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The Churchman

APRIL—JUNE, 1940

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Editorial

THERE are two difficulties inherent in the conditions of the task laid upon the Editor and his co-workers, of which it is desirable that all friends of the cause should form a clear and adequate conception. One arises from the limited space of a monthly serial containing only eighty pages : another from the constitution and circumstances of the Evangelical body.

“ The first affects the details of management. Two classes of readers have to be consulted. The one asks for readable articles on general subjects ; the other for the complete and exhaustive treatment of questions of a higher order. Papers of this latter kind cannot possibly be short. If excessive condensation be employed, all grace and vivacity of style are necessarily forfeited. If the length be excessive, they not only weary ordinary readers with their prolixity, but they occupy so large a portion of the space at command as to render variety of subjects impracticable. To adjust the mutual claims of the two modes of treatment is a task of equal difficulty and delicacy. Should the Editor sometimes be thought to miss the happy mean, he can only deprecate severity of judgment, and appeal to the forbearance of the student and the patience of the general reader.

“ Nor is the task less difficult to regulate the allowance to be made for diversities of opinion on secondary points, consistently with the firm and most unflinching maintenance of the distinctive principles of Evangelical truth. Wide variations of opinion, even on points of doctrine, have always existed, wider, indeed, than persons, conversant only with the history of their own times, are probably aware. It is inevitable that this should be the case in a School, of which a primary principle is the bounden duty of private judgment. Profound reverence for the absolute authority of the Word of God, and devout belief in Christ’s promise of the gift of the Spirit of truth, encourage an independence of judgment, which calls no man master. It would be strangely foreign to all past experience of human nature if such a

tendency did not sometimes run into excess ; but in itself it is right and good. If on one side it renders a close organization and anything approaching to party discipline impracticable, it nurtures on the other side a free vigorous life, which grows by exercise and is full of spiritual force.

“ That the difficulty of adjusting these two various claims has been felt by the Evangelical Fathers of the past generation will be seen from the following extracts. They proceed from the pen of the Reverend Henry Venn, whose sagacity of judgment was as eminent as was his jealousy for the truth of God :

No one intimately acquainted, by tradition or by the careful study of the biographies and letters of the early Evangelical ministers, will be surprised that such differences as those alluded to should arise within the Evangelical body. Differences on secondary matters always have existed, often to a far greater extent than at present ; many such differences have been precisely of the same character as some at this day—many on far more important theological questions.

He sums up the whole question as follows :

In addition to the cautions here given respecting the treatment of young and immature inquirers after the truth, it must ever be borne in mind that while the Evangelical body are united by certain great principles essential to the life of the soul, there always have been, there always must be, differences on many points, without compromising those principles, arising from the natural bias of mind, or individual relations, or, it may be, from idiosyncrasies which call for mutual forbearance, candid construction, and charity which is the bond of perfectness.

“ On these lines THE CHURCHMAN will be conducted. The Editor earnestly asks the prayers of those who are alive to the necessities of modern controversy, that a work, commenced out of a single desire to promote the glory of God, may be guided by His Spirit, and effectually prospered to the maintenance of His truth.”



With the above words did the first Editor of the CHURCHMAN embark on his perilous voyage of steering the new magazine through the difficult waters of Evangelical

opinion. We are in much the same position. We would echo his wise words and seek to follow the principles he has outlined.

He has drawn attention to "the wide variations of opinion even on points of doctrine" amongst evangelicals, and he ascribes it to the fact that the Evangelical school holds as "a primary principle the bounden duty of private judgment." This draws attention to one of the main difficulties of an unfortunate Editor, and the whole question of Evangelical Cohesion. In our contemporary, *The Church Gazette* of February, there appeared a striking article under the title of "Evangelicals at the Cross-roads" by one who styles himself "Ignoramus." That article emphasizes this very problem and the need of some real unity amongst evangelicals, even if uniformity is impossible. Ignoramus draws attention to the fact that the strongest link that used to exist, namely Unity on the Bible, is now broken by differing theories of inspiration. He goes so far as to remind us that the Third Person of the Trinity is not the Bible, but the Holy Spirit. Of course he has been attacked for this, as though he was throwing the Bible overboard, and wished to rely only on "the inner Voice." We do not believe that he intended any such thing, but would heartily agree with what our first Editor says above, that two things are necessary, "Profound reverence for the absolute authority of the Word of God, and devout belief in Christ's promise of the gift of the Spirit of Truth." (Though Ignoramus might reverse the order.)

In this same first volume of *THE CHURCHMAN* appeared an article by that great leader of Evangelicals, J. C. Ryle, later Bishop of Liverpool. The whole is so instructive that we are reprinting it in this issue. Ryle describes the rather incohesive state of Evangelicals in 1879 but he encourages all by his survey of the progress of the Evangelical School in the Church during the previous fifty years. As he closes he wonders how we shall be going on fifty years hence! Ryle's great message is, "We cannot do better than stick to our sling and stones—the Word of God and prayer." In these words are the main characteristics of Evangelicals. As prayer is reliance on the Spirit of God, so our strength is the Word and the Spirit. To omit either is equally hopeless.

“The Teaching of the Church of England”

(A survey of the paper read by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester before the Baptist Board and printed in our last issue.)

THE REV. J. RUSSELL HOWDEN, B.D.

