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868TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT 12, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.1, AT 5.30 P.M.,
ON MONDAY, MAY 27TH, 1946.

Owing to the sudden death of the President, Sir Charles Marston, the previous Tuesday, the Chairman of the Council called on the Rev. C. T. Cook to read the Presidential Address entitled "Human Nature. The World's Fundamental Problem."

The following elections have been made : *Fellows* : D. S. Milne, Esq., M.B., Ch.B., Lt.-Col. Shewell-Cooper, N.D.H., F.L.S., R. W. Wyse, Esq., G.M., M.B., F.R.C.S., Rev. J. T. Zamrazil, B.Th., D.D., E. O. Wood, Esq., B.A., M.A., Ph.D., L. S. Hawboldt, Esq., M.Sc., C. S. Grant, Esq., P.L. Watts, Esq., Joseph Smith, Esq., Ph.D., M.Eng., B.Sc., P. S. Henman, Esq., A. H. Boulton, Esq., J. J. Carr, Esq.

Members.—J. N. Burgess, Esq., M.B., B.S., D.D.R., Miss Chave Jones, H. L. Harris, Esq., Professor W. C. Young, A.M., Ph.D., T. F. Miller, Esq., M.B., Ch.B., F. L. Denton, Esq., The Very Rev. S. Barton Babbage, M.A., Th.D., H. Grantham-Hill, Esq., B.Sc., Matthew Francis, Esq., F. E. Guest, Esq., James Hislop, Esq., M.A., B.Sc., Rev. M. G. Milmine, M.A., Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A., C. W. D. Warburton, Esq., M.A., D. R. Mitchell, Esq., C. B. Sage, Esq., J. B. Messenger, Esq., Miss L. E. Kent, B.A., M.D., R. T. Lovelock, Esq., A.M.I.E.E., E. H. Trenchard, Esq., B.A., Miss M. G. Rice, B.A., L. R. Harris, Esq., B.A., W. T. Stunt, Esq., D. Wallace, Esq., M.A., M.B., Ch.M., A. W. H. Dick, Esq. (Life Member), E. M. R. Smith, Esq., B.Sc., A.K.C., J. H. Boshier, Esq., B.Sc., Rev. H. L. Ellison, B.D., B.A.

Associates.—Pastor R. E. Euston, Miss L. E. West, Rev. R. H. Roxburgh, L.Th., Harding College Library (Library Associate).

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

HUMAN NATURE.

THE WORLD'S FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM.

By SIR CHARLES MARSTON, F.S.A.

THESE are days when the world's news is full of warnings of food famine. My Address last year suggested that the famine to hear the words of God, foretold by Amos the Prophet, might also be impending.

Events of this past year have already justified the affirmation that anything might happen, and they continue to move with great rapidity.

Men of science are now beginning to appreciate what really lies at the root of world peace. For example, the B.B.C. series of Sunday Talks on "Can Science Bring Peace" was given on Easter Evening by Michael Polanyi, Professor of Chemistry at Manchester. He traced our troubles back through world politics to human nature. He succinctly pointed out that we were living in a period when propagandists were representing evil to be good, and good, evil. Already, nations could not trust each other. The world needed some accepted moral code such as that contained in the Bible. Here in brief outline was an Address which contained logic and truths so obvious, that they must have appealed to many of the millions that listened to them.

It is in one sense the very simplicity of the problem that has baffled people. Like Naaman the Syrian, they looked for some "great thing," and here is something that is a legacy of all the ages—just human nature.

But in another sense, human nature is not a simple problem. I have stressed in my previous Addresses that too much attention has been paid to the study of the science of matter, and too little to the science of man. Indeed, the 19th century involved one prolonged attempt to sidetrack the problem presented by human nature. With the advent of the doctrine of evolution, what had hitherto been called "sin," was now explained away. It was commonly supposed that sin was no more than a relic of the old animal nature.

The problem was even compared with the problem of dirt in our cities—the kind of thing that could be swept away by the brooms of education, psychology, and socialism—but which was well within the power of man to eradicate. It was tacitly assumed that all man had to do was decide what was right, and then to do it, and the simple fact that there are many people who know perfectly well what they ought to do, *but do not*, was quietly overlooked.

This doctrine became in time almost inseparable from Western civilisation, and, so convinced were we Westerners of its truth, that it very soon became an article of export for the East. We see its fruits to-day in the attempts to bring education to India.

We have been training young Indians at our universities in our ideas of Democracy, and have gradually introduced the curse of politics into that huge, dry, barren land of many races, creeds and castes, all calculated to provoke strife and dissension and bloodshed : whereas what India really needed was water !

Professor Joad has described in the *Rationalist Annual* for 1946 how he used to explain away sin. According to the evolutionary theory it was neither inevitable nor innate. The war upset this theory. " I see now," he writes, " that sin is endemic in man, and that the Christian doctrine of original sin expresses a deep and essential insight into human nature." Without it you fall victim to shallow optimisms.

