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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

## Entre Nous.

### THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, 1934-1935.

With the October number this Magazine enters on its forty-sixth year. During the past year we have had from readers some helpful criticisms and many letters of appreciation as to the usefulness and stimulus of the Magazine.

This volume will see the beginning of two new series of articles. In the first, 'Things most certainly Believed,' Dr. A. E. Garvie will write in the October issue on what he regards as most vital. Other contributors in this series include Professor C. H. Dodd, Professor C. E. Raven, the Very Rev. W. R. Matthews, and Professor H. R. Mackintosh.

The second series, on 'Important New Testament Problems,' will be introduced by Professor Vincent Taylor. The articles on 'Recurring Heresies' will continue for some months, the next contributors being Professor Emery Barnes, Professor G. D. Henderson, Professor W. D. Niven, and Professor Rufus Jones.

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### Christ and Japan.

Kagawa is, of course, one of the leading figures in the world to-day. Here comes a book by him on the two subjects that make up his life—*Christ and Japan* (S.C.M.; 2s. net)—and an informing and absorbing little work it is. The Japanese are a difficult race for foreigners to understand. Here is a photograph of them as seen by very kindly, yet shrewd and discriminating eyes. Upon the whole the heaped-up facts leave them a more puzzling problem even than before. On one side, energetic, up-to-date, intensely modern, ever-changing and absorbing and still pushing on—menacing other races by their sheer efficiency. 'Among the eleven thousand villages of the Empire, there is probably not one unelectrified. The trains of the Empire arrive and depart as punctually as an electric clock.' Doggedly facing blow on blow, catastrophe upon catastrophe, from earthquake and typhoon and tidal wave in quick and seemingly unending succession, rebuilding each time on a nobler scale; embroiled in war every ten years for close upon a century, and eating their way out and out; with an absorbing passion for education surely unequalled anywhere, and a literacy of 99 per cent.—in every village 70 to 80 per cent. of the taxes are spent on the upkeep of the local primary school'; so very modern that there are

about a thousand labour disputes every year, double the number of those in America; continually assimilating new ideas—it is less than a century, so we are told, since Japan became 'mountain-minded' (a hard saying in view of the place of Fuji in the literature); and only thirty since it took to mountain climbing, and yet already ski-ing has become the national winter sport; the very stature of the people altering almost as if by magic, for 'actual measurements show that girl students have added two inches to their average height during the past fifteen years'—here obviously is one of the most determinedly go-ahead and progressive of peoples.

Yet, on the other side, there is in them a strain of unbreakable conservatism that stands like a rock in the stormy seas of the ever-altering world. 'For more than two thousand and five hundred years Japan has maintained the same Imperial line, the same family system, and has kept her Imperial realm inviolate. It is an astounding story, but in Japan's centuries-long history not one of her myriad islands has passed into the possession of an alien hand or land.' In fact, Japan is the real home of lost causes. Once let them touch her soil and they spring to their feet endowed with a new vigour and life and potency. Buddhism, dead in the land of its birth, is a real, breathing, vital force in its new fatherland; Confucianism, all but perished in China, is alive among the Japanese: the old culture of China—its architecture, its sculpture, its paintings, its folklore, its philosophy—look for them, not in their old home, but in the Island Empire!

Kagawa sets down what he feels to be the characteristics of this people. Humourless ('only recently have the Japanese begun to indulge in laughter'), punctilious about the proprieties of life, 'but less concerned about their inner meaning'; impatient, childishly vain and touchy about national affairs, the most irascible of races, unable to brook criticism or to take defeat without loss of temper—certain football matches had to be given up because of the ill-feeling they engendered in the losers; 'with a strong antipathy to the concept of sin'—a real stumbling-block to the progress of Christianity—'for the Japanese, with their aversion to criticism, and their unyielding spirit, will not recognize the sin in their own souls'—these things, and such as these, form the dark side of the picture. And they have dire enough results, such as the

petted withdrawal from the League of Nations ('had it been England, and her economic rights and prerogatives in Manchuria had been fully recognized, she would have compromised'). But, as the former Assistant Secretary-General of the League is quoted, 'There are two self-intoxicated nations in the world, Germany and Japan.' 'In this matter,' agrees our author, 'Japan is like an infant.'

