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## Entre Nous.

### Ernest De Witt Burton and Chinese Missions.

THE death last year of Ernest De Witt Burton, the President of the University of Chicago, has meant an almost irreparable loss to New Testament scholarship in America. The Chicago University Press is to be congratulated on having issued so soon a life of Dr. Burton (noticed this month under 'Literature'). It has at the same time issued a collection of his papers and addresses with the title *Christianity in the Modern World* (10s. net). A number of the addresses are reprinted from 'The Biblical World,' of which Dr. Burton was editor for a number of years. They have been chosen as giving the essence of his thinking on the religion of Jesus and its application in Christian education and world problems. But for ill-health he would himself have gone to the mission field, and in his last public address—in April 1925—he dealt with 'The Future of Christian Education in China.' He made the following three practical suggestions which should not be lightly set aside to-day :

'Let us remember that control by the Chinese—complete control—is the goal of our efforts; that we are not in China to maintain a Christian movement which is essentially foreign. We are there to make ourselves dispensable as soon as possible. The characteristic of the foreign missionary movement is that it becomes successful by putting itself out of business.'

'Shall Christian schools make attendance at Bible classes and religious services compulsory? This does not seem to me an essential part of our Christian education in China. The *quality* of our education in Christianity is far more important than that it be compulsory. If it is not compulsory, it must compete, on the same level, with other subjects. If its quality is high we should not fear such competition. I hesitate to say it, yet—if I am to believe the testimony of those who have been in immediate contact with the situation—it has sometimes been true in our mission schools that Christianity has been less effectively taught than any other subject in the curriculum. Is that a tolerable situation? Suppose we reverse the situation? Cease to make attendance at classes in Christianity compulsory, but make those classes second to none in the quality of the work offered and the ability of the teaching given, and what will be the result? Will students be more likely to be won to Christianity by being required to attend instruction of poor quality, or by being given the

privilege of attending classes which are of the highest caliber of any work offered in the school? Do away with compulsion and substitute high quality, and I do not fear the results.'

'Finally, I believe that we ought to be ready to make any adjustment whatever in order to achieve the fundamental purpose for which we are maintaining Christian education in China. I hope the time will never come when we shall have to face the question of conducting schools in which no religion can be taught. But if we should have to face that question, what would be our answer? My answer would be that I would *stay in China*; that I would stay and seek to express the Christian spirit by giving the most helpful service I could render to the Chinese, even if they refused to let me give them in words what they can not and will not refuse me the opportunity of expressing in life.'

### Why I am Content to be a Christian.

The first address in *Christianity in the Modern World* was originally delivered before various non-Christian audiences in India, China, and Japan. It is Dr. Burton's *apologia pro vita sua*. There are six reasons, he says, why he is joyous to be a Christian.

1. 'I am content to be a Christian because Christianity is a religion of intellectual liberty—a religion which, making truth supreme, leaves me free, requires me, indeed, to accept whatever is true.' This character was stamped on it by its founder, Jesus of Nazareth. He did not ask, as His contemporaries, What did our fathers hold? He asked simply, What is true? and so although retaining, also rejecting, much that His contemporaries accepted.

2. 'I am content to be a Christian because Christianity, being a religion of intellectual liberty, is able to appropriate to itself truth from whatever source it comes, and, what is even more difficult, leave behind its own outlived elements.' He gives as an example here the attitude of Jesus towards the Fast Days and towards the eating of clean and unclean food. Asked why His disciples were not punctilious to keep the Law about clean and unclean food, He answered, 'Not that which enters into a man defiles a man, but that which goeth forth from him defiles him.' Modern Christianity still has this power and has shown it in its attitude to science, to

which it has surrendered much but from which it has also learned much, so that to-day we no longer fear it. 'For however scientific men may confuse truth and error, in the end true science can only bring us truth and thereby make us richer.'

3. 'But I am content to be a Christian still more because Christianity is a religion of spiritual power. It maintains that fellowship of the human soul with God is possible, and vindicates that claim by a long line of men in whom faith in such fellowship has brought purity and power.'

4. 'I am content to be a Christian because Christianity sets before men a high ethical standard, and highest precisely in this: that it demands that men shall care not supremely for their own welfare, even their own moral welfare, but shall seek their own good in the good of their fellows. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and thy neighbor is thy fellow-man, and to love him is to seek his welfare in all its phases and aspects.'

5. 'Again, I am content to be a Christian because Christianity is a religion of broad horizon.' Dr. Burton finds that the community of Christianity is larger than the tribe and the nation; larger even than the race. 'Christianity, believing in fellowship with God, makes him the first member of its community, and then recognizing that he is the God of all men, and all men are one race, takes into its community all those to whom belongs the name of man.' But not even there is the limit drawn, for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth are also objects of the Heavenly Father's care and so also of our consideration.

6. 'Finally, I am content to be a Christian because Christianity embodies its ideals in a person who not only taught the truth, but perfectly exemplified it in his life and is to-day the mightiest force for the uplifting of men and nations.' The Christian sees in the life of Jesus the perfect ideal of human life which is at the same time the challenge and inspiration to him. But more than that, he sees in Jesus the supreme revelation of God.

#### Do It Again.

The Student Christian Movement has published a volume of essays by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick with the stirring title *Adventurous Religion* (6s. net).

The essays are very diverse. Here are some of the titles—'On Being a Real Skeptic,' 'Concerning Prayer,' 'Science and Religion,' 'The Desire for Immortality,' 'What Christian Liberals are driving at.' But though they are diverse in subject they are held together by the fact that they all have the same background—the situation which has arisen in the American Churches on account of Fundamentalism. They are held together also by the desire of the writer 'to separate religion altogether from the fickle ups and downs of theological and sectarian strife and to make it appear, as it is, an integral part of a wholesome life.' To show Dr. Fosdick's point of view we cannot do better than quote what he has to say on the core of religion:

'In Nottingham, England, is the Wesleyan chapel where William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was converted. A memorial tablet keeps fresh in recollection the fact that there this notable friend of the friendless received his baptism of spiritual power. Naturally, the chapel has become a shrine of pilgrimage for Salvation Army leaders from around the world. One day an aged colored man in the uniform of the Army was found by the minister of the chapel standing with uplifted eyes before the tablet.

"Can a man say his prayers here?" he asked.

"Of course," was the minister's answer, "a man can say his prayers here."

'And the old Salvation Army officer went down on his knees and, lifting his hands before the tablet, prayed, "O God, do it again! Do it again!"

'That prayer is the touchstone of abiding reality in religion. The reproducible experiences concerning which men can pray across the centuries, in all sorts of mental settings, "Do it again!" are the vital elements.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. E. Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion*, p. 292.