

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

you did not. You will relieve their wants, and preach them a faithful Gospel, and pray for them morning, noon and night, I am sure. But even all this is not sufficient. You must, if possible, know each individual. If an Apostle with the care of all the Churches on his shoulders could say "Who is weak and I am not weak? who is made to stumble and I burn not?" cannot we say it? If Julius Cæsar and Napoleon knew the names of each old soldier in their armies, cannot we imitate them? But perhaps to this some of you will make this remark: "We do not see the result of this pastoral work; we teach and visit, and try to get at our young men, and yet, for all that, our churches are but little fuller, our communicant list not much longer." But oh, my young brethren, never say that. In the first place, God placed us here to sow, not to reap; to fight, not to win the battle. Whether you succeed or not is of no moment whatever; that is in Christ's hands, not yours. In the second place, you have forgotten your *À Kempis*: *Dat sæpe Deus in uno brevi momento, quod longo negavit tempore; dat quandoque in fine quod in principio distulit dare.* There is only one speech for every pastor in the world, the speech of Simon at Bethsaida: "Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net." To him who acts in the spirit of these words the Lord will say in the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

FRANK PARNELL.



ART. III.—FOUR GREAT PREBENDARIES OF SALISBURY.

No. 3.—ISAAC BARROW.

IT is a distinction of which any Cathedral may well be proud, to contain in the roll of Prebendaries names like those of Hooker and Pearson, Barrow and Butler. There is no fear that English theology and English literature will ever lose sight of the great works of the two first and the last in this list. In spite, however, of the admiring notice of men thoroughly masters in theology, Barrow hardly appears at the present moment to stand as high as he deserves. In his life-time he attained the highest distinction as a mathematician, and it has been well said that he is the thorough type of the scholar in the seventeenth century, who knew how to combine the old science and the new. When he entered Cambridge the great study of the place had few votaries. At his death his own pupil, Isaac Newton, was in the full exercise of his extraordinary powers.

Barrow was of respectable parentage. His father was a linen-draper in the City. He had an uncle who was Bishop of St. Asaph. He was born in London in 1630. Charterhouse School has certainly had unusual luck in the distinction attained by some of its sons. Barrow, Addison, and John Wesley were all at Charterhouse, and it is remarkable that at one time in the present century Thirlwall and Grote, Julius Hare and Dean Waddington were about the same time boys in the old Charterhouse School. At Charterhouse Isaac Barrow does not seem to have distinguished himself. There is a tradition that he was quarrelsome, and he certainly acquired greater distinction at the grammar school of Felsted. After a short stay at Peterhouse he migrated to Trinity in 1645.

It is said that his father, who had suffered in the Civil War, was assisted in the expenses of his son's college career by the excellent divine Hammond. Trinity suffered from the harsh rules of the Parliament commissioners. Cowley the poet and Thorndike the divine left the college. Barrow, though he never concealed his real views, escaped censure, and kept his position. He was scholar in 1647, fellow in 1649. A true son of the soil, his whole life from fifteen to his death at forty-seven was spent in his college. He was a vigorous and enterprising student, and it is wonderful to read the account of his labours in all directions. It was possible in his day to aim at distinction in all branches of learning, and after some years of hard work he obtained leave to travel. His first object was to join his father, who was living in exile in France. Barrow was able to render him substantial assistance. He was impressed with the hollowness of the French Court, and turned with delight to seek the society of learned men. It is curious that though he took interest in the religious movement in France, he seems to have known nothing of Pascal. Barrow went to the East, saw the wonderful scenery of the Ægean Islands, and spent a year at Constantinople, where he mastered the works of Chrysostom. When he returned to England, in 1659, he was ordained by the deprived Bishop of Exeter, who was living quietly at Sonning in Berkshire.

Barrow became Greek professor, and made his tenure of the chair a reality. He gave lectures at Gresham College in geometry, and was also first professor of mathematics. The variety and versatility of his career is certainly marvellous. Whatever he attempted he seems to have succeeded in. It is said that during his tenure of the Lucasian professorship he had approached very nearly to the verge of one of Newton's greatest discoveries. Barrow felt, however, when he became Master of Trinity, that divinity must occupy all his time. He had gradually been attracted by the original and thoughtful men who gathered round Lord Falkland

in his Oxford country-house. There are many passages in Barrow's writings which bear traces of the influence of Cudworth and Whichcote. Barrow soon became eminent, though never popular, as a preacher. We hear of him at the Abbey, and, according to Dr. Pope, the vergers, anxious to secure the gratuities of sight-seers, made the organist silence the lengthy preacher. When preaching in the city on one occasion, he had the good fortune to have Baxter in the congregation. In fear of a long sermon many left the church. It is not unusual sometimes now in cathedrals, but Baxter remained and comforted the preacher, as he came down from the pulpit, with encouraging praise. When Master of Trinity, Barrow distinguished himself in his care for the college, and the noble library is his enduring monument.

He did not hold his great preferment long. In 1677 he went to London for the election to Westminster School. He caught a cold, according to Tillotson, in preaching on April 13, Good Friday, and on May 4 he died in a prebendal house at Westminster, and was buried in the Abbey. His Good Friday sermon, on the "Passion of the Lord," was actually printing when he died. His famous treatise on the "Supremacy of the Pope" he delivered to the keeping of his friend Tillotson, who for nearly ten years laboured in the editing of Barrow's works. It is said that the father of the great divine received the large sum of £470 for the copyright of the folio edition of Barrow, a contrast to the £20 received a few years before by Milton for "Paradise Lost." The modern edition of Barrow, edited by the late Rev. A. Napier, is an admirable and careful work. The text has been most thoroughly revised, and Cambridge may well be proud of this tribute to the great Master of Trinity. Nothing can be better than the notice of Barrow's life prefixed to the ninth volume of Napier's edition, by another great Master of Trinity, Dr. Whewell, a man whom it is almost impertinent to praise, and who certainly resembled Barrow in his firm grasp of the realities of faith.