But the other side is impressive. The universal passion for poetry and song—unmatched in any other country—running back into a love of Nature, which is so engrained, and so much part of the national character, that no religion has a chance with them in which that does not find a central place. 'So strong is the instinctive feeling of the Japanese for nature that, if Christ had not been a nature-lover, I question whether they would have found it possible to give Him their hearts' fullest and finest devotion.' And, more impressive still, when in despair, finding no help or hope in the other faiths, in agony over the moral corruption of his home life and his own mental perplexities, it was when Kagawa came upon the verse in Luke, 'Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; but I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these,' that 'through this verse, I made the momentous discovery that the love of God enfolds this universe.' That was the door through which Christ came to him, claiming his life, and meeting with an eager and a full surrender. 'Peter and Paul seem over-importunate,' he says, to suit his countrymen. 'Christ pointed to the lily of the field. He lifted His eyes to the birds of the air. He called our attention to the evening glow, the soil by the road-side, the wheat, the tares, the fig-tree, and the lamb. For this reason the Japanese leap to an understanding of Christ.'

Further, there is, of course, the amazing loyalty which, without a second's hesitation, will sacrifice life for a cause, for a hero, often for what seems to us a mere punctilio; and a high sense of duty; and compassion—'there are few records of cruelty in Japanese history'; and a contempt for riches ('there is not a single instance of Japanese literature that extols the love of money'), though later we are told of a race recently commercialized and money-seeking; and a *flair* for philosophy—not arguing—they avoid debate—but listening, considering, learning; and a dislike of showing feeling and affection ('though he sincerely loves his wife, under no circumstances would he say so in the presence of any one else'); and a magnanimity

and broad spirit of toleration for almost anything that does not touch upon the nation's honour, and a fierce feeling that the yellow races—two-thirds of the world's population—are being unjustly cramped and crowded into a corner of that world.

As to war and peace, the situation is confused. 'Japan is isolated to-day internationally, because of her militarism. It must be made clear, however, that her militarism had its rise with professional patriots. The Japanese people as a whole are not responsible. Ninety-nine per cent. of the intelligentsia of Japan were opposed to what happened in Manchuria on September 18th, 1931: the masses are by no means war-minded, neither are they opposed to disarmament.' As to Manchukuo, Kagawa feels little is going to be gained by that. Japanese capital will benefit the Chinese population. But Japan herself will not make much from it.

Above all, it is insisted that the Japanese are a religious people. 'Undoubtedly, with the single exception of the Indians, the most religiously inclined people of the Orient.'

And so the book enters upon its second theme. There is a sympathetic outline of the various faiths held in Japan. Shinto, with really 'no system of theology,' except what it 'has borrowed from Christianity,' which it has done, and still does, 'daringly'—yet another indication of how Christianity is leavening the world even outside the bounds of its own believers—Shinto, 'whose revival is the most significant social phenomenon of to-day,' grown, on one side of it, militant, fascist, nationalistic, with 'no element of a new moral regeneration,' but winning adherents by its practical brotherliness, and zealous folk at that, witness the system whereby they dedicate their labour as a substitute for money, working in crowds in labouring clothes at manual toil as their contribution to the cause. And Buddhism, revived, spiritualized, made a thing vital and beautiful by some of the Amida sects, while others show a curious parallel in Nicherin to Nietzsche. And Confucianism, largely transformed, again by Christian influence. It is a heartening picture. And yet Japan needs Christ—Japan with its fearsome poverty and its social sores—many of the silk workers have their fingers rotted off; its moral diseases—'there are two hundred thousand prostitutes and geisha girls'—and the inadequacy of its own religions. 'My father was devout according to the Japanese conception of devoutness, but morally he was impossible. In Japanese religions and religious devotion piety