IT is all to the good that Bishops and Baptists should foregather and that each should try to explain to the other his view of the doctrine which he teaches. The Paper read by the Bishop of Gloucester before the Baptist Board last December deserves particular examination as an attempt to present to our Baptist brethren the distinctive teaching of the Church of England. Unfortunately the very comprehensiveness of the English Church makes any such attempt exceedingly difficult. The Bishop of Gloucester both by his gifts as a Theologian and his position as a Bishop of that Church is specially qualified for such a task. Yet it will readily be agreed among the readers of THE CHURCHMAN that not even Dr. Headlam's great gifts have enabled him to give a fair or adequate account of the position and creed of the ordinary evangelical. It might well be thought presumptuous on the part of an ordinary Parish Minister to criticize the statement of so eminent a Churchman and divine as the Bishop. But one of our most cherished privileges alike as Christians and as Britishers is the right of private judgment. Dr. Headlam's paper deserves and challenges the scrutiny of us all.

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION.

The Bishop begins with the teaching of the Church of England concerning the Bible. He quite properly and naturally starts by quoting Article VI. He then states with emphasis that the Article does not teach the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture. He therefore affirms that these things are not believed by the great majority of thoughtful Christians.

Now we may at once admit that infallibility and inerrancy are not explicitly laid down in the Article. But if “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation” it is a fairly obvious corollary that these qualities are implied in

the very fact of the sufficiency of the Bible. It is unfair to emphasize the omission of direct reference to these matters in the Article, for the Article does not appear to have been written to set forth a complete doctrine of Holy Scripture, but solely with the practical design of setting forth the Protestant foundation as being the Scripture only in opposition to the Roman basis of Scriptures plus tradition. Rome says that Scripture and tradition are parallel, equal and equally venerable sources of doctrine, and one without the other is not sufficient for salvation (H. Browne, p. 124). In blunt opposition to this the Article states that Scripture is sufficient and consequently by implication that there is no need of tradition. It is surely significant that from this point, the Bishop goes on to assert that there is room for a right use of tradition. This tradition he holds implies two principles. First, that the New Testament is the creation of the Church; and second, that the Holy Spirit is continually teaching the Church, and that therefore the teaching of the Church has authority.

With regard to the first point it must surely be obvious that the Church was brought into being and built up upon the teaching of the Apostles (Eph. ii. 20). Humanly speaking it was the Apostles who gave the New Testament to the Church. The Church is a witness and keeper of Holy Writ (Article XX), but not in any sense its creator, and it is unfortunate that the Bishop of Gloucester should have advanced this theory.

With regard to the Bishop's second principle, it is enough to remind ourselves that there is no element in the teaching of the Christian Church, or any section of it, that has any validity unless such teaching can be shown to be consistent with Scripture. We may well ask the Bishop to tell us of any single truth concerning either God or man that is not to be found in the Bible. And, of more immediate practical importance, tradition gives us no additional information as to how a sinner may be saved.

We may agree more fully with the Bishop in what he affirms as to the teaching of the Church by the Holy Spirit, but we ought sharply to distinguish between the general leading of the Holy Spirit, guiding the disciples into all the truth, and the particular anointing of special men for the writing of the Inspired Book.

THE CREEDS AND ARTICLES.

The section on the Creeds seeks to exalt these statements by comparison with the Articles. The Bishop indeed goes so far as to say, "What the Christian faith is, is taught us in Creeds. No Church should add anything to that belief."

Yet, after all, the Creeds, are very like the Articles both in their historic origin and in their incompleteness. All the various doctrinal statements of the Christian Church had their origin in times of controversy. The era of the Creeds was the era of controversy as to the Person of our Lord. The era of the Articles was the era of controversy as to His work. As to the incompleteness of the Creeds it may be sufficient to point out that in neither the Apostles' nor the Nicene Creed is there any mention of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and that the Sacrament of Baptism receives only a passing reference in the one Creed and is not so much as named in the other.

In the days of the Prayer Book controversy of twelve years ago, Bishop Guy Warman stated that once the Prayer Book had been modified to suit the ideas of the revisers the next thing would be to get rid of the Articles. The Bishop of Gloucester is not quite so outspoken as that. But he does seek to show the generally subordinate position of these formularies. The Bishop omitted to tell his Baptist hearers of the emphasis which the "Declaration of Assent" gives to the articles, or that on the first Sunday of a Clergyman's introduction to the Cure of Souls in a Parish he is obliged formally to read the Articles to the people and publicly to declare his assent to them.

THE SACRAMENTS.

In the section on the Sacraments the Bishop would have done well to quote the statements of the Articles rather than the quite unauthoritative report of the Committee on Faith and Order. The Bishop mentions attacks on Sacramental teaching, but as he does not give details we do not know what he had in mind. At any rate he appears to think that the statements made by the Committee of Faith and Order are unassailable.

With regard to the number of the Sacraments the Bishop quotes the answer in the Catechism, "Two only . . . Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." It seems a pity that the

Bishop could not have left it so. But later he adds, “ While there are some in the Church of England who would dogmatically say there are only two Sacraments, most theologians would say that there are two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself, and other ordinances which may be called Sacraments, for in them Grace is given in answer to the prayers of the Church, and there is an external act or sign.” This might give the idea that grace is a something which can be, so to speak, retailed by the Church to the participant. It seems necessary therefore for the sake of accurate theology for Evangelicals to keep on affirming that grace in the New Testament sense of the word is not a something which can ever for one instant be separated from the Giver of grace.

