

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

he never wavered in his belief that Babylon was the destined power. Thus it was that he could say to his countrymen :

What business have you with Egypt's fashions,
To sip the waters of Nile,
What business have you with Assyria's cult,
To sip the River's water ?

when towering above them both loomed the terrorizing military power of Babylon. It is unthinkable that a great public figure like Jeremiah, so public and powerful that his life-story alone among his fellows has been preserved, should at one juncture in his life sponsor the Scythians and at another transfer his thoughts and confidence to the Babylonians, with any hope of winning the ear of a fickle populace.

It appears, then, that the times were indeed 'out of joint' for the delicately balanced temperament of Jeremiah, and yet it was just the breaking of nations that brought him to the forefront of events. Little wonder that, like Hamlet, he debated often and seriously with himself the use of living and the fear of dying. He knew only too well that in the march of a new power to conquest Anathoth would

hear again the clash of arms, and couriers would canter back and forward along the white dusty roads of Esdraelon. Ambassadors would come to the royal court, and members of the *corps diplomatique* would whisper their sweet nothings into the ears of courtier and counsellor, and again the little kingdom would be the prey of the stronger force. A buffer State could not hope for peace when the scramble for empire reopened. But the same prophet knew also that the might of Egypt was built upon Ionian and Carian mercenaries, a very perilous foundation for so great glory, and he knew that such an empire could not long stand the shattering blows of a nation rising to liberty and leadership. He knew the calibre of Egyptian soldiers and the spinelessness of Egyptian religion. The treachery of Egyptian diplomacy was written plain across Judean history. But the East was bright with a rising glory, and Babylon, after her refreshing sleep, awoke to shining armour and the trumpet of war, for behind her was her plighted word and before her the task of God. Such were the times when, in 616 B.C., the flush of dawn lit up the face of a young man standing in Anathoth with his eyes turned to the East.

Entre Nous.

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, 1933-1934.

With next month the magazine enters its forty-fifth year, and in the October number fuller details of the year's programme will be given. But we may say that we are to have an interesting series on the great recurring Heresies in the Church. To carry out the request of several subscribers, we are to survey broadly and in as popular a way as possible the various contemporary German schools of theological thought.

'That ye might have peace.'

No better devotional commentary on these words of our Lord can be found than Mr. C. F. Andrews' latest book, *Christ in the Silence* (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s. net). In it he tells how he himself found inward peace. 'We want you,' one correspondent wrote to him, 'to tell us how you were able to keep a quiet joy in the midst of all the turmoil of your active life. We want you to explain just this one

thing and nothing else; for it is all-important. We are wearing ourselves out as we run to and fro in search of something we cannot find. We still hear in the church on Sunday the words, "Come unto Me, ye weary, and I will give you rest." But they have almost ceased to carry the music in them which they had long ago. We have hardly time to listen, except to the radio, as life rushes past. One sensation follows another. The pace is killing our souls.'

Even in his earlier years quiet communion with Christ in the daily life, as a supreme need, was never absent from Andrews' mind. 'From the time of my conversion onwards this communion with Christ in the silence had always been accepted as one of the first axioms of the Christian life, but it had never been fully learnt by heart in such a way as to become part of my inner being. I had tried to keep regularly a morning hour apart for devotion. The daily Eucharist had been the prelude of each day's work, and I had known in it the

joy of His presence. Nevertheless, while this had been my greatest safeguard against absorption in mere activity, the sense of haste had penetrated whatever occupation I had to carry on in the outer world, till it seemed to belong to the very air I breathed. The value that I placed on getting things done was altogether excessive.'

During his time in India as an Anglican missionary Andrews formed a close friendship with Sadhu Sundar Singh, and also with Rabindranath Tagore. After he severed his connexion with the Anglican mission, for what he believed was a wider sphere, he was able to spend some time in the Retreat founded by Tagore at Santiniketan. 'I had constantly thought of Christ's restfulness of soul as an infinitely precious treasure. But the deep inner need of it in my own life, as a necessary complement to action itself, had not come home to me in such a way as to carry final conviction. Now at last, in Santiniketan, a golden opportunity had come wherein I could learn these things more fully, until they sank deep down into my heart. The fever and fret of outer things had ceased for the moment to obtrude. A quiet haven had been entered and the vessel of my life had found its anchorage.'