and personal morals are wholly unrelated.' Kagawa's mother was a servile geisha girl and concubine; and his soul writhed amid the comforts of his home, and found no resting-place till he came upon Christ, and the Father God of Christianity, which gave him what the other faiths had failed to do. Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism, all—he admits with gratitude—teach love. But it is the redemptive love of Christianity that alone is enough. 'The peoples of the Occident have lived under the ægis of the Christian faith for nineteen hundred years, consequently they fail utterly to comprehend their deep indebtedness to Christ.' 'Blot out Christ for a season! Efface every trace of His presence and power,' and men with a shudder would not be able to recognize the dark, unfriendly, hopeless world that would be left. Japan needs Christ, and the way of the Cross.

How to win for Him this country that so needs Him, and that is His own? At a first glance, the golden chance seems lost. 'Christian work in the Orient is exceedingly and increasingly difficult.' 'It is as difficult for a Japanese to become a Christian as it is for a Brahman.' The foolishness and errors of the past, such as the clash between the Department of Education and the Roman Catholic Church which refused to allow its students to pay homage at the Yasakuni shrine to the spirits of those who have died for their country and so outraged patriotic sentiment; still more, the Amakusa and Shimabara rebellions plotted by the Roman Catholics and never forgiven or forgotten; the individualism of the West, an over-emphasis on doctrine as apart from life, the failure of the Christians in the East to live their faith—the Western emphasizing of the clash between natural science and religion, the Western 'introduction of the capitalistic system which makes men slaves for money'; the Western disease of speculation, the multiplicity of the Protestant sects—all these are stumbling-blocks. Yet much is being accomplished. 'Christianity started the fight for personal purity in Japan. Public prostitution is tottering before the onslaught of Christian influence. Monogamy is now looked upon as common sense. Christians taught our people social welfare work and public service.' 'It is impossible for outsiders even to imagine to what extent movements motivated by Christ's love have illuminated and purified the life of this nation.'

Of thirteen ministers in the Cabinet that took office in 1932, seven had Christian wives, and one was himself a Christian. There are a hundred and sixty thousand Japanese Protestants; including

Roman Catholics, the Christians number some three hundred thousand—a small band, yet growing. How to increase the pace of the advance? Masses of trained and self-supporting native evangelists seem to Kagawa the main chance, and schools—his famous peasants' schools, and greater tolerance to the best in the other faiths ('it is most unfortunate that Protestants carry with them a sort of spirit of antagonism, and that the Roman Catholics take an attitude of intolerance'), and a burning social gospel; for, while Kagawa knows that the individual must be saved, to him this is not nearly enough. 'Unfortunately, the Protestant Church is giving the nation a Christianity which makes the pulpit and preaching central. Japanese youth, dissatisfied with this emphasis, are drifting from the Church. Their recent flight to Communism is caused by this situation'; and a busy co-operative movement running through every phase of life. In the constructive portion of his little book the author seems open to obvious criticism. Would it be really wise to accept the situation offered by the Zen sect that Christ is merely one of the incarnations of Amida Buddha? Or is the preaching of Christ really less efficient than a mass of kindly activities? Is not that to hurl us back into the world before Galileo came, with this little earth of ours central and all-important, and to lose sight of the Eternities, and the Christian standards of measurement? Do not the Commission on Mass Movements in India give it as one of the most certain of their findings that missions which give the initial, or the central, place to social activities fizzle out in some mere economic betterment, that only those, in which these are the outcome of the preaching of the Cross to individual souls, root and flourish and bear permanent fruit?

But Kagawa is a man who knows Christ, and who knows Japan, and his pronouncements merit close and serious attention.

