

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

by whom they had been spared for the will of God.'

LESLIE H. BUNN.

Louth, Lincolnshire.

Ephesians iv. 28.

ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπέτω, μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιᾷτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἵνα ἔχη μεταδίδοναι τῷ χρεῖαν ἔχοντι. The phrase, ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθὸν, seems somewhat vague and unsatisfactory. Throughout the N.T., ἐργασθαι τὸ ἀγαθὸν (to do good) and the synonymous ἀγαθοποιεῖν, which are frequently met with, are generally contrasted with their opposites, ἐργασθαι τὸ κακὸν, κακοποιεῖν, 'leading a good life' as opposed to leading an evil life' (cf. κατεργαζόμενον τὸ κακὸν . . . ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθὸν (Ro 2⁹, 10); ἀγαθοποιῶν . . . κακοποιῶν (3 Jn 11): (Mk 3⁴, Ro 3⁸, 2 Co 13⁷)). Further, only here is the expression found with a qualification—and that so strangely emphatic as—ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν. St. Paul (*sup. et inf.*) has been warning his hearers to refrain from certain vicious practices, stating clearly and definitely in each case the counter practice that is to be followed. 'Wherefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak truth with his neighbour,' he enjoins (v.²⁵), and 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of

your mouth, but such as is good for edifying' (v.²⁹). So here (v.²⁸) we should expect a like clear-cut pronouncement in place of the vague, 'doing good with his own hands.' How, too, 'good' (in the abstract) is to be 'shared (μεταδίδοναι) with him who is in want,' is rather difficult of conception.

I take ἐργαζόμενος here to mean 'earning' (by working), and suggest the adoption of a variant reading, τὸν ἄρτον for the received τὸ ἀγαθὸν, which may have had its origin in a marginal comment, or have been read into the text from its familiar association with ἐργασθαι. The difference between the two readings in uncial or cursive script, is, it may be noted, not great. The passage would then read, 'Let the bandit rob no more, but rather let him labour earning his bread with his own hands, that he may have wherewith to share with him who has lack of it.' Hitherto the robber has been living on the proceeds of banditry, acquired by, and shared by each member of the band, henceforth he is to earn his living by working with his own hands, sharing the proceeds of his labour with him that is in want. In support of this rendering of ἐργαζόμενος I would instance, ἵνα μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργαζόμενοι τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν (2 Th 3¹²), which I would translate, 'that earning quietly their own bread they eat it (and not that of others).'

W. D. MORRIS.

Kelso.

Entre Nous.

Flora Annie Steel.

The Garden of Fidelity (Macmillan; 12s. 6d. net) is the autobiography of Flora Annie Steel—a four-square garden set with flowers and trees, she tells us; 'A garden where one human soul had laid to rest his loves, his hopes, his fears.' Jowett, Ruskin, Pater, Pattison, Goldwin Smith, Sayce, and other names are mentioned as friends, but the life is 'no record of people I have met, no transcript of other folks' lives, no gossip of this world's doings. Simply a straightforward account of things I have seen and done in eighty-two years.' From the time that she went to India at eighteen as the young wife of a Civil servant—'Steel's baby bride'—she kept a diary. So none of the tints of the picture has faded; here are all

the impressions quite fresh that the events of her life made on her.

It is a self-revealing biography. The 'round-faced, high-coloured, with my hair still in curls, though tied up at the back with a bow of ribbon,' young girl is already eager, brushing aside difficulties, thinking for herself and taking her own line; already a musician and a painter of some note, overflowing with life and vitality, and showing intellectual powers that never—in spite of her later output of novels that in their time were literary events—contributed what they might have done to the world's enrichment. She was born a generation too early, and perhaps she was too versatile. She recognizes herself that this was the case, and, speaking of the

word, tells the story of a Scottish member of a choir she was training who parried an attack on the purity of his tone by the irrelevant remark, 'Ye see, Mistress Steel, ye're so verrsittle.'

There is a Victorian curtain drawn over all intimate relationships. She was not in love with her husband. 'I do not think either of us was in love. I know I was not; I never have been. . . . It has not made life any the less entrancing, any the less full of what Swinburne calls

Fair passions and bountiful pities
And loves without stain.'

Her husband was, we gather, a capable administrator and a fearless one, but he never liked Government service. He was known as the 'maker of gardens.' Every station that they went to, and they were moved continually, he made beautiful with flowers. Parenthetically we may remark that the daughter says of her father, 'To him my mother was the one entirely right thing in this world.'

Flora Annie Steel was an autocrat and admits it. The people of Kasur want to make her Begum. 'It is a fine Utopia to have, as it were, for my very own. What a tyrant I should have been! What a thorn in the side of any self-respecting British Government!' It was difficult for her to compromise. 'Scene-painting,' she says in one chapter, 'improved my sketching. I learnt how much one had to leave out. How little often produced an effect. That, in life, is one of the hardest lessons to learn; how much to see, how much to leave unseen. Women are specially liable to mistakes in this respect. It is very difficult for them to compromise.'