A further experience which taught him most of all came when he was suddenly called upon to pass through the shadow of the valley of death. 'In a moment, the dread disease of Asiatic cholera attacked me just before night came on. It was like the "pestilence that walketh in darkness." No human aid was near at the time and it was long before a doctor could arrive. Yet Christ was intimately near me in that most desolate hour of all when I entered the dark valley, and He bade me fear no evil. . . . Out of that intermediate state of death in life and life in death, through which I had passed for many days, I awoke at last into a new world. Old things had passed away and much of my former restlessness had gone. For when mortal weakness had reached its utmost limit, God's immortal strength had been revealed. Very slowly indeed, during the long time of silent waiting till vital energy returned, my nature became transformed from within and I knew a deeper quietness and peace. The touch of the unseen and the eternal was upon me, and those who met me were conscious of a change, though they might not be fully aware of what had taken place. For the perspective of outward things had altered, and the unseen world was nearer to me than it had been before.'

Years later—in the middle of 1932—there was

another special time of blessing. He went through months of agony as he watched by the bedside of a young Indian student in Germany who was stricken down by tuberculosis. 'But the foundations held. The love of Christ, which could never be shaken, remained steadfast to the end. His own still voice within the soul whispered peace; and out of the tempest hour of that affliction I was able to learn by heart more of the true meaning of the Cross than I had ever known before in quiet seasons of fair weather when all around was calm.' From the Black Forest he went on to Ermatingen, a village on the shore of Lake Constance. There in August 1932 a number of the leaders of the Oxford Group Movement had assembled for communion and prayer. 'I came into glowing contact with those whose first experience of the love of Christ had turned their whole life into a song. The peace of Lake Constance itself, as I watched it hour after hour from a quiet lonely spot overlooking its still waters, was a healing influence. By a natural reversal of thought, the lake with its surrounding hills brought my mind away from the last dread act of the Passion outside Jerusalem to the bright dawn of Christ's early ministry on the shores of Galilee, where the first young disciples were called one by one to follow their Lord. We seemed at Ermatingen to have come once more to the fresh vision of those early days. The radiance of the Christian faith had been restored.'

In a postscript Mr. Andrews turns from principles to practice. There is only one way to have the presence of Christ within the heart and that is by the practice of prayer. And so Mr. Andrews makes some suggestions. The greatest need, he believes, is to rescue the morning hour for silent communion with God. 'One of the most beautiful characters I have known, an aged Musalman named Munshi Zaka Ullah of Delhi, had been so self-disciplined in this respect that, though he was the most friendly and sociable of men, he would make it known beforehand at any evening gathering that he would be obliged to retire at a certain hour. He would never miss for a single day his morning communion with God in prayer. He rose each day before the dawn.'

This morning hour should be spent in a solitary place. 'Sometimes even to sit at an open window, where one may see the sky, may be a help.'

Again one needs to practice recollection throughout the day. 'The opening words of the Lord's Prayer said mentally have been a great help to me in this direction. . . . When Bishop Lightfoot was near to his death his chaplain asked him what he

was engaged in at the moment. He said, "I am feeding on a few great thoughts." Perhaps the best of all inner recollections is to remember some one who deeply needs our prayers owing to suffering or sorrow or temptation. It is always the unselfish thought that drives out self.'

Mr. Andrews has other suggestions with regard to evening prayer, the use of Sunday, concentration on the great central thoughts, the great moments of luminous realization, until at last, as Wordsworth says in the 'Excursion':

a step,

A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory, beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense, or by the dreaming soul.

'I am the Way.'

'I would venture to use an analogy from the world of sound. For a long period no instrument had been fine enough to catch the human voice perfectly as it wandered round the earth on waves of ether. Then a delicate apparatus was so attuned as to catch a certain wave-length, and the voice "came through." I was in New York, awake before daylight on a certain morning, when for the first time the King's voice from London "came through," clear and strong. Greater wonders followed, and soon afterwards men in New York were listening to Admiral Byrd as he told about the Antarctic from a wireless station in Dunedin, New Zealand, thirteen thousand miles away. His voice also had "come through." Last of all, on Christmas Day, 1932, in a million homes there was heard distinctly, from every quarter of the globe, a cheery Christmas greeting as a welcoming answer to the King's broadcast message. Mankind in every land was "listening in."

'How slowly, slowly, first of all, was this new wonder of sound achieved out of the darkness of the soundless past! The waves of ether were quivering all the while, but there was no instrument yet discovered delicate enough to catch the different notes. There was no means of "listening in."

'Can we not feel, in St. John's opening words of his Epistle, something of his first glorious surprise

when the divine message at last "came through" from the dark world beyond? "That which we have heard with our ears . . . declare we unto you . . . that your joy may be full."

'Before Christ came no human vehicle had ever been so finely attuned as to catch that divine message fully and completely. Prophets and seers had heard its dim music vibrating in the air; they had indeed tried hard to "listen in" and had recorded the first faint murmurings of its notes. Then at last Christ's ear had caught it, not in a quivering fragment of sound only, but in a full clear harmony of music, so clear, so distinct that we who live centuries after can hear it still, in our turn, as we have communion and fellowship with Him.'¹

Contemporary American Theology.