In dealing with the question of baptism the Bishop merely states that the Church of England believes whole-heartedly in infant baptism. He did not deal with the vexed question of baptismal regeneration which is, one would imagine, a point on which the Baptist brethren would have had a good deal to say. Nor does he deal with the blunt statement of our Prayer Book, “ Seeing now this child is (or persons are) regenerate.” The difficulty in this declaration is to be met, so Evangelicals believe, by reference to the appropriate and explicit teaching contained in the Articles. We may presume that this omission is due to the Bishop’s reluctance to acknowledge the Articles as being an authoritative statement of Church of England doctrine. Another noticeable omission in this connection is that of any reference to the parallelism between Christian baptism and Jewish circumcision which is suggested by St. Paul in Col. 2.

HOLY COMMUNION.

In the brief section on Holy Communion there will be more general agreement with the Bishop’s exposition. It is to be supposed that many Evangelicals would agree with the Bishop’s statement that the Twenty-eighth Article condemns Zwinglianism. Even the Tutorial Prayer Book agrees with the dictum. But to the present writer at any rate this seems to be quite unjustified having careful regard to the language of the Communion Service itself.

THE MINISTRY.

Here the Bishop’s position is one which should commend itself to Evangelicals generally. Particularly is the Bishop’s

condemnation of any theory of tactual apostolic succession to be noted. He is emphatic that at an Ordination it is Jesus Christ Himself Who ordains, and Who bestows the gift of the Spirit. One criticism on this section may perhaps be permitted. The section would have gained enormously in value if it had been made clear that the Church of England recognizes that in the New Testament there is identity between Presbyters and Bishops. It would have been helpful if the Bishop had reminded his hearers of Lightfoot's *Essay on the Christian Ministry*.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

This section of the Bishop's address will also command general assent. Two points only seem to need comment. The first is that the term "united" is used with reference to the Church in a somewhat ambiguous sense. There is surely a distinction to be made between unity and uniformity. Evangelicals hold firmly that there is and can be but one living and true Church which comprises "the blessed company of all faithful people," including the Baptists, whom the Bishop was addressing. Probably the Bishop would agree on this point, but it would have been nice if he had told the Baptists.

The second point to be observed is the reference to the term "Protestant." The Bishop speaks of the Church as Protestant only in a negative way, "because it is obliged to protest against the improper claims of the Church of Rome." But both the etymology and history of the word give to it a definite and affirmative significance.

* * * * *

POSTSCRIPT BY THE EDITOR.

We cannot let this article appear without extending to the author our deep sympathy in his great loss through the departure of Mrs. Howden to be with Christ. As he has taught and comforted thousands in like circumstances: nay more, enabled a great company to embrace Christ, and to walk joyfully through the valley of the shadow; so let us pray that the same comfort through the same Comforter may bless him at this time.

In order to spare him further labour, we have not submitted the proofs of this article to him for revision.

Where are We ?

(WRITTEN IN 1879.)

The REV. J. C. RYLE.

(This article is reprinted from the first volume of "The Churchman". It was written just 60 years ago.

Ryle was of course later Bishop of Liverpool.)

WHAT is the state and condition of the Evangelical body in the Church of England? This is a question which demands special attention just now. Where are we? What is our present condition? What are our future prospects? Let us see if we can supply an answer to these inquiries.

Whatever the cause may be, there is no doubt that the eyes of the public have lately been concentrated on the Evangelical body in a very marked and peculiar manner. When our late gallant champion, Dr. M'Neile, died, the *Times* at once contained a leading article declaring that Evangelicalism was worn out, decaying, and passing away. We were useful, forsooth, at one time; but we are played out, and our usefulness is at an end! When the probable sale of Exeter Hall was recently reported, the *Saturday Review* coolly informed its readers that this was a symptom of our decline, ignoring the notorious fact that the tide of fashion has run westward since the hall was built, and that the famous great room in the Strand at best is a most inconvenient, awkward place of meeting, with means of entrance and egress disgracefully insufficient, and far too long tolerated by the authorities. *The Church Times* continually tells the public that there is not a single real theologian in the Evangelical School—nobody, of course, being a theologian who does not agree with the *Church Times*! The *Guardian* gives us occasionally some faint praise, but never ceases to remind us that our views are sadly defective, and that our system does not meet the times. Mr. Gladstone in the

British Quarterly; Mr. Lecky in the *Nineteenth Century*; Dr. Lang in the *Catholic Presbyterian*, all have been writing about us lately, and making us a text for articles of various kinds, tendencies, and proclivities.

I suppose we ought to feel much flattered by the amount of attention we are receiving, and the proofs supplied, that our existence is a great fact which cannot be ignored. We evidently live, and move, and have a being in the Church of England. But surely when the fierce light of public opinion is turned so fully upon us, it is common prudence to review our position, and see how we stand. If there are any real symptoms of decay in the Evangelical body, let us look them fairly in the face, and know what they are. If there are no such symptoms, let us show cause for our confidence. To bring the matter to a definite point, let us look back over the last fifty years, and compare the position of the Evangelical body at the end of that period with the position which it occupied in 1829.

