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Is it a Biblical Idea?—would seem rather to point the other way: to the conclusion, indeed, that those writers, even while thinking of the Divine Being, when they looked backward into the distant past or forward into the distant future, thought simply and naturally of that which passed *beyond their ken*.

JAMES HENDERSON BROWN.

Edinburgh.

Deuteronomy xxxiii. 12.

לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר

יָרִיד יְהוָה יִשְׁפֵּן לְבֶטֶחַ¹
הַחֹפֶף עָלָיו כָּל־הַיּוֹם
וּבֵין כַּתְּפָיו שָׁכֵן :

TOUCHING Benjamin he said :

'Beloved of YHWH, he dwelleth secure ;
He sheltereth him all the day,
And between His shoulders he dwelleth.'

The last line has been a long-standing crux. A

¹ Omitting the first עָלָיו of MT, with many moderns.

common explanation is that כַּתְּפָיו has here the sense 'his mountain-ranges' (cf. Is 15⁸ 18¹⁸, Nu 34¹¹, Jos 15¹⁰ 18², etc.), but this seems to break the metaphor contained in the words חֹפֶף עָלָיו כָּל־הַיּוֹם. Joüon (*Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale à Beyrouit*, iv. 21) has even proposed the emendation בְּנִפְּיוֹ, i.e. 'between his wings he dwelleth.'

I venture to suggest that וּבֵין כַּתְּפָיו שָׁכֵן is a proverbial expression exactly comparable with the Arabic *baina azhorihim*, 'between the backs,' used in the Aghani 19⁹⁷, and again in 'Icd 3²⁷², to describe the condition of a tribe which is under the protection of another. According to Robertson Smith (*Kinship*, 55), the meaning is that it 'could not be reached by a foe except over the bodies of its supporters.'

This accords excellently with the context. Benjamin is regarded as the special 'favourite' of YHWH, who acts, as it were, as his bodyguard (חֹפֶף; cf. Arabic *h'ff*, 'surround') and 'between the backs' of whom he dwells.

THEODOR HERZL GASTER.

London.

Entre Nous.

Is War Obsolete?

Professor Raven in the Halley Stewart Lecture for 1934, which has just been published—*Is War Obsolete?* (Allen & Unwin; 4s. 6d. net)—replies that it is. In the War Professor Raven was a combatant and he saw much active service in France. No one is more alive to the fine qualities which war may develop and bring out in the fighting forces. In this volume he gives several moving stories of heroism. The quiet courage shown in the following account could hardly be bettered. 'Twelve hours before I had been caught by shell-fire on a sunken-road—a howitzer-battery was traversing it up and down. In a scrape in the bank big enough to contain us I spent the next hour with an unknown private, huddled up and waiting for a direct hit. We could hear the gun fired, the flight of the missile, its scream and splash and roar, and the whizz of the pieces. Every half-minute a shell arrived, never more than a hundred yards away. The lad with me seemed unable to sit still: at last I warned him to stay quiet. A shell burst near: I saw his face: and realized that at

each explosion he had put his body in the mouth of the hollow between it and me, offering his life for mine under conditions that try the manhood of the bravest.'

The very fact that Professor Raven was not in the first instance a pacifist disarms us if we require disarming. And he carries us with him in his protest against the use of the fear motive. 'If I may be frank, when I listen to some of my peace-loving friends, their arguments arouse an instinctive antagonism: their horror of death, the falsity of their picture of war. . . . To read even so sincere and passionate a *cri du cœur* as Mr. Beverley Nichols's *Cry Havoc* is to be constantly reminded of the neurosis from which he is manifestly suffering. Sensitive, imaginative, courageous as he is, one cannot forget that poignant scene in Savernake when he parted from his schoolfellow so soon to be slain, or the confession of a much greater sufferer, "It is only those who have not themselves suffered who have a morbid horror of pain." ' This same point is made forcibly by Edward Bradby, the Secretary of the I.S.S. Co-operating Committee

