

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

portions of the Law read on the same days. Of particular value are the Editor's survey of the year's work in Old Testament studies, and the very full list of articles, culled from over a hundred periodicals, dealing with subjects bearing on the Old Testament. Though Professor Hempel has

some assistance in this work, yet his own labours must be enormous, and the result is that the *Z.A.W.* is indispensable for any student who wishes to keep abreast of the work being done in this field.

T. H. ROBINSON.

Cardiff.

Entre Nous.

The Group in History.

This is the title of a fascinating essay by Miss Evelyn Underhill in *The Meaning of the Groups*, edited by the Rev. F. A. M. Spencer, D.D. (Methuen; 5s. net), a review of which will appear next month. Some of its rich contents are indicated in the following paragraphs. From the beginning the Group has been, in one way or another, a characteristic form of Christian expression; and its latest developments come at the end of a long line of brave experiments. The periodic revolt of fervent spirits against the formalism and settling-down tendency inherent in all institutions—the ever-recurrent sense of spiritual realism, of the concrete demands of the Christian life—always tend to embody themselves in this way. From one point of view, the Primitive Church was itself a group formation within Judaism, in which spontaneity, close fellowship, high moral demands, and the sense of supernatural 'guidance' were at least as marked as they have been in later revivals of the Group ideal. And one of the main factors in the development that followed was the change in the conception of the Christian fellowship from the idea of a group to the idea of an institution—a Church.

The result was the loss of those peculiar qualities which always inhere in the Group as such—freshness, ardour, a genuine religious realism, a willingness to apply and live by costly ideals of conduct. A visible Church tends to standardize its routine and open its doors to the unheroic multitude, with an inevitable lowering of temperature. It is apt to fail in providing outlets for the desire for sacrificial action by which young and generous natures respond to the spiritual call. Hence the constant emergence of 'voluntary communities of efficiently earnest souls' usually under the leadership of a single heroic personality.

These groups emphasize some point of gospel ethic which makes inconvenient demands, and at the same time they provide a social environment

within which it can be fulfilled. This environment may be a ring-fenced religious community, as in the case of the Carthusians or the Trappists; or it may be a free association of persons living in the world, and dissatisfied with the apathy of the Church, e.g. the Friends of God, the Quakers, the Methodists. But the religious group is an unstable compound. It does not long maintain itself in its original form. It may crystallize into a sharply defined community, and this happens when the Church is friendly and powerful. A case in point is the Benedictine Order which became an accepted and important part of the organized Church. But if the group does not crystallize into a community, it tends to evaporate, or to wander into extravagances, and finally to vanish from the religious arena. But as the twelfth century developed, another type of group became prominent. It arose among the devout laity, and represented their dissatisfaction with institutional religion. At the heart of each group of this kind we find an impassioned spiritual realist, a God-possessed man. A good example is the Waldenses, a typical embodiment of the democratic and evangelical group which springs up in many districts during the Middle Ages, offering a simple and practical religion to the laity. The market-place, not the monastery, is its home, and its very existence and popularity are virtual criticisms of the shortcomings of the contemporary Church life.

It is the tragedy of Christian history that the Church, faced by the inconvenient problems and the uncompromising demands forced upon her notice by every new manifestation of group enthusiasm, seems always inclined to one of two methods of dealing with the situation. Either she smothers the group in her bosom or she casts it forth from her bosom. The mendicant orders are examples of the first. The Waldenses, the Quakers, the Methodists are victims of the second method. Yet history suggests that a third position might

have been possible, the acceptance of the group as a religious way, not *the* religious way, giving thanks for its fervour and initiative, educating its raw energies and supporting its undoubted virtues—acting, in fact, as the wise parent, neither over-possessive nor over-severe. Uprushes of new life are always disconcerting and sometimes humiliating to the established and mature; yet without them, human nature being what it is, real religion would soon die a comfortable death. And Christian history suggests that the true way of dealing with all such movements is the alliance between the 'Church type' and the 'sect type,' the spirit of tradition and the spirit of spontaneity. Both have a very real contribution to make to the Christian life. Both tend to exaggeration and defect, and both need the correction and supplementing of their faults. The best example in actual experience of this alliance is that of the Friends of God; essentially a lay movement it yet remained loyal to the Catholic Church, combining reverence equally for the eternal and the historical. This example points the way for ourselves. We neglect the lessons of history at our peril. The Christian complex is rich, not simple. Tradition and novelty, the unchanging and the changeable, must all find expression in it. For it appeals not to one part of us, but to the whole creature, natural and supernatural.

'Kingdom Come.'

Kingdom Come, by Mr. Hugh Redwood, is a little book costing only a shilling (Hodder & Stoughton), but its value is not to be assessed in coin of the realm. The author has put his life into it, and no one could read it without being moved and edified by his assurance, his simplicity, and his persuasive witness. His creed is that God is in everybody. Hence redemption is possible for the worst. Hence also the power of prayer. Hence definite, detailed guidance. Hence Providences and Preventions, doors shut and opened, life radiant, victorious, and serene. All this is documented by stories of personal experience. Mr. Redwood is already known for his previous books, 'God in the Slums' and 'God in the Shadows.' This new record will be as likely as either of the others to lead some (many, it may be hoped) to make the great experiment for themselves.