It may clear the way if I remind my readers that the state of things as to religious parties within the Church of England has undergone a complete change since 1829. At that date it is not too much to say the Evangelical body formed the only distinct party of any activity within our pale, and that it had almost a monopoly of the life and zeal of the Establishment. No doubt from the days of Bishop Hooper and the Vestiarian controversy there were always two Schools, a "High" and a "Low" School of thought, among our clergy. But in 1829 the immense majority of Churchmen took very little interest in religious matters beyond a formal use of the Church's services, and perhaps the only bond of union among them, with a few bright exceptions, was a common dislike to Evangelical principles and practices, and to all who followed them. In short, outside the Evangelical body, as a general rule, sleepiness and apathy was the order of the day. I need hardly say that this Bœotian state of things has utterly and entirely passed away.

Within the last fifty years two other distinct and active Schools of thought, beside the Evangelical, have crystallized and come into existence. I mean, of course, the High Church and the Broad Church. Each of these two Schools has its own distinctive opinions, and makes its mark on the nation. Each has attracted round it

numerous adherents, each has also its own peculiar phraseology, its own literature, and its own organs in the press. Each party is rich in preachers, speakers, and writers, and zealous in pushing and maintaining its own views. Not least, each of the two can show as much laboriousness and diligence in ministerial work as we can ourselves, however much we may think it misdirected. The logical tendencies of the two parties at first sight seems to be in diametrically opposite directions. High Churchmen who push their principles to legitimate conclusions seem in danger of returning to Rome, and swallowing the creed of Pope Pius IV. Broad Churchmen who go all lengths seem likely to give up all creeds, and articles, and dogmas as fetters, and to cast them overboard like useless lumber. Within these three great Schools in 1879 the greater part of the energy and life of the Church will be found ranged.

The modifications, and subdivisions, and shades, and half-tones of these three great Schools of thought are so many and so delicate that I cannot pretend to enumerate them. Their name is legion. There are honest, old-fashioned High Churchmen of the School of Andrewes. There are equally honest Broad Churchmen of the School of Burnet. There are Ritualists, pure and simple, who make no secret of their dislike to Protestantism. There are Evangelical Ritualists, and Ritualistic Evangelicals. There are Broad Church Evangelicals, and Evangelical Broad Churchmen, and Broad Church Ritualists. There are Eclectics, who try to pick a tit-bit out of every School, and partly agree with none, and partly agree with all. There are some zealous and active Churchmen who hold such rabidly outrageous opinions that, like the fly in amber, you wonder how they are in the Church at all, and why they do not go to their own places. There are some decidedly non-Evangelical men who really work so hard, and preach so much truth, that you feel "*Cum talis sis utinam noster esses!*" There are other zealous fellows much run after and admired, on whose pulpits you might justly write "*Mangling done here!*" and whose sermons, like Solomon's ships, contain not only gold and silver and ivory, but worthless apes and gaudy peacocks. In short, there are such complications of opinion in the present day that it baffles any attempt to classify all. For all this time, we must remember, there remains outside all

Schools of English Churchmen a large residuum of men who are ever proclaiming that they belong to "no party," and hold "no extreme views," not knowing in their Arcadian simplicity that they form about the most distinct party in the land! Never, I suppose, were there so many distinct schools and religious parties as there are in England at the present day. It need not surprise us; it is the natural consequence of increasing intellectual life and thought; men are awake and will think and act. It is not an unmixed evil; we provoke each other to emulation; we keep each other in order. We almost all agree in loyal love to the Church of England; the man who tries to destroy the Church, because we are divided, will find that he might as well interfere in the quarrels of husband and wife. We may scratch each other's faces, but we will not allow any one else to do it. One curious fact, however, remains to be mentioned. Of the three great parties in the Church, the most isolated and unpopular among the clergy is our own. Whenever a question has to be settled by voting, all Schools of thought combine in voting against the Evangelical.

But after all, when we balance party against party within our pale, and measure their comparative strength, what is the precise position which the old Evangelical School occupies in 1879 as compared with fifty years ago? Are we weaker or are we stronger? Is our influence in England increasing or diminishing? Do we hold our own, or, like the later Roman Empire, are our boundaries contracting every year? Is our strength, like that of Caleb, equal to anything or are we silently decaying and melting away? Is there any vigour left in our School, or are we, like extinct volcanoes, the cold memorials of a bygone power to shake the world? These are deeply interesting questions which ought to be looked in the face. I shall not shrink from looking at them and giving an answer.