With the dawn of the present century the shallow views on sin received a number of setbacks. The first came from psychoanalysis.

Freud, despite his anti-religion prejudices, was forced to conclude that original sin was a fact. Outward and apparent innocence, and beauty of human character proved nothing at all, beneath the surface there was a hidden source of evil. Psychoanalysis revealed a whole world of rottenness, villainy and sin, which had not hitherto been suspected by the psychologist—though its presence was clearly enough asserted in the New Testament. The analyst was forced to conclude " that all children, if they were free to respond to their instinctive impulses, would act as criminals."

The evidence from all quarters of the world as a result of this war now completely contradicts the assumption that human nature is anything like as good, or as stable, as has been postulated.

Again, we are all the while hampered by the assumption that uniformity exists in human nature. The Creator has been regarded as a sort of manufacturer of repetition machine work. And this in spite of the fact that everyone of us is daily in close contact with evidence which completely contradicts that assumption. If we can find no uniformity even among children born of the same parents, how is it possible to assume uniformity among nations ?

The fact that the world has been brought so much closer together by rapidity of communication has only accentuated this

problem. Men of foresight have affirmed that it would be almost as difficult "to win the Peace" as it was "to win the War." It would seem now as though this was even an understatement.

So despite last year's complete victory over Germany and Japan, peace and plenty are by no means in sight. We are now facing a world famine of food in the foreground, and a possible epidemic of plague in the background—further restrictions on our freedom at home—the perverseness of Russia—and quarrels with her and many other nations abroad.

These are all in accord with what we have been led to expect, not by prophets of to-day, but by those of thousands of years ago, whose writings and sayings have been preserved in Holy Scripture. In spite of the recent great meetings of U.N.O. in London and elsewhere, the time has surely come when "Men's hearts are failing them for fear" (Luke xxi, 26), as prophesied by Jesus Christ Himself.

We can trace the causes of all that has happened through the pages of the Bible, we can rarely find them in the literature of to-day.

And yet there are intelligent people who still think that Holy Scripture is "old fashioned" and "out of date"!

I write at a time of year when the events connected with Christ's Passion are again fresh in our memories. We have heard again how He wept over Jerusalem, and said "If thou hadst known the things that belong unto Peace" (Luke xix, 41, 42). Is there not a Divine displeasure on our state of civilisation? What He condemned was their attitude to Him, for He knew that it would affect their destiny.

We hear so much about "the rights of man" and not much about "the Rights of God."

I have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that the Bible is the Text Book of Human Nature; and that during the past twenty years its claims to authenticity have been verified by the science of archæology, and are now being verified by its own prophecies.

A book entitled "The Anatomy of Peace," by Emery Reeves, published in 1945, has pointed out, with devastating logic, that U.N.O. cannot succeed, and that we must have a World Federation, and have it at once. Mr. Churchill appears to have reached

a like conclusion. He has now advocated an Anglo-American Federation as the first step in that direction. But, as yet, the world does not seem ripe even for that movement.

The fact is that the traditions of thousands of years of National Governments cannot be swept aside at short notice, without authority little, if any, short of the Divine.

Here again, the course of world events, as revealed by Bible prophecy, seems to march with the present time. The 38th and 39th chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel contain a description of a great encounter to be fought in the latter days in Northern Palestine. The aggressors came from "the uttermost parts of the North" (Ezekiel xxxix, 2). Their names are associated with territories which to-day belong to the Soviet Union. It is even more significant that Persia, upon whom Russia is now encroaching, is included among them (Ezekiel xxxviii, 5). And this, too, from the pen of a prophet who wrote more than two thousand five hundred years ago. The complete defeat of Russia, according to this prophecy of Ezekiel, is to come about by direct intervention of the Lord Jehovah, Who is the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament. (Hebrews i, 1-12.)

Again, even as I revise these very lines, comes the announcement that our Government have acceded to the urgent demand of Egypt to withdraw altogether from that country, and to give up the guardianship of the Suez Canal.

In anticipation of such an event, the great General Gordon in his lifetime propounded an alternative and better route than the Canal. The Jordan Valley runs through Palestine to the Dead Sea at about one thousand feet below sea level. Gordon's plan was to cut a channel across Palestine from Haifa, so that the Mediterranean would pour through and fill up both the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea, and to further connect the southern end by a waterway into the Gulf of Akaba.

The last great battle, it would seem from Old Testament prophecy, is to take place round Jerusalem and immediately to precede the filling up of the Jordan Valley. The hostile forces are already accumulating for this conflict. On the surface it would appear that the return of the Jews to Palestine is a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and it is so being used by the Zionist Movement.

But even in St. John's time there were people who "Say they are Jews, and they are not" (Rev. ii, 9 and iii, 9). And in the centuries that have since rolled by, the proportion of pseudo-Jews has greatly increased. It must be remembered that the migration of so-called Jews to Palestine during the past 25 years has been on a basis of money, and not on a basis of character.