Some months ago there came from America an interesting volume on *Contemporary American Theology*, vol. i. (Round Table Press; \$3.00). Now a second volume has been published—the whole containing autobiographical sketches by twenty-three leading theologians who are representative of various schools. Each has his own story to tell of the early influences that moulded him, of the quickening and disturbing contacts of College days, and of the conclusions which have been hammered out by hard thought and the experiences of life. Volume I. has already had some notice (April 1933), but to show more fully its quality we are giving a few extracts here, leaving volume II. for next month. One of the most interesting of the sketches is Professor Rufus M. Jones' 'Why I enroll with the Mystics.'

Worship.

Professor Jones writes: 'I was immersed in a group mystical life from the very birth of consciousness and memory. Every day after breakfast we had a long period of family silent worship, during which all the older members of the group seemed to be plainly communing in joyous fellowship with a real Presence. The reality of it all was so great, and the certainty of something more than just ourselves in the room was so clearly felt that we little folks were caught into the experience and

¹ C. F. Andrews, *Christ in the Silence*, 75.

carried along with the others. The mysterious hush had its own awe and the rapt look on the older faces deepened the sense of awe and wonder. By the time I was four years old I had formed the habit of using corporate silence in a heightening and effective way. It brought with it, even for the child, a sense of Presence. Not much later than that early period of four I began to be taken to Quaker meeting for worship. It involved a ride of three miles through marvellous woods, which even now stir me with indescribable emotions, and that was a moving preparation for the main event. . . . The persons who composed the group were, for the most part, simple, rustic people who came from their farms and their kitchens, but one felt that they knew God and found Him there. There was a touch of awe and majesty, of surprise and wonder, and while there was very little "thinking" or "thought-content," there was a gleam of eternal reality breaking on the humble group which put a kind of a spell on the little boy in the midst.¹

Mysticism.

'I will give two or three accounts of personal experiences of my own to illustrate what I mean by a type of mystic experience which does not reach the stage of ecstasy and which seems affirmative rather than negative. Once at sea, in the middle of the night, when all unknown to me my little boy, left behind in America, was dying with no father by him to hold his hand, I suddenly felt myself surrounded by an enfolding Presence and held as though by invisible Arms. My entire being was fortified, and I was inwardly prepared to meet the message of sorrow which was awaiting me next day at the dock.

'Another experience came much earlier in my life, when I was spending a year abroad after graduation from college. It was at Dieu-le-fit in France, near the foot-hills of the Alps. I was walking alone in a forest, trying to map out my plan of life and confronted with issues which seemed too complex and difficult for my mind to solve. Suddenly I felt the walls between the visible and the invisible grow thin and the Eternal seemed to break through into the world where I was. I saw no flood of

¹ *Contemporary American Theology*, 191.

light, I heard no voice, but I felt as though I were face to face with a higher order of reality than that of the trees or mountains. I went down on my knees there in the woods with that same feeling of awe which compelled men in earlier times to take off their shoes from their feet. A sense of mission broke in on me and I felt that I was being called to a well-defined task of life to which I then and there dedicated myself.'²

The Doubt of Doubt.

From Professor J. Gresham Machen, who writes on 'Christianity in Conflict,' we take the following :

'Bishop Blougram was a great help to me, and that comfort was to be had no matter what sort of character Browning meant Bishop Blougram to be. The question is not merely whether we can rest in our faith, but whether we can rest in the doubt that is the necessary alternative of faith. We pass sometimes through periods of very low spiritual vitality. The wonderful gospel which formerly seemed so glorious comes to seem almost like an idle tale. Hosts of objections arise in our minds; the whole unseen world recedes in the dim distance, and we think for the moment that we have relinquished the Christian hope. But then let us just face this situation; let us just imagine that we had really given up all these things that formerly seemed to us so dear. Ah, when we do that, life seems to us to be a hopeless blank. It is all very well to toy with the thought of a Christless world, but when we once imagine ourselves living in it we see that really, in our heart of hearts and mind of minds, we have not given up our Saviour after all.'³

Erratum.

Please note that in the review of a *Treasure-House of the Living Religions*, by Professor Robert E. Hume, in the June issue (p. 404, col. 1, line 49), the word 'strained' should have been 'stressed.'

² *Op. cit.* 206.

³ *Op. cit.* 263.

Printed by MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED, Tanfield Works, and Published by T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, Edinburgh. It is requested that all literary communications be addressed to THE EDITOR, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.