She did not compromise with injustice in administration. Her knowledge of the vernaculars gave her a semi-official appointment as inspector of schools in the Punjab, and scandals in the administration of the then new university of Lahore came to her knowledge. The fight culminated 'in my husband being transferred to the other end of the Punjab. And when I remained where I was, Government was unwise enough to ask the reason why. My husband, being a wise man, sent me the letter for reply. This I did by saying briefly that I had yet to learn I was under Government's orders, which was true, but the fat was in the fire. "Why don't you keep your wife in order?" wailed a helpless Secretary. "Take her for a month and try," was the amused answer. It was, of course, an *impasse*. So for nearly a year things remained. I did my educational work as usual. They knew it was valuable. . . . At last Mr. Baden-Powell,

brother to Sir Robert Baden-Powell, came across indisputable proof. . . . So let it pass. I will not have it in my Garden. But it brought me one experience that is worth keeping there for ever and ever a day. My scholars in the town, nigh four hundred of them—from four to fourteen—had an inkling that I was in a tight place. . . . I was to come to the big school at daybreak. There I should find the door barred, and a noise as of singing birds within. So I was to chant, "Little birds, little birds, why do you sing the night long?" And the answer would come back in chorus, "We sing for freedom, for freedom. Let us go! Let us go!" Then I had to unbar the door with the words, "Fly away, little birds," and the rest would follow. It did follow with a vengeance. Such a rush of four hundred children never was . . . and as they passed they flung at me the spools of cotton which the elder ones had spun during the long night during which *every one of them*, babies and all, had sat up, hungry, thirsty, singing hymns. I was literally snowed under. Afterwards they gathered the spools up, they wove them, they dyed the cloth, they embroidered it, and oh! the delight when I actually came down to school in a dress made by them. I have it still and I shall wear it when my time comes to pass on and find out what life has really meant.'

Mrs. Steel started on the Great Adventure on the 12th of April 1929, and she wore this dress, as she wished. The last chapter is added by her daughter. 'She became much interested in the modern conception of space and time, and read and re-read Professor Eddington's last book. More than ever, she said, she felt the truth of Lewis Nettleship's words, "There is no room for death."'

The best-known of Mrs. Steel's novels was *On the Face of the Waters*. 'Mr. Heinemann told me he had never known a book so universally praised. I do not know if this is so. I only know that it brought me one piece of criticism which I cherish greatly. A perfect stranger wrote to me and said, "I lost my wife in the Mutiny, and after forty years you have enabled me to forgive." That was something worth having.'

There is no space to consider the light the book throws on the India of forty years ago and the India of to-day. The book is well worth reading.

—————
'Pass it on.'

'By the middle of August my husband had taken me up to the nearest hill station of Kasauli, to be the guest of an unseen, unknown Commissioner. But

even those who had not been privileged in person to know Colonel Reynell Taylor knew him by repute. He was the *preux chevalier* of the Panjab. It was quite enough for him to know that the young wife of one of his subordinates was helplessly ill in the heat of the plains, for him to offer indefinite house-room. . . . I think he was the most perfect specimen of simple manhood I was ever privileged to meet. I saw very little of him during my six weeks' stay, but the words with which he met my attempt at thanks for his kindness as we said good-bye in the verandah have remained with me all these years. They have been far more useful than any sermon I ever heard: "Pass it on, my dear, pass it on."¹

'And being let go.'

With *The Three Half-Moons* (Epworth Press; 5s. net) Dr. F. W. Boreham adds another volume of essays to an already goodly company of predecessors, and being Dr. Boreham it is not necessary for him to make any effort to create the right atmosphere between the reader and himself, for the former will already be filled with a pleasing feeling of anticipation. Still he writes a little introduction. An introduction, he says, to let the cat out of the bag, 'is purely an attempt to create an atmosphere. Life is heavily freighted with such ingenious contrivances. The *Introduction* to a book is the author's way of gripping his reader's hand.

"Ah," that eager handshake seems to say, "this is excellent! Come right in and take the arm-chair yonder! And now, let's overhaul the universe, talking on planets, politics, potatoes, or on anything that comes to mind!"

'Having observed, through the medium of an *Introduction*, this pleasant ritual, and having reached so perfect an understanding, let us get on! For it's a long while since we met, and I, at least, have much to say.'