The duties of a Prebendary of Sarum were in Barrow's days certainly light. There is no record of sermons preached by him in the cathedral, but it is known that he spent the small income derived from his prebend in charity. A sinecure which he held in Wales was also devoted to charitable purposes. The anecdotes which are told of his fondness for tobacco and fruit, his presence of mind when attacked by a dog, and his clever repartee to Lord Rochester at Court, are sufficient to make us long for a Boswell, or a Joscelyn De Brakelond, who might have retailed something of the customs and sayings of the great Master of Trinity. There are manuscripts in the British Museum which may still afford some material to a future biographer. Some years

ago a full and satisfactory article on Barrow appeared in the *Quarterly Review*. Anyone, also, who labours to give a true estimate of Barrow as a theologian, will find that he has been anticipated by Dr. Wace in the "Classic Preachers of the English Church." Although Barrow stands in the front rank of theologians, he possesses a distinction and quality of his own, which makes it difficult to assign him an exact place in the catalogue of great divines.

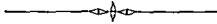
Barrow's treatise on the Pope's supremacy can never be out of fashion. It is a masterpiece. Barrow has a crushing power of argument, and his dissection of the Petrine claims is unmatched as a cogent and systematic chain of reasoning. Perhaps the most favourable specimen of his moderation and wisdom, is the sermon he preached at the consecration of his uncle, the Bishop of Sodor and Man. The advantage to be derived from an endowed clergy has never been more forcibly given. The sermons on the Creed are in many ways admirable, and should be studied by young divines as a complement to Pearson's great treatise. Many of the germs of thought scattered through Butler's works are to be found in Barrow. He is especially great on the inability of man to comprehend Christianity perfectly; and there is a sermon printed by Mr. Napier, for the first time, on the question of "Man's Limitation" as to the knowledge of God," worthy of the most careful study, and anticipating much that was well said by Dr. Whewell in the course of the controversy raised by Dean Mansel's Bampton lecture. All Barrow's utterances on the subject of Church unity are admirable. The weight of his learning is never felt as a burden by the reader, and there is a completeness and exhaustiveness, as Dr. Wace says, which leaves the impression that we are in the hands of a master.

The deep problems of theology had no particular attraction for Barrow. His whole soul was given to the enforcement of the great primal truths of the Gospel. Christianity appears to him to be the real restorative of human nature, and the beauty and reasonableness of a consistent life is his constant theme. There is a manliness and intrepidity in his faith which make even his longest sermons powerful and attractive. Some years ago a volume of his Beauties was published, and, if we mistake not, the Religious Tract Society issued a selection of his most striking passages in a series comprising some select divines. These are days of reprints, and a judicious selection of Barrow's sermons ought to be popular. He is never tedious or verbose; and although we cannot say that there are any passages equal in rhetorical power to the highest flights of Jeremy Taylor, there is a loftiness and dignity in Barrow very attractive. The *Quarterly Review* well says: "He was not a Bacon or a Pascal

but among minds of the second rank it is not easy to find one surpassing Barrow's in breadth and power." Sermons valued by men differing so widely as John Locke, Bishop Warburton, and the elder Pitt will always have an attraction for Englishmen. Barrow himself had a dread that his mathematics should interfere with his divinity. The reverse is true. "Every sermon," it has been said, "is like the demonstration of a theorem." Mathematics undoubtedly gave him his direct clearness, and the thorough temper and tone of his mind.

There are few things more interesting than the ante-chapel of Trinity College, and the stranger who stands before Noble's remarkable statue of Barrow may well feel proud of the character, the dignity, and the completeness of the great Master whom Walter Savage Landor described "as one of the brightest stars in the firmament of English worthies."

G. D. BOYLE.



ART. IV.—WHO ARE "THE BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD"?

1 Cor. xv. 29.

THIS is a passage of well-known difficulty, which has called forth a multitude of comments. One writer mentions seventeen¹ different expositions of it, some of them differing very widely from the others. Bengel's observation—that a mere catalogue of the various interpretations which have been suggested would amount to a treatise,² is hardly an exaggeration. As might be inferred, no explanation has ever received general approval. Nor is it likely that after the failure of the most learned doctors of the Church, during eighteen centuries, to elucidate its meaning, anyone will ever succeed in doing so. Nevertheless, a careful examination of the passage will enable us to clear away some idle fancies, and correct some fallacious reasonings, which have rendered a difficult passage still more difficult, and make it easier to determine, approximately, its meaning.

The general purport of the Apostle's writing cannot be mistaken. The great stumbling-block of the Greeks, as regarded their acceptance of the Gospel, was the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. When St. Paul preached at Athens—the

¹ Since writing this article I have seen a similar one on "Baptism for the Dead," by the Rev. J. Horsley, which enumerates no less than thirty-seven different interpretations. But nearly all these—excepting those noticed in this paper—are so far-fetched and obviously untenable as hardly to require notice.

² "Tanta est interpretationum varietas, ut si qui, non dicam varietates ipsas sed varietatum catalogos colligere velit, dissertationem scripturus sit," Bengel in *loco*.