

THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

Everything Written By The Prophets

What is “the fulfilment of prophecy”? We use the word *prophet* improperly, to mean *a person who can foretell the future*. Many Biblical prophets do; but their real concern was to speak about the present, to direct the minds of living men and women to the truth, the actual reality, of their situation. Prophets are not dreamers with a faraway look in their eye. They have eagle vision, and are brilliantly *alive* to the truths other people busily ignore. They’re the little boy in the story of the Emperor’s clothes. They’re people into whom truth pours, who deliver it back totally honestly, unedited, unpolluted. They can neither deceive, nor keep their mouths shut. Not a comfortable crew.

Coming True

It follows that what a prophet says can’t *come* true. It’s *already* true. What happens is that the rest of us catch up with the prophet; we get beside him and say, *now I know what you mean*. Now we can enter into the reality he saw, and we couldn’t see. In this we become more real, more true; we ourselves “come true”. We aren’t always. We cut corners; *false* often comes easier than true - in the short run. But we lose a lot to our hope that lies may serve us as well as truth. The effort may be quite comprehensive. Can’t you think of a time in your life when you were chasing some fantasy that would never work out? A long pilgrimage down a dead end? Can you remember the wretched retracing of your steps when you cottoned on - the boring business of extricating yourself from an unreal landscape of false hopes, now all embarrassingly flattened? What a waste! If only I’d caught on a bit sooner, I could have made some real progress, got somewhere worthwhile. Yes; a frustrating, embarrassing experience; but serious and positive; we’re coming true at last; *joy comes with the dawn*.

The Truth Will Out

Living in the truth is the condition for the only sort of life worth living. But we don’t believe it. We suspect that reality is harmful or nasty; it must be so, because we are so scared of it. We’re ready to deny all sorts of things we suspect are true, and we’re also prepared to be lied to if the lie makes us feel better. There’s a special world in which I live, where my vices are not vices at all, my failings are acceptable, my

wildest dreams the real future. My bad habits don’t harm me, in that blessed place, and there are no policemen. No-one demands anything of me, and nothing is too good for me. It’s my blue heaven...and the horror of it is, that every minute I spend in this monstrous place makes me a little less fit for anything in the real world.

Consummatum est

Jesus’ dying was the ultimate point of his entry into human truth; all men die, so he died; we might say that in this moment he became finally human, he (in his own words) *consummated* his humanity. He also completed the task his Father had given: to live out a human life in *all* its reality, with *all* its consequences. Every step he took was taken in the truth: in him people encountered the truth; and the abundance of life flowed through his fingers and even from the touched hem of his robe. *I am the truth*, he said in his most consoling vein: and he promises the Spirit, who will lead us into the fulness of truth, precisely as our Comforter. In this way Jesus is the ultimate prophet, the teller of ultimate truth, the last Word of God to the earth. We should let the two words - *truth* and *consolation* - embrace, marry in our minds, until we understand and believe in their closeness, and find true and lasting joy in the real created world, in our real lives, lives, and in the trustworthy words of his prophecy.

Fr Philip