One of the chapters is slightly different from the others. It is in the form of an address rather than an essay, and on the text from Ac 4²⁸, 'And being let go, they went to their own company.' Break the chain, says Dr. Boreham, do away with all the restraints and obligations of life and see which way man goes. For the broken chain is *a revelation of the relationships of life*. Every one has his own company, but it is not always easy to see what it is. For propinquity is no evidence of affinity, and companionship does not necessarily indicate kinship. 'In a certain museum, Henry Drummond says, there stand side by side on the same shelf two small

boxes filled with earth. A low mountain in Arran has furnished the first; the contents of the second came from the island of Barbadoes. When examined with a pocket lens, the Arran earth is found to be full of small objects, clear as crystal, fashioned by some mysterious geometry into forms of exquisite symmetry. The substance is silica, a natural glass; and the prevailing shape is a six-sided prism capped at either end by little pyramids modelled with consummate grace. The contents of the second box are very similar. Indeed, chemically, the material is the same. The only difference is that the angles of pyramid and prism have given place to curved lines. The appearance is that of a vast collection of microscopic urns, goblets, and vases. Each tiny urn is chiselled into the most faultless proportion, and the whole presents a vision of magic beauty. "Judged by the standard of their loveliness," says Professor Drummond, "there is little to choose between these two sets of objects. Yet there is one cardinal difference between them. They belong to different worlds. The last belongs to the living world, the former to the dead. The first are crystals, the last are shells."'

The broken chain is *a revelation of the restraints of life*. 'Being let go, they went to their own company.' 'They would have sought that company earlier but for the restraints to which they were subjected.' . . . 'We none of us say the things that we feel like saying or do the things that we feel like doing. We submit ourselves to a severe curb. Owing to the restraints imposed upon our goodness, we are not as good as we should like to be. We are conscious of good impulses—impulses that reflect our best selves—but we seldom carry them into execution. We are restrained by the example of others; or by the fear of disapproval; or by counting the cost; or by any one of a thousand considerations. Again, we are none of us as bad as we should like to be. We are living in a good world, and the restraints on evil are incomparably greater than the restraints on goodness.'

It is *a revelation of the releases of life*. A thing only betrays its real character when the restraint is removed. 'I went to a cricket match the other day. After playing a brilliantly fine innings, a popular batsman mishit a fast bumping ball and it soared swiftly skywards. The man fielding at cover-point turned and ran rapidly under it, his eyes on the ball. But why? The ball had gone up among the birds—up towards the stars! But the man at cover-point knew that the ball had no real affinity with birds and stars. He knew that it

¹ Flora Annie Steel, *The Garden of Fidelity*, 35.

belonged to the realm of mundane things and that, *being let go* from the force that propelled it upward, it would return to *its own company*.'

Dr. Boreham might have added the story that Dr. Benjamin Kidd tells of a young cuckoo which he had tamed and kept in his house. When the time for migration came he noticed that the bird became restless, flapped its wings ceaselessly and looked as if it were in a trance. For nothing can finally force a creature—man or beast—to be content with an alien bondage. 'It was one of the strangest sights,' says Dr. Kidd, 'that I have ever witnessed—this young migratory creature of the air, which had never been out of my house and which had never known any of its kind, sitting beside me in the gloom of our northern winter, and by a kind of inherited imagination flying thus through the night, league-long over lands and oceans that it had never seen.'

But, says Dr. Boreham, there remains one word to be said. It is that while the soul has patriotisms, loyalties, and affinities of its own, they are not of necessity final. They can be changed. 'In his *First Men in the Moon*, Mr. H. G. Wells tells of a magic chemical by means of which Cavor and his companion could neutralize and nullify the attraction of any particular world. The glass globe in which they sailed had curtains saturated in this chemical. The airmen had but to draw those curtains on the side nearest the world on which they found themselves, and they instantly floated off into space. By an adjustment of the curtains they could navigate their weird machine to any sphere they chose. It is an allegory. The attachments of the soul are not final. I may draw a magic curtain and be free from the magnetisms that have bound me. The New Testament is particularly explicit at this point. When the Prodigal Son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, he went to *his own company*. *Being let go*, he flung off the restraints of home, and lost himself among companions of his own choosing. But, with the disillusionment of the years, his heart swung back to the old roof-tree. He shook himself free from the vicious restraints of the far country, as he had formerly shaken himself free from the virtuous restraints of his father's house. He

returned to his home. The company that he had once repudiated became *his own company* after all.'

John xiv. 6.

"Sometimes the track is difficult," he [Dan Crawford] wrote. "A native guide was leading me along a new trail [on the way down to Elisabethville] to avoid a detour of one day. Being a bit dubious of his direction I asked this proud-as-punch guide *where* we were going. 'The Way?' said he, smiling patronizingly. 'Want to know the Way? I am the Way!' said he, as he pointed proudly to his breast, where the hidden knowledge was locked up. I took my text from that; sat down with him in the forest on . . . a fallen tree, and told him . . . of the Blessed One who could truly say, 'I am The Way that never was a way until I passed along it.'"¹

St. John Adcock.

LIGHT.

When you have sought God vainly elsewhere—
Have closed your books, and hushed your idle
prayer,
Too weary and heart-sore
To seek Him any more—

And, loving yet your human kindred, go,
Forgetting self, to work for them, nor know
By lowly paths benign,
You reach the height divine:

Then, 'mid the living world where He hath wrought,
In some chance word, or thought, or glimpse of
thought,
When all your search is past,
You may see God at last.²

¹ G. E. Tilsley, *Dan Crawford*, 575. An account of this Biography will be given next month.

² *Collected Poems of St. John Adcock*, 126.