for England and Wales, writing in the March number of 'The Student Movement': 'We are all agreed that wars proceed from fear and a sense of insecurity, and it therefore scarcely seems wise to try and *frighten* people out of making war by this sort of atrocity-story. There was a secret fascination about the "bogy man" of our childhood which far exceeded the charms of "sugar and spice and all things nice." Again, if you brood on the horrors that the enemy may inflict on your innocent wife and children, you will most probably conclude in the end that the only salvation is to strike the first blow. Worst of all, to appeal to the *fear* of war as a safeguard for peace is to appeal to the baser, more primitive elements in human nature, and that means that the appeal will not in the long run hold the respect of young and healthy people.'

But if Professor Raven found himself not wholly comfortable in the pacifist camp, he finds himself far less comfortable in the opposite one. 'Set me to listen to the apologists for war—I do not mean to the swashbucklers of the *Daily Express*, but to distinguished Christian statesmen—and all my soul cries out in protest. If this cautious and lukewarm conventionality is the best that the Church can do, if we are to haggle about the perils of unilateral disarmament while all the world is waiting for a lead, if despite all our phrases the appeal is in the last resort to the sword, then such advocates are welcome to try the trenches: I shall not be there. Do these people really suppose that the fighting soldier enjoyed battle? Do they forget that the one clear aim for which men died and women agonized was a world safe for democracy, a world where war should be no more? If not, how can they be so compromising in their praise of peace, so afraid of being labelled pacifist, so acquiescent in the lie that readiness for war is an insurance against it? Better the nightmares of Mr. Nichols, better any sort of crazy pacifism, than "the wisdom of this world, earthly, sensual, devilish," than the caution which prides itself upon seeing both sides of a question and thinks that the function of a leader is to chair committees and see that they reach inoffensive results. "Go slow" may be a wise man's motto: it is exactly what the Pharisees must have said when Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin.'

In the last chapter he sums up his message. And it is a message to the Church. 'It has been the purpose of these lectures not to criticise other programmes of immediate action, but to urge upon the Church its own special and positive duty'—

indeed, he says definitely that it ought surely to be possible for Christians to acquiesce in the internationalizing of armed force while advocating and developing another way of reconciliation.

And in the advocating and developing of this reconciliation Professor Raven finds the moral equivalent to war—all the zest and romance of living dangerously which war brings.

Professor Raven does not slur over difficulties. As we read these lectures we meet and face most of the anti-pacifist arguments, and as it is to the Church that he looks to be the peace army he does not evade the difficulty of Christians urging the necessity of world unity or expecting statesmen to behave generously 'when hardly any of them seem to care for the reunion of Christendom. . . . Can anyone imagine that an institution whose past is blackened with records of persecution has outgrown that past when it tolerates in its representative journals a bitterness of calumny and misrepresentation which no decent secular paper would dream of allowing? Such questions might be multiplied almost indefinitely.

'That the difficulties are enormous anyone who has had experience in matters ecclesiastical or who has a wholesome knowledge of his own weaknesses will not be likely to dispute. To catalogue them once more would be disheartening and unprofitable. Yet if our contention is sound that in such a venture there is a moral equivalent for war, then such difficulties, however vast, are a necessary condition and incentive. It is the magnitude of the effort which makes it worthy of support.'

Let us give in Professor Raven's own words his summing up of the ministry of reconciliation. 'For indeed, whatever may have been the case in the past, we have now come to the point at which armed force must somehow be superseded, if we are not to lose our opportunity and relapse into barbarism. Christ by His death revealed that there was another and a more effective way of dealing with enemies; recent events have demonstrated once more the truth both of His warnings and of His example. The Churches have denounced war as inconsistent with His teaching: the Nations have solemnly outlawed it. Surely there are among us men and women sufficiently adventurous, sufficiently Christian, to take up the ministry of reconciliation, to exercise it wherever the outlook is most dangerous, and to convince the world that the power of the Spirit is stronger than the arms of the flesh and that in these days warfare is as obsolete and as intolerable as slavery. The times are admittedly critical: at such a crisis the Christian

should have no excuse for halting between two opinions: "if the Lord be God, follow Him."