Now, it is the fashion in many quarters just now to speak of the Evangelical School of Churchmen as an effete and worn-out body. It pleases some to proclaim everywhere that our day is past and our work done. We were once useful, like the old wooden three-deckers, but are now only fit to be laid up in ordinary or broken up. We are distanced in the Ecclesiastical race and left far in the rear. We shall soon be as useless as an old almanack or a stranded wreck on a

sandbank. Such is the talk of many. Mr. Gladstone once wrote in the *Contemporary* that Evangelical Churchmen are deficient in learning, and that their system "contains in itself the elements of disintegration." The organs of extreme ritualism declare that we are destitute of theological knowledge, and are rapidly falling to pieces. I believe some weak folk are frightened by all this "tall talk," and are preparing like rats, to quit the shinking ship, or, like rabbits, to bolt into their holes. For my own part, I regard it all as "talk," which there is nothing whatever to justify. The wish is father to the words of these men. I see facts, great patent facts, which lead me to a very different conclusion. No doubt the faults and infirmities of the Evangelical body are not few, and it does not need a Solomon to discern them. No doubt we are only a minority in the Church of England. We never were anything else, and probably never shall be. If we pleased men, and all spoke well of us, we should not be servants of Christ. We are completely outnumbered by all the other Schools of thought combined together. We are comparatively a little flock among the clergy, while "the Syrians fill the country." But if any man means to tell me that on striking the balance of parties and analysing the spiritual condition of each, he sees in the Evangelical party the signs of decay, I take leave to tell him that he is utterly and entirely mistaken. I will give him some plain facts to digest, and in the face of those facts I defy him to prove the truth of his assertion.

1. Does it look like decay when the Evangelical body occupies a commanding position, both in the pulpits of London and almost every other large town in England, which it certainly did not occupy fifty years ago ?

2. Does it look like decay when all over the land we possess the confidence of the majority of lay Churchmen—that is, of the middle classes and intelligent lower orders ? That we are in a minority among the clergy I fully admit, and probably in the ratio of four to one in the south of England. An Evangelical clergyman has very little chance of being elected a proctor in Canterbury Convocation. But I firmly believe a return from the laity, if it could be obtained, would tell a very different tale. When the Public Worship Bill was before the House of Commons, which is the true representative of the middle classes, Mr. Gladstone, with all his tail of

Ritualistic and Broad Church followers, never dared to go to a division. When Diocesan Conferences containing clergy and laity from all the parishes are brought together, and the churchwardens are fairly represented, you soon find that the speeches which elicit the most hearty response are those which are most thoroughly Protestant and Evangelical. When large masses of the population are brought together for religious objects in places like Manchester or Liverpool or Birmingham, you soon see that the good old principles of the Reformation—the principles of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and not of Laud—are the only principles they cheer and applaud. And does this look like decay or a dying cause? I think not.

3. Does it look like decay when our most distinctive doctrinal views and opinions can stand the test of sifting, searching, judicial inquiry, and can come out from such ordeal not merely unscathed and unharmed, but triumphant and victorious? Men used to say fifty years ago that Evangelical clergymen were little better than "tolerated heretics." They might be good earnest ministers, but they were not sound Churchmen. And too many of our party, I fear, with more meekness than book-knowledge, and more grace in their hearts than learning in their heads, used to hold their tongues, assume an apologetic attitude, and find nothing to answer. But since the Gorham case, and the Denison case, and the Mackonochie case, and the Purchas case, and the Bennett case, have been argued, and the arguments made public, I note that men have altered their tone a good deal, and changed their minds. Moreover, such books as Dean Goode's volumes on Scripture, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and Dr. Blakeney on the Prayer-book, and Canon Mozley on the Baptismal Controversy, have made their appearance and stand to this hour unanswered and unrefuted. In short, people have found out that Evangelical Churchmen are as loyal and true Churchmen as any in the land. We hold our ground at Church Congresses, and are recognized as an honest integral part of the Church of England which has a right to be heard anywhere. A Congress in which the Evangelical body was not represented would hardly be considered a Church Congress at all. We can set our foot down firmly, and speak with our enemies in the face, and defy any one to convince a jury that our distinctive

views are not the views of the Articles and Prayer-book, if fairly, honestly, and harmoniously interpreted. If any are "tolerated heretics" now-a-days, at any rate it is not the members of the Evangelical body. And does this look like decay? I think not.

4. Does it look like decay when every kind of Evangelical machinery has been borrowed from Evangelical Churchmen by clergy of other Schools, and adapted to their own purposes? They confess by their actions that they find no tools like ours and can invent no better. To hear some people talk, one might fancy there never was any hymn-book before *Ancient and Modern*, and never any Mission Weeks till the Ritualists began them! But this notion is ridiculously and entirely incorrect. I boldly assert, and I defy contradiction, that lively hymn singing, special Missions at home, non-Liturgical Services, Lay Agency, Mission Women, Pastoral Aid Societies, Missions to the Heathen, Missions to the Colonies, Missions to Seamen, Missions to our brethren on the Continent—all, all, all were first started by the Evangelical body. Other parties have had the wisdom to borrow our engines, but have too often not had the grace to acknowledge where they got them. But does it look like decay when the rival Schools of thought are continually coming to our arsenals, like Russians to Woolwich, and getting patterns to work by in their own way? I think not.

5. Does it look like decay when the religious societies, supported by Evangelical Churchmen, are continually growing in wealth, power, attractiveness, and influence? Let any intelligent Englishman quietly study the history of such institutions as the Church Missionary Society, the Jews' Society, the Pastoral Aid Society, the Colonial and Continental Church Society, the Irish Church Missionary Society, the Bible Society, and the London City Mission. Let him mark the constant increase of income which, comparing one decade of years with another since 1829, each of these great societies can report. Let him remember that each of these societies represents and expresses the voluntary confidence of that important body, the middle classes in England, and that this confidence is evidently increasing. And then let him note the huge fact that the 4,000 or 5,000 Evangelical congregations of the Church of

England raise more money by annual voluntary contributions for their own distinctive religious societies than is raised by all the non-Evangelical congregations put together! Does this look like a decaying School, a dying body, a worn-out party, a failing cause? I think not.

