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EDITORIAL NOTES

Dr. Taliaferro Thompson in Korea.

Dr. W. Taliaferro Thompson, Professor of Religious Education in Union Seminary and Editor-in-chief of THE REVIEW, is in Korea, where he is giving a series of addresses on Sunday School organization and methods, and Young People's work before the missionaries and native Christians. Dr. Thompson went out under the joint auspices of the World's Sunday School Association and the Foreign Missions Committee of the Southern Presbyterian Church. He is addressing missionaries and native Christians of the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches, the Northern and Southern Methodist Churches, the Canadian Presbyterian Church, and the Australian Presbyterian Church. He will spend a month at the Methodist Seminary of Korea and a month at the Presbyterian Seminary. He is to go from one end of Korea to the other, and, before returning, will attend the annual meeting of

or of the other Evangelists. Our Christ was not a myth but a mystery, not a legend but a fact, not an imaginary but a historical person.

THE IDEAL AND THE PRACTICAL.*

By THE REV. ROBERT FISHBUENE CAMPBELL, D. D.
Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Asheville, N. C.

Ever since the sneer of Joseph's brethren at Dothan, "Behold this dreamer cometh," (Gen. 37:19) practical men have scoffed at the idealist. But as then, so often since has it come to pass, that in the end these same practical men have been obliged to adjust themselves to the dream and do obeisance to the dreamer whom they scorned.

This has been notably true in the world of mechanical invention. In his "History of the People of the United States," McMaster's writing of Arkwright's spinning jenny, says: "It was indeed with this at first, as with every great invention, from the alphabet to the printing press, from the printing press to the railroad, from the railroad to the telegraph. It was bitterly opposed." Of Robert Fulton's steamboat, the Clermont, he says: "Fulton met with the same opposition which in our time we have seen expended on the telegraph and sewing machine, and which, sometime in the future will be encountered by inventions and discoveries of which we have not the smallest conception. No man in his senses, it was asserted, would risk his life in such a *fire-boat* as the Clermont when the river was full of good packets." These packets moved at the rate of three or four miles per hour.

A recent editorial in the Asheville Citizen (Dec. 19, 1923,) is authority for the statement that five years after the experiment of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, N. C., in which they smashed the theory that a heavier-than-air flying machine

*A paper read before the Pen and Plate Club, Asheville, N. C., Jan. 17, 1924.

was a scientific impossibility, a reporter for the New York World who wrote the story of that adventure, was suspended by his news editor as a Munchausen until his story could be verified.

Prof. Samuel P. Langley of the Smithsonian Institution, who had previously demonstrated the theory, is said to have died of a broken heart because of the ridicule that was heaped upon him and the refusal of the government to make the grant of money necessary for completing his experiments.

The dreamers in statesmanship have fared little better at the hands of contemporaries than the dreamers in mechanics.

In 1791 Alexander Hamilton launched his plan for the Federal Bank. McMasters says that at that time there were only four banks in the United States, and that they were very unpopular institutions. "Some were deterred from making deposits by the recollection that their fathers had never done so before them, others by the strong antipathy which they felt for banks in general. The old way, they said, of doing business was good enough. If a man were prosperous and had cash to spare, the best place to keep it was in his own house, under his own lock and key." So with that great idealistic document, the Constitution of the United States. "It was with the greatest difficulty," says Dr. Willard L. Sperry, "that it established itself in the face of the bitter hostility and dismal predictions which it aroused. It seems to have been regarded by the Antifederalists of that day much as the Covenant of the League of Nations has been regarded by the great majority of Americans today, a useless and Utopian scheme. The criticisms visited upon it were precisely those which in our time have been passed upon the Covenant as an idealistic and impracticable scheme."² Even Alexander Hamilton expressed his despair of the practicability of establishing a republican form of government over so extensive a country; and this at a time when the area of the country was vastly smaller than it is today.³

²The Disciplines of Liberty, p. 88.

³W. C. Rives, Life and Times of James Madison. Ch. 29.

In every field of idealism the idealist has been met with the old gibe, "Behold this dreamer cometh."

I do not wish to desiccate this paper with too many definitions. A few sentences from Eucken's "Main Currents of Modern Thought" will suffice to indicate the meaning of "the ideal" and "the practical" as I propose to use these terms.