God and the Aviation-Wireless.

Peter Rawlings had seen his only daughter away by air-liner. He had no fears for her on her journey, for he knows a good deal about flying and the

almost uncanny completeness with which it is supervised. He knows that the pilots of these big passenger machines are in constant wireless communication with their ground stations: he knows that there is a man in the control tower at Croydon so cunningly equipped as to be able to state immediately the exact position of every plane in the air, to give it guidance and warning of danger, to send it help if need should arise. He has sat at home in his study, which is also his radio den, and heard the faint cry of a fog-bound pilot, lost, maybe, over Flanders, asking Croydon to tell him his whereabouts. And the great booming voice of Croydon has called up Pulham to take a cross-bearing, and in less time than is needed to write it has given the information required. And always the man in the tower, repeating the message he hears, prefixes the words 'I understand.'

Peter Rawlings heard all this gone through the morning after Daphne left. And suddenly there flashed into his mind, 'If I take the wings of the morning . . .' The wings of the morning! the aeroplane mail to the Rhineland. Omniscience in the control tower and the inescapable reach of the wireless. 'If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there . . . even there shall thy hand lead me.' The facts about God are not less certain than those about wireless, and a thousand times more wonderful. If only we believed them! If when we lost our way, and called on God to give us our bearings, we could be sure, not only of getting an answer, but of hearing Him say, 'I understand'! The need of the world is in nothing greater than this. It needs omnipotence and it needs love: but most of all it cries out for understanding!¹

'I was a Pagan.'

This pathetic little autobiography—*I was a Pagan*, by Mr. V. C. Kitchen (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s. net)—would, its author says, never even have been written, had not God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose dread Silence not even Gethsemane, not CALVARY, could pierce, favoured our author one fine day with a sure tip for the Stock Exchange. It was, he tells us, an investment he would not even have considered *on a human basis*, but, not daring to flout the august Tipster, he put down his money and soon found himself flush enough to spend his time on writing his little book and on going trips with fellow-evangelists, to bring others to his God.

Naturally, after so remarkable an Attention, he feels there is little he can tell of himself that will

¹ Hugh Redwood, *Kingdom Come*, 99.

not be of supreme interest to every reader. And one of the results of an educational system which has taught people to read, and even to make money, without having taught them to think and to live, is that a large reading public find themselves at home and happy with a book like this. They like to read of the little secret drinker of fifteen years old, going on to college—to several colleges, and still drinking and misbehaving, and at twenty calling life 'a high adventure, intriguing and indecorous'; they like to read of his business successes, his rising salaries, of days flavoured with discreet immoralities and shady dealings, and at the same time dignified with numerous references to his *studies* (God save the mark) of Plato, Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, Einstein, Spinoza, Descartes, Hegel, Eddington, Jeans, Jesus, and Professor Lovejoy—to name but a few of his intellectual familiars. 'What a superman!' these simple readers no doubt exclaim. In one glorious curve he is surreptitiously drinking in the pantry, wrestling with his Plato, leading the orchestra at a night club, writing out 'suggestive' advertisements for his firm, 'seeing too much of women he could not respect,' delivering a drunken lecture on temperance, wondering if Einstein was right, sleeping off a Saturday 'hang-over,' and 'looking back once more at Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, and the rest,' and discovering that 'they too had failed to produce any real change in themselves.' Again, 'Through the history of all the moralists, in fact, I found a singular lack of moral application.'

So this pitiable career, that to the simple reader might at first have appeared merely one of drab and unrelieved nastiness, takes on the dignity, if they do not stop to think, of a mind measuring itself with the grandest human minds of history, and finding them lacking, interesting discovery, just in what it lacked itself. 'Indeed,' he seems to admit, 'I was unconverted in these gay old days, but in what a glorious company!'

But we must hasten on. V. C. Kitchen is converted. He meets some evangelists in an hotel, the deed is done, and he leaves that glorious company far behind. For after all these years of patient and familiar sojourn with the great, this disillusioned soul finds himself compelled to write (and we see his thumb and tattered Plato and Aristotle and Spinoza and Hegel and Jesus and the rest, replaced neatly on his study shelves), '*I never in all my life encountered any spiritual environment or world of goodness. If such a thing existed, it had never come within my ken.*' The italics are ours.

But now simple goodness has become to him, a

second nature. Now, for example, he sees that 'in helping a man to find his next meal, he was merely helping a lame dog over a fence. And the really charitable thing to do for a hungry man is to get down to the sin which is blocking him from God and thus blocking him from knowledge of the plan by which God means him to make his living.' Again, 'I now know that when I lead a man to God all these things shall be added unto him.' And if we ask Mr. Kitchen for a proof he will tell us again the story of the tip God gave him for the Stock Exchange. It is a point on which he is very sensitive. 'Once, for instance,' he writes, 'I gave twenty dollars to a hungry artist who had come to the very brink of an experience with God.' As a result the hungry artist turned away from God. Such a story makes one think. It might have made Jesus think. That Good Samaritan now, in the parable, if he had only been as wise, as full of faith as V. C. Kitchen, would he not have gone on with the Levite? For who knows? That poor man left robbed and wounded on the high road might, too, 'have been on the very brink of an experience of God,' and the Good Samaritan stepped in and spoiled it all!