6. Does it look like decay when gatherings of Evangelical Churchmen are increasing and multiplying every year in numbers, size, and importance? Fifty years ago, the well-known Islington Meeting stood almost alone, and used to assemble with ease in the Vicar's library. I need hardly say no clergyman's library in London would hold it now. Within the last thirty years the annual meetings of the West of England lay and clerical, the Midland lay and clerical, the Northern Counties lay and clerical, the Home Counties lay and clerical, the Southport lay and clerical Societies—all based on Evangelical principles—have sprung into healthy existence and been most successful. And does this look like decay? I think not.

7. Finally, does it look like a failing cause and a decaying School of Theology when the very doctrines which are the glory of the Evangelical body, and which we are constantly accused of teaching too prominently and exclusively, are resorted to at last with avidity by members of other parties. Not a year passes over my head but I hear of such cases, and I have no doubt that my experience is that of many. I hear of people who have spent their lives and strength in the ranks of Ritualism and Broad Churchism eagerly grasping simple Evangelical truths in their last hours, and taking comfort in the very thing which they used to hold cheap and even despise. I hear of them, as they go down the valley of the shadow of death, casting aside all their old favourite tenets, and talking of nothing but the blood of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the intercession of Christ, justification by faith, and all those precious corner-stones of our system which in former days they used to say we used to make too much of. On the other hand, I never heard of one single case of a truehearted Evangelical Churchman forsaking our principles in his last hour for Ritualism or Broad Churchism. Oh, no! The nearer men draw to the grave, the more they find out the value of simple Evangelical truth, without subtraction or addition, and the more determined they feel not to give it up. To use the words of William Romaine,

“The truths, which they held as doctrinal principles in life, they find comforting in death.” And does this look like decay? Does this look as if Evangelicalism were an effete and worn-out system? I think not.

In saying all this, I hope I shall not be mistaken. I abhor even the appearance of boasting. The defects and blemishes of our School of thought are so many that we have nothing to boast of, and much cause for humiliation. I could easily put my finger on not a few blots and blanks which require our serious attention. But I refrain, and leave this point for future consideration. I have said what I have to show my readers that a calm review of our position in 1879 affords strong reasons for thankfulness and encouragement. I have said it for the special benefit of my younger brethren in the ministry. I ask them not to be moved by the taunts and gibes of our rivals in other Schools, but to look at plain facts and see what a tale those facts tell. To appreciate facts and depreciate talk is one mark of a wise man. I ask them, in short, to believe that the Evangelical party, with all its faults, shows no symptoms of decay, and is as strong as any School of thought within the Church of England, if not stronger. We are not a sinking ship. We are not worn out yet. We are not dead, but alive. Yes! by the help of God we continue unto this day, and by the same help I believe we shall continue and hold our own for many a long day, in spite of ridicule, contempt, and persecution. “We shall live and not die,” as Wycliffe said to the Friars, and be a thorn in the side of the Pope and the infidel, and all their satellites and allies. We shall live and not die if we are only true to our old principles, if we will only work, and watch, and pray, and read, and understand the times.

But I repeat emphatically, we must be true to our old principles—the principles revived by Henry Venn, Romaine, Berridge, and Grimshawe, kept alive by Newton, Scott, Milner, and Cecil, handed down to us by Simeon, Daniel Wilson, Legh Richmond, and Bickersteth, kind and courteous to everybody, but stiff as steel in our adhesion to the old lines. We must steadily refuse to exalt things indifferent and secondary to the same level with the primary verities and weightier matters of the Gospel. We must beware of trimming, compromising, and conceding, under the vain hope of conciliating our rivals and catching them by guile,

or keeping our young people from adopting what we disapprove. It is wretched policy to try to out-manceuvre our opponents by borrowing their uniform and imitating their drill. It is a policy which gains over no enemy and disgusts many friends. Saul's armour will not fit David. It is useless to go down to Egypt for chariots and horses. We cannot do better than stick to our sling and stones—the Word of God and prayer. We cannot improve on our old principles ; then let us not lightly forsake them. We cannot make them popular ; they never were and never will be. Let us put up with unpopularity if conscience tells us that Christ and truth are on our side.

I am no prophet, and in a changing world I dare not conjecture where the Evangelical party will be when another fifty years have passed over the Church of England. The drying-up of the Turkish Empire, the prevalence of Popery, infidelity, lawlessness, are dark signs of the age. It may be that sifting, trying times are before us. It may be that our numbers may be thinned, and many may desert our cause under the pressure of incessant official frowns, persecution, ridicule, and unpopularity. But come what may, I trust the Evangelical cause will always have a representative body in the Church of England, and a faithful remnant who can stand fire, and stand alone. If gaps are made in our ranks, I hope the cry will always be, as it was in the squares at Waterloo, "Close up, men, close up ; let none give way." It was a grand saying of Lord Clyde on a memorable occasion, when some one talked of a battalion of the Guards retiring, "Sir, it would better that every man in Her Majesty's Guards should die where he stands, than that Her Majesty's Guards should turn their backs to the enemy." So say I this day to my Evangelical brethren, we have no cause for discouragement, despondency, or despair. Things are in a better condition in 1879 than they were in 1829. Then let us stand firm and fight on.