After tracing the history and development of the word "idealism," Eucken says, "It soon became possible for all those to call themselves idealists who maintained the superiority of spiritual activity over the forces of the external world." He quotes from a letter of Schiller to Humboldt: "After all, we are both idealists and would be ashamed to have it said of us that *things shaped us and not we the things.*"

And again he quotes F. A. Wolf as saying, "The direction of the spirit towards the ideal is the first condition of all higher developments. It is not fitting for free and magnanimous souls to be always seeking after the useful"⁴—the practical. "Virtue is its own reward." The realm of idealism is a realm of true values, but of values that are measured by spiritual standards instead of by the yardstick and avoirdupois of "the practical man."

The materialist is impatient for results. He demands of life that it "deliver the goods." The idealist on the other hand can wait—

"Can so forecast the years
To find in loss a gain to match,
And reach a hard thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears."

He looks not at the seen, which is temporal, but at the unseen, which is eternal.

A system of philosophy has recently come into vogue called *pragmatism*, pragmatism being only another name for *the practical*. According to this system, or *method*, as Prof. Wm. James, its high priest, prefers to call it, the test of what is true and right is found solely in the practical results. "On pragmatical principles," says he, "if the hypothesis (of God) works

⁴Main Currents of Modern Thought, pp. 101-2.

satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true." Of course, this means, if it doesn't work it isn't true. "The true," says he, "is only the expedient, in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient, in the way of our behavior."⁶

"Notwithstanding the stimulating power of such a movement," says Eucken, "supported as it is by brilliant and distinguished thinkers, we are compelled to regard it, when considered as a whole and *in its ultimate bearings*, as an error. The powerful impression produced by pragmatism is due, in the first place, to the fact that it reverses the conventional way of looking at things. *But what if*, in the process, the idea of truth itself is reversed and ends by standing on its head?"⁶ Eucken's figure of truth turned topsy-turvy by pragmatism is a picturesque exposure of the fallacy. A thing is not true or right because its results are experienced as satisfactory, but in the idealist's view the results will be satisfactory in the long run because the thing is true or right.

We may indeed test what is alleged to be true and right by its results, provided we know what the final and complete results will be, and provided we can appraise those results at their true value, but that is a very different thing from saying that the results *make* the thing true and right, or false and wrong, as the case may be.

As Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins puts it, "Pragmatism, affirming that whatever *works* is true, has tended to supply a philosophic justification for whatever *seems to work*, whether it be true or not."⁷

Perhaps Mr. Dooley's summary of the teachings of this philosophy is more to the point than any of the more serious ones: "It's this way, Hennessy, whin the truth stops wur-rukin', it's a lie, an' whin a lie starts goin' it's the truth."⁸

⁶Pragmatism, p. 222.

⁶Main Currents of Modern Thought, pp. 77-78.

⁷Modern Religious Cults, p. 61.

⁸See Articles on Pragmatism by Dr. Harris E. Kirk, Union Sem. Review—Vol. XXI, Nos. 1, 2, 3.

The core principle of pragmatism seems perilously akin to the jesuitical maxim, "The end justifies the means." If followed to what Eucken calls "its ultimate bearings," the ideal would prove to be the Jonah and the practical would be the whale.

So far we have spoken of the ideal and the practical as they stand in mutual contrast or opposition. And they *are* in opposition when the practical is regarded as an end in itself, instead of the means to the higher ends of idealism. But when truth is put on its feet instead of being made to stand on its head, there is a close and proper correlation between the ideal and the practical.

It has been said that every man is at bottom either a Platonist or an Aristotelian—Plato standing for the philosophy of idealism and Aristotle for the philosophy of the practical. This is no doubt true, speaking by and large; but in this as in all other attempted classifications of mankind, according to temperament and turn of mind, there are intermediate grades between the two extremes. In every human being the ideal and the practical overlap to a greater or less extent.

The rounded character, the balanced personality, is the man in whom the ideal lifts the practical above the sordid, while the practical holds the ideal to solid fact and substantial truth. The ideal is the kite that catches the winds of heaven and rises by their force; the practical is the tail of the soaring kite that serves as ballast and saves it from the floundering that ends in wreck.

Let a man by all means hitch his wagon to a star, but let him take warning from the philosopher who was so absorbed in gazing into the heavens that he stumbled into a well.

