one case by a reference to His death. What he set forth to the Galatians was Christ crucified. The summary of the Gospel he made known to the Corinthians was that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and rose again the third day and appeared to His disciples. When he exhorts Christians to love one another it is as Christ loved them in giving Himself for them. So Peter's reference to the example of Christ seems to be to His demeanour at the tragic close of His life when He was in the hands of His enemies. Nowhere is anything made of the details of the Gospel story.'

But may not the example of Jesus, little as was made of it then, be effective now in inducing men to give up the service of sin for the service of the

living and true God? Dr. MACLAGAN turns to his experience as an evangelist, the experience of many years in China. 'As it seems to have been in apostolic times, so, if I may trust my experience, is it in the mission field to-day. The evangelic preaching is of One who came down from Heaven, died for our sins, rose again after three days and after forty days ascended into Heaven. Very many of the Chinese catechumens learn about Jesus, to begin with, nothing more than this. Some may add to their account of Him that He "preached the doctrine and wrought miracles," but their knowledge of either doctrine or miracles is small. If they hold that He was good they can give no concrete example of His goodness. So little do they, to begin with, reflect on His character that some of them having been told that all men are sinners, will, in utter self-contradiction, include Him also in that generalization. The point here again is that the details of the earthly life of Jesus are little applied to as a guide in conduct. The main, almost the only, thing in view is His love in coming to this world and dying for us.'

Then Dr. MACLAGAN turns to ourselves. He is addressing an audience of educated men and women, the very audience of which we have been speaking. The chapters of his book were first given as lectures at 'a Conference of young men and women on the fundamentals of the Gospel.' And what he says to them is that 'the record of Christ's life, as it stands, is not available—without some qualification—as our rule in life.'

He gives two examples. 'I am a total abstainer. Jesus used wine, and I am told that to advocate total abstinence as a Christian duty is to reflect on Him. I cannot avoid this conclusion if I am tied by the historical doings of Jesus. Yet for me I feel that, without judging others, it is my duty to abstain. How can I defend my position? I may urge difference of circumstances, though it can hardly be made out that in Jesus' day there was no drunkenness, or that He never drank intoxicating wine. I better defend myself by an appeal to Paul's exposition of loving self-denial for the sake of others as being the very spirit of Christ. Surely this, rather than His temporarily conditioned actions, is the standard both for me and for my critics, though they may question my application of it.'

That is the first example. The other is like it. 'Take, again, the question of vegetarianism, practised not "for the stomach's sake," but out of pity for "the lower creation" and a sense of the sacredness of all life. Is this question closed for every Christian by the example of Jesus, who was certainly no vegetarian? Shall we say that to eat flesh or fish cannot be wrong for any Christian since Jesus did so? Shall we condemn the conscientious, not, of course, the valetudinarian, eater of herbs as being a thankless despiser of God-provided food, as Chinese Christians sometimes say to converts from Buddhistic ideas? Or, at least, may we criticize him as claiming a keener moral sense than Jesus had? Is it not more in accord with the spirit of Jesus to say to him that rather than eat flesh, even though Jesus did so, he must in any case follow his own conscience? "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." As the example of a Christian brother so also the example of Jesus Himself must not embolden a man to act against his own moral insight.'