#### Internationality.

'In 1931 the P.E.N. reached its tenth anniversary, and Galsworthy, always responsive to incentives which permitted him to sing the praises of friendliness and put another nail in the coffin of war, indulged Mrs. Dawson Scott in her desire to celebrate the occasion. A dinner was held at which twenty-four countries were represented; Galsworthy presided. . . . On this occasion he again disclaimed the idea that internationality and nationality were mutually destructive. 'I believe in my own country. I desire the best for

it,' he said; 'and because of that belief and that desire I understand how others feel about their countries. If one is a child in a large family and wishes to have for oneself all the nubby bits and warm corners, or even more than one's fair share of them, one is commonly called and treated as a pig, and rightly. I do not know why it should be otherwise in the family of Homo Sapiens, in which the nations are children. Fair play is a jewel, but I regret to say that internationally speaking that jewel is generally at "My Uncle's," or, if that expression is too classical for some of us, let me say—up the spout.'<sup>1</sup>

#### War.

"War," he wrote in an open letter to the Disarmament Conference in 1932, "however you look at it, is an insensate folly. It achieves no real end; no sane or lasting satisfaction for national honour; no true economic benefit; not even a strengthening of fibre through suffering and effort, for, though it may be a purge at first, it becomes a wasting disease long before its close."<sup>2</sup>

#### Christ Triumphant.

In the preface to *Christ Triumphant* (Allen & Unwin; 5s. net), N. G. explains how he came to make this Anthology: 'While the Oxford Group gave me a tremendous "jolt," it was necessary for me to be assured of their message by turning to the records of Christian experience. Experience is the ultimate test of truth; it is not metaphysical ecstasy but a fact in one's life.' The anthology has a very wide range of quotations—for example, on the page facing that from which the Dostoevsky extract is taken we find Ruysbroeck, St. Louis of Granada, Tertullian, Madame Guyon, and William Penn:

'Heaven lies hidden within all of us—here it lies hidden in me now, and if I will it, it will be revealed to me to-morrow and for all time. And in very truth, the Kingdom of Heaven will be for us not a dream, but a living reality. . . . To transform the world, to recreate it afresh, men must turn into another path psychologically. . . .

<sup>1</sup> H. Ould, *John Galsworthy*, 93 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 56.

Everywhere in these days men have ceased to understand that the true security is to be found in social solidarity rather than in isolated individual effort. But this terrible individualism must inevitably have an end, and all will suddenly understand how unnaturally they are separated from one another. It will be the spirit of the time, and people will marvel that they have sat so long in darkness without seeing the light. And then the sign of the Son of Man will be seen in the heavens. . . . But, until then, we must keep the banner flying. Sometimes even if he has to do it alone, and his conduct seems to be crazy, a man must set an example and so draw men's souls out of their solitude, that the great idea may not die.—*Dostoevsky.*<sup>3</sup>

#### The Crusader.

Come! Let us lay a crazy lance in rest,  
And tilt at windmills under a wild sky!  
For who would live so petty and unblest  
That dare not tilt at something ere he die,  
Rather than, screened by safe majority,  
Preserve his little life to little ends,  
And never raise a rebel battle cry!<sup>4</sup>

#### NEW POETRY.

##### T. S. Eliot.

In June this year a pageant play was performed at Sadler's Wells Theatre on behalf of the Forty-five Churches Fund of the Diocese of London. The book of words—*The Rock*—has now been published by Messrs. Faber & Faber (2s. 6d. net)—the author being Mr. T. S. Eliot. Much is in prose, but take this as a sample of the verse and of the thought of the Play:

##### 2nd Male Voice:

A Cry from the North, from the West and from  
the South:  
Whence thousands travel daily to the time-kept  
City;  
Where My Word is unspoken,  
In the land of lobelias and tennis flannels

<sup>3</sup> *Christ Triumphant*, 28.

<sup>4</sup> H. Ould, *John Galsworthy*, 55.