Sydney Smith in one of his letters speaks of a Scotch friend, of whom he says, "I never saw so theoretical a head which contained so much practical understanding," and then remarks, "What I object to in Scotch philosophers in general is, that they pursue truth without caring if it be useful truth. The philosophy that descends to the present state of things is debased in their estimation." His genial gibe at the Scotch philosopher is illustrated in the following letter: "Dear Lady

Holland: I take the liberty to send you two brace of grouse—curious, because killed by a Scotch metaphysician; in other and better language, they are mere ideas, shot by other ideas, out of a pure intellectual notion called a gun.”⁹

The ideal, strictly speaking, is theory as contrasted with practice. The ideal is embodied in a principle; the practical is the application of the principle to concrete cases and is embodied in rules and regulations. The ideal is generic; the practical is specific. The ideal is the goal; the practical is the path that leads, it may be through a maze of difficulties, to that goal. Men have cherished ideals that are purely visionary—shadows and phantasmagoria that flit through the fool’s paradise. Don Quixote is the outstanding example of pathetic idealism—the idealism of a noble soul with astigmatic vision. “Don Quixote,” says Vincente Blasco Ibanez, “is poor mortal man, who desires to make right and justice triumph, and who stumbles and falls in his noble efforts. At times the American people take Sancho Panza as their model and think only of material satisfactions, of the egoisms that make our life comfortable. On other occasions they display a generosity and idealism as lofty as that of Don Quixote.”¹⁰ If we have to choose between the two, the noble but illusory idealism of the Don is infinitely better than the coarse and sordid materialism of his servant. It is far nobler to have visions, “trailing clouds of glory as they come,” but destined “to die away, and fade into the light of common day,” than to be possessed of a soul shut in by shades of the prison house, never lifting to let in “the light that never was on sea or land.”

But we are not shut up to this alternative. The vision that we cherish may be “a phantom of delight,” and at the same time “a creature not too bright or good for human nature’s daily food.” It may be like Wordsworth’s skylark, that soars to sing at heaven’s gate, but builds its nest on “the dewy ground:” “Ethereal minstrel, pilgrim of the sky, despising not the earth where cares abound.” As *idealism* is of two distinct species,

⁹Memoirs of Rev. Sidney Smith, Vol. II, pp. 15, 46.

¹⁰International Book Review, Dec., 1923.

so the practical is of two diverse kinds. The ideal as we have observed is the goal, the practical is the path that leads to the goal. But the path may be *straight*, or it may be *crooked*. How different the impression made by the word "practical," as applied to a politician from that which it makes when applied to a statesman!

The phrase, "a practical politician," suggests unscrupulousness, a time-serving demagogue who seeks to attain his selfish ends, like Ah-Sin, the heathen Chinese, "by ways that are dark and tricks that are vain." But a "*practical statesman*" is suggestive of a *patriot*, who follows high ends for his country by ways that are *wisely* and *astutely chosen*, but never crooked or debased. There is "the practical" that sacrifices principle to policy, and there is "the practical" that strives towards the ideal by the best way that is open to it, at the time, compromising, it may be, with that which is below the level of the highest, but never with that which is wrong.

John Morley says of Gladstone: "Hard as he strove for a broad basis in general theory and high abstract principle, yet always aiming at practical ends, he kept in sight the *opportune*." He held that government is "a huge, rough machine, and those concerned in working it *have to be satisfied with what is far below the best*. It was very easy to label him as an *opportunist*, yet if an opportunist be defined as a statesman who declines to attempt to do a thing until he believes that it can really be done, what is that but to call him a man of common sense?"¹¹ He was the brightest of those political lights that shed lustre on Queen Victoria's reign, of whom the poet-laureate wrote:

"And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet."

Justin McCarthy says that even Gladstone's enemies felt that one idea always inspired him—a *conscientious anxiety to do*

¹¹Life of Gladstone, Vol. I, p. 190; Vol. II, p. 241; Vol. III, p. 539.

the right thing. None accused him of being one of the politicians, who, as Victor Hugo says, "mistake a weather-cock for a flag."¹²

Our own Grover Cleveland was of the same moral type, but still more sturdy, holding to his ideal of public office as a public trust, in the face of the hostility and ridicule of the practical politicians, and shallow demagogues, with a tenacity that has hardly been equaled in all the history of statesmanship. But his ideals were not those of the visionary or the fanatic. In one of those sententious sayings for which he was famous he created a maxim of practical statesmanship that has taken its place among the political proverbs of the world: "It is a *condition* that confronts us—not a *theory*."¹³ He had wise regard to conditions, but as a high idealist, he could never consciously sacrifice principle on the altar of expediency. "The way of right and justice," said he, "should be followed as a matter of duty, and regardless of immediate success."¹⁴ Some one has aptly likened him to the pilot of whom old Seneca wrote, who when his boat was overtaken by a terrific storm that threatened to engulf it, said to Neptune: "O god of the Sea, thou mayest save me if thou wilt; and if thou wilt, thou mayest destroy me; *but, whether or no, I will steer my rudder true.*"¹⁵

The lines addressed by Tennyson to the Duke of Argyll, when, at the sacrifice of his political fortunes, he stood firm for what he deemed to be a great principle, present an almost perfect picture of the balance between the ideal and the practical in statesmanship:—

"O Patriot Statesman, be thou wise to know
The limits of resistance, and the bounds
Determining concession; still be bold
Not only to slight praise but suffer scorn;

¹²History of Our Own Times, Vol. I, p. 432.