The Kingdom of God

THE REV. CANON A. ST. JOHN THORPE, M.A.

DR. EDERSHEIM in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, writes, "Concerning this 'Kingdom of Heaven,' which was the great message of John, and the great work of Christ Himself, we may here say that it is the whole Old Testament sublimated, and the whole New Testament realized. The idea of it did not lie hidden in the Old, to be opened up in the New Testament—as did the mystery of its realization. But this rule of heaven and Kingship of Jehovah was the very substance of the Old Testament; the object of the calling and mission of Israel; the meaning of all its ordinances, whether civil or religious; the underlying idea of all its institutions. It explained alike the history of the people, the dealings of God with them, and the prospects opened up by the prophets. Without it the Old Testament could not be understood; it gave perpetuity to its teaching, and dignity to its representations. This constituted alike the real contrast between Israel and the nations of antiquity, and Israel's real title to distinction. Thus the whole Old Testament was the preparatory presentation of the rule of heaven, and of the Kingship of its Lord."

Going back, therefore, to the writers of the Old Testament, we find the generally accepted belief that the universe is God's dominion, and that all His creatures are under His power, even natural phenomena obeying His will. As for instance in Ps. xviii., we read: "Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth" (verse 7). "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hail stones and coals of fire" (verse 13, and again in Ps. civ.). He is Lord too, of men and nations, for we read, "The Kingdom is Jehovah's, and He is ruler over the nations" (Ps. xxii. 28), and in Isa. xl. 22, "He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. . . . He bringeth princes to nothing."

But apart from this general aspect of the Kingdom of God, an outstanding revelation of the Old Testament is how God chose Abraham and his seed to be a blessing to all the families of the earth: how this family multiplied under Egyptian bondage, and how He led them into the promised land and adopted them as "a people for His own possession above all peoples upon the face of the earth" (Deut. vii. 6), giving them the promise, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Together with this revelation of God's choice of Abraham, there grew up the monotheistic belief of the Hebrew people, which survived all the competition of surrounding polytheism. At first Jehovah was mentioned as the greatest of all gods, as when we read in Exodus xv. 11, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" or again in Chapter xviii. 11, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them." But when we come to the prophets, we find Jehovah proclaimed as the only God, the Holy One of Israel Whose glory fills the earth, as in Isa. vi. 3, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." And again Daniel writes, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. iv. 32). Together with such beliefs there grew up the strong hope of a Messianic Kingdom, and so deeply had this teaching entered into the religious life of the Jewish people that in spite of the silence of the voice of the prophet for three hundred years, there was a common expectation of the Messiah when Christ was born.

From this summary of Old Testament teaching concerning the Kingdom of God, let us turn to the New Testament. To quote Dr. Edersheim again, he says: "According to the Rabbinic views of the time, the terms 'Kingdom,' 'Kingdom of heaven,' and 'Kingdom of God' (in the Targum on Micah iv. 7, 'Kingdom of Jehovah'), were equivalent. In fact, the word 'heaven' was very often used instead of 'God,' so as to avoid unduly familiarizing the ear with the Sacred Name. This, probably, accounts for the exclusive use of the expression 'Kingdom of Heaven' in the Gospel by St. Matthew." And Dr. Hastings in his Dictionary of the Bible says, "It may be noticed that the phrase 'Kingdom

of heaven' (or 'of the heavens') is peculiar to the Gospel of Matthew, in which it occurs about thirty times. In 2 Timothy iv. 18, we read of 'His heavenly kingdom,' but elsewhere the term employed is 'Kingdom of God.' There is no good reason to doubt that Jesus Himself made use of all these expressions, and we should not look to find any recondite or peculiar significance in any one of them. The phrase, 'Kingdom of God' occurs also four times in Matthew, and often in the other Gospels and in the Acts and Epistles." And finally Dr. Klausner, in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, writes: "The expression 'Kingdom of heaven' is typically Hebrew, and this Hebrew character is apparent in its Greek form which employs the plural to translate the Hebrew dual form. The Jews of the time habitually used 'heaven' to avoid having to pronounce the name of God; so 'the Kingdom of heaven' meant 'the Kingdom of God,' or 'the Kingdom of the Almighty,' i.e., the Messianic age." Thus, have we quoted the views of a Hebrew Christian, a Gentile Christian and a Jew, all men of scholarship, on the common meaning of the terms Kingdom of God and Kingdom of heaven.

But to understand the New Testament doctrine of the Kingdom of God we need to study what our Lord says on the subject. His early preaching and that of His disciples proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven as at hand; and to His hearers such an announcement would mean little more than that the reign of the Messiah, foretold by the prophets, was about to begin. But to learn of the true nature of the Kingdom we must study our Lord's teaching. And the first thing we may observe is that He never gave His approval of the popular Jewish opinion that a temporal prince would come to world dominion in the generally accepted sense of the term. On the other hand He does not seem to have stirred up opposition by opposing such a belief, but rather sought to inculcate a more spiritual conception of the Kingdom; as for instance when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36); and "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke xvii. 20). Yet, on the other hand, there is something more than the thought of spiritual power in the believer, when we say in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Dr. Griffith Thomas writes on the Lord's Prayer in his book, *The Catholic Faith*, "God's Kingdom is

His rule over hearts and lives. The prayer implies that the Kingdom, though already in existence, has not yet come in its fulness. At present it is in the hearts of His people as an invisible power (Luke xvii. 20-21); (Rom. xiv. 17); but it is yet to come as an outward and visible rule for the world. When we pray to the Father that His Kingdom may come, we are praying for the hastening of that ultimate and final day when God shall be "all in all" (I Cor. xv. 28; Matt. xiii. 33; xxvi. 29).