EDITH ANNE ROBERTSON.

Aberdeen.

Guidance.

'I can say with truth that I have reached the decision by my own self and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. . . . The Holy Spirit leads in harmony with the *Word, reason, conscience, and providential events*—never in harmony with *feeling* alone, nor with feeling necessarily at any time. My decision has accorded with the above four things as far as I am able to interpret them.'¹

Faith.

S. Ralph Harlow says: 'Years ago in my student days you made a statement that has been a pillar of fire in my life these many years. "Live in the utmost limits of your faith, not in your doubts," you said. That I have tried to do. There have been many doubts. Who could have seen what I saw and lived through in Turkey—and in Smyrna—with never a moment of spiritual doubt? But always faith has triumphed.'²

Advice to You.

'To put it briefly, his advice is, first, "Burn the bridges behind you. Abandon decisively every-

¹ B. Mathews, *John R. Mott*, 88.

² *Ibid.*, 358.

thing that reason, conscience, or experience shows to be questionable." Following that advice unnumbered men have gone to their rooms and torn down and burned suggestive pictures from their walls. Secondly, "Build up a life-habit of studying the Bible." His pamphlet on *Bible Study for Personal Spiritual Growth* concentrates his practice and precept on that subject. With this habit he directly associates the practice of the Morning Watch, handled in the pamphlet with that title, together with one on secret prayer. The necessity of instant sharing of fellowship is the next principle, and warning against inevitable swift reaction from decision, and the fact that a man must not be in despair if he finds that he has given way to temptation, but, with redoubled vigilance, earnestness, and prayerfulness, profit by the experience.¹

To-day.

The shadow by my finger cast
Divides the future from the past ;
Before it stands the unborn hour
In darkness, and beyond thy power.
Behind its unreturning line,
The vanished hour, no longer thine.
One hour alone is in thy hands—
The now on which the shadow stands.²
(Quotation on a sundial.)

Intercessory Prayer.

'To raise money, to secure workers, to batter down opposition, to help others (and are not these the four things which consume most of our time?), this is the method which should have right of way. This is the work most needed in the world. It is also the most Christ-like work. "He ever liveth to make intercession." Appeal for prayer for each other. "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."³

'God's got started on us.'

'There had been a lot of lying, and Ana [a Bantu child] had been in the thick of it.

"Don't you ever want to tell a lie?" She looked at me searchingly.

"Yes—I suppose I do at times."

"There you are," said the child, with a quick eager movement of her body. "And God started long ago on you, so many years ago that we cannot count them. And He has only just started on us. . . . Don't mind it so much," she said earnestly. "God is rather slow, isn't He? It took Him a

¹ B. Mathews, *John R. Mott*, 202.

² *Ibid.*, 447. ³ *Ibid.*, 380.

long time to get you white people ready to come and tell us about Him. I'm sorry I told that lie ; I did not understand it, it seemed far worse to me to be found out. I'll remember, really I will." And then with a little engaging smile, "But really you need not mind quite so much. God's got started on us now."⁴

Prayer for the Sick.

Prayer by John McNeill for his wife when in a nursing home waiting to undergo an operation :

'Lord, bless my beloved Peggy this day. It is a day such as she and I have not passed through before. Thou knowest I shall miss her sorely, and she shall miss me—*unless* Thou dost give us special help. We don't want to feel downcast ; we want to feel, as never before, the comfort and peace within, which the Spirit gives in such time of need. Be pleased then, O loving Saviour, to make us very restful and contented in Thee, and in Thy gracious will. Give my darling her own portion from Thine own hand. She may not sit with Thy people in Thy house, and eat the Bread and drink the Cup. But she *may* feed on Thee, Thou living Bread, in the quiet of a sick room, and feel lifted and strengthened. Oh, that it might be so. Draw near to her ; very near. Cause her to feel Thy presence, and let her lose herself and her pain and loneliness in the deep secret joy of finding Thee. Master, I am unworthy even to ask such blessings, but Thou wilt not turn away my prayer for my beloved wife. She lies underneath Thy gaze, in weakness and weariness and sleeplessness, she who so often, so unweariedly, rose early, and sat up late, and denied herself needed rest and sleep that she might minister to the weakness and helplessness of others. Now, Lord, remember her. Lift her into the very bosom and blessedness of her Saviour's love. Cause her to feel the clasp and pressure of Thy dear everlasting arms. Heal *all* her wounds. Reveal to her, as never before, that secret, boundless, endless grace of Thine that has brought salvation and eternal glory to her soul. And make this day better than a thousand, a foretaste of the days of heaven. For Jesus' sake, Amen and Amen.'⁵

⁴ M. Shaw, *God's Candlelights*, 194.

⁵ A. Gammie, *John McNeill*, 213.