¹³Annual Message, 1887.

¹⁴Modern Eloquence, Vol. I, p. 231.

¹⁵Montaigne's Essays, XVI; Seneca Epist. 85.

And be thy heart a fortress to maintain
The day against the moment, and the year
Against the day; thy voice, a music heard
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of feud
And faction, and thy will, a power to make
This ever-changing world of circumstance,
In changing chime with never-changing Law."

I wish there were time to speak of the ideal and the practical in business, in labor and capital, in professional life, in journalism, in education and in legislation, each of which might call for a special essay or a volume. But I shall pass by all of these except the last two, and shall touch these very lightly in the time that remains.

President Coolidge says: "Education must give not only power but direction. It must minister to the whole man or it falls. Such an education does not come from science. That provides power alone, but not direction." He then enters a plea for the study of the Greek and Roman Classics and of our own great literature, and adds, "The classic of all classics is the Bible." "I do not underrate," says he, "schools of science and technical arts. They have a high and noble calling in ministering to mankind. . . . I am pointing out that in my opinion they do not provide a civilization that can stand without the support of the ideals that come from the classics."

These are wise words, and they find an illustration in the recent history of a great nation. In the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, the German universities began to crowd the classics to a back seat to make room for scientific and technical training. The great scholar and theologian, Dr. Dollinger, speaking in 1872 at the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the University of Munich, alluded to this in words that have proved to be sadly prophetic: "Who knows," said he, "but that for a time Germany may remain confined, without air and light, in that strait prison which we call Materialism? This would be the forerunner of national ruin."¹⁶

¹⁶Modern Eloquence, Vol. VIII, p. 527.

One of our own prophets, Dr. William Ellery Channing, years ago sounded the warning for us:

"The ground of a man's culture lies in his nature, not in his calling. His powers are to be unfolded on account of their inherent dignity, not their outward direction. He is to be educated because he is man, not because he is to make shoes, nails or pins."¹⁷

Cardinal Newman has a beautiful paragraph on what he calls the *beau ideal* of an educated intellect: "It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the Spheres."¹⁸

I fear that in America we have drifted too far from these high ideals in our eagerness for technical education. Prof. George Santayana says, "The American is an idealist working on matter. Understanding as he does the material potentialities of things, he is successful in invention, and quick in emergencies. All his life he jumps into the train after it has started and jumps off before it stops, and he never once gets left or breaks a leg . . . To my mind (says he) the most striking expression of his materialism is his singular pre-occupation with *quantity*. If, for instance, you visit Niagara Falls, you may expect to hear how many cubic feet or metric tons of water are precipitated per second over the cataract"—and then he slyly adds: "This is what I confidently expected to hear on arriving at the adjoining town of Buffalo. But I was mistaken. The first thing I heard instead was that *there are more miles of asphalt pavement in Buffalo than in any city in the world.*"

But he adds this optimistic note: "When the senses are sharp and joyous, as in the American, they are already liber-

¹⁷Channing's Works, p. 19.

¹⁸Modern Eloquence, Vol. IX, p. 923.

ated; and when the heart is warm, like his, and eager to be just, its ideal destiny is hardly doubtful. Time and its own pulses will give it wings."¹⁹

As to the ideal and the practical in legislation, I wish to call attention to the wonderful adjustment and balance of the two in the laws of Moses, which has been too often overlooked.

The Hon. James M. Beck in his recent book on the Constitution of the United States says: "Too little attention has been paid by the legal profession to questions of moral psychology. . . . And yet, to paraphrase the saying of the Master, 'the laws were made for man and not man for the laws,' and if the science of law ignores the study of human nature and attempts to conform man to the laws rather than the laws to man, then its development is a very partial and imperfect one."

This remark of Mr. Beck's amounts to this, that it is a condition and not a theory that confronts the framers of law. Wise legislation will always take into account the stage of progress, and conditions of life reached by those for whom the laws are intended.

Now the legislation of Moses shows marvelous wisdom in this respect. The government of Israel was, according to Moses, a theocracy. Jehovah was not only the moral governor, but the civil ruler of the nation, the legislator and king. As moral governor He gave a perfect ideal of morality, which because it is perfect can never be added to or taken from. But as civil governor He enacted practical statutes adapted to the stage of progress reached by the people, and the condition under which they were to live. The perfect ideal is found in what we call the moral law, finding its expression negatively in the "shall nots" of the Ten Commandments, and positively in the summary of the two tables of the Decalogue in the comprehensive statement: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." There stands the perfect ideal of religion and morality for all time!