The One Thing worth living for.

'Again there are some whose cry is that of the youthful Saint Augustine, before his conversion, "Give me purity. But not yet." I knew one such case here in Salford. From the time when I first met him, when he was a boy of thirteen, till he was killed in France, aged twenty-seven, I counted him one of the handsomest, most engaging and most brilliantly clever persons I have ever met. One night in the Lads' Club, when he was about twenty-one, I said to him, "Why have I never been able to do any good with you? You come to church occasionally, but you have never been confirmed, and you have never taken your religion in earnest at all." He replied quite frankly, "I know I have not. I'm not ready for it. If ever I take up with religion it will be for me, as it is for my sister, the only thing in life. I am not ready for that yet." He had sense to know that if God is to come into anyone's life He must come as Master, and have first place. No second place will do. And he was not prepared to give God that place nor to own Him Master. He was not ready for that. This would be a sad story to tell if it ended there. But it does not. The night before he was killed in France he wrote to me from the trenches, "Do you remember that talk in the Lads' Club six years ago? Well! out here in France I have learned the truth of what you said then, that God is the one thing worth living for. And when I come back you will see the difference." He never came back, for the next day he was killed in an instant, shot through the head. But he had lived long enough to learn life's great lesson, that God is the one thing worth living for.'

John xvi. 23.

'Why is the Holy Communion the best time for prayer? Here is a story that I have found useful in this connexion. One of the Ameer's of Afghanistan was once holding a court of justice in the open air. He was sitting, and his guard was standing in a semicircle behind him. Near the Ameer was a wild Afghan fakir or holy man, squatting on the ground. The prisoner, dressed only in a loose white shirt, and with his arms pinioned behind him, stood in front of the Ameer. No one noticed that, during the trial, the fakir was edging nearer and nearer to the Ameer till all of a sudden he sprang

¹ Peter Green, *This Holy Fellowship*, 10.

at him and struck at him with a knife. The guard were standing too far back, and were too taken by surprise to do anything, and the Ameer must have been stabbed to the heart if the prisoner had not sprung between the Ameer and the assassin and caught the knife in his own side. In a moment the guard had rushed forward and hewn down the fakir, and the Ameer ordered the prisoner to be unbound. It was then found that the knife had glanced off his ribs, inflicting only a superficial wound, so that, though there was a great patch of blood on the white shirt, the man was not dangerously wounded. The Ameer not only ordered the man to be set free, but said: "Keep that torn and blood-stained shirt, and if at any future time you are in trouble or need, show me the shirt and I will grant any request you make." Some years after the prisoner's only son was discovered taking part in some conspiracy or plot, was brought before the Ameer, and was sentenced to the dreadful punishment of being put to death by stoning. His father came to plead for his pardon, but the Ameer, who did not recognize the man, but thought he was merely a distracted father pleading for his son, sternly said that the punishment must take its course. Suddenly the father put his hand under his coat and pulled out the torn shirt still showing the dark, rusty patch of blood. "By the blood I shed for you," he cried, "I claim the fulfilment of your promise." The Ameer turned to the guard and said: "Give the man his son. He has a claim on me that I cannot disregard." Have we done anything for God which gives us a claim on His mercy? No, indeed. When we have done all we must say, "We are unprofitable servants." Yet we have a claim on God which He cannot disregard, and it, too, is based on blood that has been shed. If I have shed no blood for God the Father, I can yet say: "By the blood that was shed I claim the fulfilment of Thy promise," for at the celebration of Holy Communion we hold up, as it were, before God the Father the blood shed on Calvary, and it has power with God and our requests are granted not for our merits but for those of our Saviour.'

² Peter Green, *ibid.* 100.