We have to-day one great advantage over our forefathers in the interpretation of Holy Scripture, we are approaching the end of the Dispensation. We have been in doubt as to the chronology of events foreshadowed in the Bible. The Second Coming of Christ did not occur when it was anticipated by the Early Church, so it has been assumed by a large proportion of the present-day Church that it would not now occur at all. The men who produced the Theory of Evolution predicted better and better times on earth, and substituted them for the awe-inspiring events foretold in the Bible. Science was to bring us the new Heaven and the new Earth, without regard for the infirmities of human nature. The Jews who crucified "the Man who came to save the World" cried out, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Our modern outlook has been, "Not this Man, but Materialism will save the world." And now—the Atomic Bomb!

When the present course of events cause the British and American nations to cast aside the delusions of the past half-century, and to recognise that even the Federation of the World is impossible without some Supreme and Unquestioned Authority, then they will give up building the Headquarters of U.N.O. in the United States. Then our nations will return to their Bibles, the Authority that has made them great. They will appreciate that the Book is not a collection of myths, legends and folklore, as German scholars beguiled ours to believe, but contains a Divine Revelation guaranteed by the fulfilment of prophecy. Then they will prepare for the Coming of the Supreme Authority over Human Nature—the Saviour and Redeemer of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible would seem to foretell other events that will happen at the end of this Dispensation to which I have made no reference. It is to be "a time of trouble such as never was." As we read these accounts and consider the widespread decline in our morals, and the present disregard of religion, we say "What hope is there for us as a nation?" I think, as we look

back on the last few years, and reflect what hope *there was then for us*, we realise that the Divine Providence has wrought a series of miracles on our behalf. That for some cause which is not yet recognised, we have been treated as a favoured nation by Him. Let us take hope in the thought that the Divine, who has brought us through these present wars, will continue His care for us.

None the less, it is our imperative duty to turn from the vain outlook and teachings of the present, and study our Bibles in the light of to-day. There will be found the cure for human nature, presented, but largely neglected through the ages. There will be found a greater and more effective power than the atomic bomb—the power of prayer. Alexis Carrel, of the Rockefeller Institute, New York, one of the greatest medical scientists of this age, compared this before he died with the power of terrestrial gravity. And there will be found the Record of the Eternal Sacrifice for Sins by Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Second Coming must now be rapidly approaching.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS.

AIR COMMODORE WISEMAN said: Only the day before he died Sir Charles Marston had written him on the subject of this paper. Not only the Institute, but Biblical archeology had lost a generous friend, for with his ample fortune he had given considerable encouragement to the excavation of Biblical sites. The results of these investigations, those at Jericho and Lachish particularly, had been made available to the public in popular form in his books, the last of which *The Bible Comes Alive*, has had a wide circulation; Thus "he being dead yet speaketh." Sir Charles had an intense faith that archeology had, and would continue to have, a considerable influence in the minds of men in regard to the authenticity and trustworthiness of the Bible. When at the end of my remarks on his Presidential Address last year, I referred to his books on archeology, he told me after the meeting that the publication of these books "had been the one thing worth while."

The paper to which we have just listened, which the President had looked forward to reading himself, was written when he was rather unwell, it contains, in a way he was then unaware, his last words to

the Institute ; writing at the end of a full life he sees quite clearly that the world's fundamental problem is human nature itself. The recognition of this takes us back to the Bible where this fact is even more clearly stated. Man still seems to imagine that it is in some environment or system eternal to himself that he will find the root cause of his troubles and sense of frustration. But Scripture makes it plain that the root cause is in himself, his fallen nature, his sin. This is the disruptive force at work blighting even the best intentions of human nature. Biblical Philosophy has much to say about this problem ; it is viewed as the fundamental problem throughout the ages, its origin involved separation from fellowship with God, its continuance the frustration of mankind ; the remedy is revealed in the sinless life and atoning death of the Incarnate Saviour. At this Annual Meeting of the Victoria Institute or Philosophical Society of Great Britain I cannot but affirm my faith in the Biblical Philosophy, especially in view of the bankruptcy of modern philosophies based on a merely mechanistic development of the universe. It is surely significant that while these philosophies continue to replace each other and " have their day and cease to be " the Biblical Philosophy of man and sin remains permanently true.

There was until recently a settled belief in the inevitability of human progress, it was part of the evolutionary theory of all things, and the phenomenal material progress of the past one hundred years gave it the semblance of an " assured result." There is now widespread delusion ; it is quite evident that man has not improved on the Ten Commandments given in ancient time. It is in the realm of man's conduct that the weakness appears and I submit, that its solution is to be found in the right relationship of man to his Maker. Human beings, being what they are, can never be effectively controlled except by a knowledge of the solution made known by Christ. The Philosophies which exclude God and substitute a merely mechanistic universe, may borrow for instance the Biblical philosophy of conscience for a time, but in the end the logic of their atheism kills even this conception of man's guiding principle. The only completely consistent philosophy of the " problem of evil " in man is to be found in the Bible and the remedy revealed in it is the only valid deliverance from pessimism.