¹⁹The Living Age, March 8, 1919, pp. 589-95.

But even a wise *human* government will not expect or attempt to realize an ideal of morality by statute law; much less an All-wise God. People cannot be legislated into goodness, which is a thing of the heart. And we find in the *Mosaic statutes*, which constitute the civil as distinguished from the moral law, this great principle fully recognized. The ideal standard is enacted once for all, in the moral law; but the statutes of the civil code, which is a very different thing, are thoroughly practical in being adapted to human nature and to the people of Israel in the conditions of that time. I wish I had time to illustrate this in detail. But two quotations from the New Testament will, I hope, make the matter sufficiently clear. "The Pharisees came to Jesus, and asked him is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? And He answered and said unto them, what did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, *For the hardness of your heart he wrote this precept*. But it was not so in the beginning, for from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife and they twain shall be one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:2-9.) There we have the ideal; the indissolubility of the marriage bond as it was instituted by the Creator in the beginning; but in legislation the imperfections of human nature, "the hardness of men's hearts," had to be considered, and statute law adapted to actual conditions. The hardness of men's hearts cannot be legislated out of them.

The other passage that I wish to quote is from the eighth chapter of Romans: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (that is, through the infirmities of human nature), God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." That is, law has its limitations, because it is dealing with human beings, with the weakness of the flesh, with the hardness of men's hearts,—confronting not

a theory but a condition. If man is to be brought into conformity to a perfect ideal of morality, something beyond legislation is absolutely necessary; and that something is *a new spirit within him*. The love of that which is evil must be condemned—must be put to death on the altar of his heart, and the love of righteousness must be implanted there; then by an inner and voluntary impulse he will walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." "Except a man be born again"—changed in the spirit of his mind—"he can not enter the Kingdom of God,"—he cannot be conformed in his life to the laws of that Kingdom.

It has been argued, from the fact that some of the statutes of Moses seem to fall below what is ideally perfect, and are not adapted to the social and political conditions of today, that the Mosaic system did not come by Divine inspiration as it claims to have come. On the contrary, the marvelous combination of the ideal and the practical in that system is one of the strongest arguments that can be advanced for its Divine origin. It is the very perfection of wisdom in legislation—which the world is far from having attained. Especially does America need to sit at the feet of Moses, that she may learn the limitations of legislation and rely more and more on moral influences and the power of Christ and His gospel to lift the life of her people toward the perfect ideal: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." "Love," says the greatest of the Apostles, "is the fulfilling of the law." You can not create love by legislation.

There is a story told of George V. that, when he was a small boy, the prime minister was discussing with his father, Edward VII., some matter of restrictive legislation, when the little fellow broke into the discussion with the naive and childish remark: "If I ever become king, I'm going to have a law passed *abolishing all sin*." He has been king for nearly fourteen years, but up to date the law abolishing all sin has not been forthcoming.

In this paper I have tried to suggest some of the ideals that

should characterize a nation. But a nation can not rise above the individuals that compose it. Each citizen contributes his quota to the national character, and men influence one another in unsuspected and subtle ways. All this enhances tremendously the power and importance of personal ideals—ideals high enough to

“Set up a mark of everlasting light
Across the howling senses’ ebb and flow.”

Louis Pasteur wrote his own epitaph, which may be read by those who visit his mausoleum in the Institute that bears his name: “Happy is he who has a Deity within him, an ideal of duty which he obeys, an ideal of art, an ideal of country, an ideal of the virtues of the New Testament.” These ideals were wrought into his life and work and made him a great world citizen and exalted him to a place among the immortals, who being dead yet speak and whose names will be fragrant to the end of time.

No true idealist can ever realize his own ideal; for every ideal dies as an ideal in the moment of attainment. It is a flying goal, ever eluding the outstretched hand of the pursuer—“For a man’s reach should exceed his grasp, or what’s a heaven for?”

THE BIBLE STORY OF THE CREATION.

BY THE REV. EDWARD MACK, D. D.,

Professor of Old Testament Interpretation, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.

It is commonly believed among Modernists that the world with all of its varieties of materials and all of its forms of life, coming to climatic culmination in man, are the product of natural laws in their gradual and regular operation. According to their notion, creation is an evolution produced by forces from within, without external aid. It is an offense to a mod-