There are some special uses of the term Kingdom of Heaven which deserve our attention, e.g., when it is used to cover a group of people, as for instance, in the parables of the Tares and the Drag-net (Matt. xiii. 24, *et seq.*, and 47 *et seq.*), which teach that both good and evil people dwell within the kingdom, but that finally they must be separated. The conclusion is that the real children of the kingdom out of which the evil is to be taken, is the group of those whose hearts are right with God.

Another special use of the term is found in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xxi. 33, *et seq.*). At the conclusion of which our Lord says to the Jews (43), "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The thought here can only be that of the transfer of privilege and blessing which the Jews had enjoyed as God's chosen people. And again there are passages which suggest the term is synonymous with heaven, and that the Kingdom of God is the place where the righteous go after death, e.g., "It is better to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into Gehenna" (Mark ix. 47). Here the contrast suggested is that of Heaven or Hell.

However, after considering some of the special uses of the term Kingdom of God or Heaven, we return to the general view of it, as the rule of God in men's hearts and lives, one day to become the outward and visible rule for the world. In considering the Kingdom of God as such, there are several considerations to be borne in mind.

First of all our Lord's teaching concerning entrance into it. And for this our thoughts turn naturally to Christ's discourse with Nicodemus, when He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3).

The thought of a new birth would not be strange to Nicodemus, for he would be familiar with the Jewish thought of proselytes as "new-born." Had our Lord referred to the new birth only as applied to proselytes, Nicodemus would have understood what he meant, and there would not have been any perplexity on his part. The new birth as applied by the Jews to a proselyte was in consequence of his having entered the kingdom, but the way Christ put it revealed an entirely new aspect, viz., that the new birth was the condition of seeing the kingdom.

Again, our Lord spoke of a birth from above. Judaism could understand a new relationship between God and man, and man and man, but knew nothing of the new birth from above, as the initial step in that relationship. Thus our Lord taught that Grace is the lock which opens the door into the Kingdom of God. On the other hand some time afterwards, when in Capernaum, in response to His disciples' question, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" (Matt. xviii. 1), He replied, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Thus showing that man's will is the key which fits the lock of Divine Grace, and opens the door of the Kingdom of God.

Secondly, let us pass from the condition of entry into the Kingdom of God, to a consideration of the principles and characteristics of this kingdom. Two verses which seem to sum up this part of our subject are in Heb. i. 8, 9. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy Kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." Here we have three grand characteristics of the Kingdom of God: Firstly, Stability—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Secondly, Righteous government—"Righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom." Thirdly, Holy living—"Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity."

I. *Stability*. When we consider the stability of the Kingdom of God, we cannot but contrast it with the transitory Kingdoms of the earth—such as the Egyptian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman; for the territories held in the past by the rulers of these Empires are to-day being colonized by the emissaries of the Kingdom of God. In spite of the efforts of Judaism and paganism in the early Christian

centuries to prevent the setting up of the Kingdom in the hearts of men; and in spite of the determined efforts made to-day by Communism on the one hand and nationalism on the other, to do the same thing, the stability of the Kingdom is unshaken, and we still say with confidence, "Thy Kingdom, O God, is for ever and ever."

II. *Righteous Government.* Secondly, a righteous government characterizes the Kingdom of God. In the Old Testament we read such passages as "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne," and again, referring to Israel, "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day." In the New Testament the righteousness of God is manifested in the infliction of the penalty of sin to the uttermost (in the willing sacrifice of Christ, Who made Himself a curse for us) because He (God) would "in no wise clear the guilty." And so we look on to that day when guilt shall be cleared away, not only from the hearts of men, but from the nations of the world, and "A king shall reign in righteousness."

III. *Holiness.* Thirdly, holiness is a characteristic of the Kingdom of God. As Hannah sang, "There is none holy as the Lord," and what she meant was—there is none holy but the Lord. Since "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity"; those who belong to Him must be holy too. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Thus, as citizens of that Kingdom, holiness is to characterize our lives now, and perfection at the coming of the King. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

In closing let it be stated that the Kingdom of God is in the heart of the believer, and because of this the Kingdom is in the world. At the same time the greater glory of the Kingdom is in the future, when the King returns in person. And it is the privilege and duty of all on earth whose "citizenship is in heaven," to witness by life and lip to the truths of the Kingdom, until that day when, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Prevailing Confusion in the Interpretation of Prophecy

REV. W. S. HOOTON, M.A., B.D.

(A reply to Eusebes lament in the "Record" about this confusion.)

TH**ERE** is very great need for the sifting of facts from theories, in the matter of the interpretation of prophecy in general, and of Second Advent teaching in particular. Much confusion is caused by the existence of different "schools" of prophetic study; still more by the confident assertions made by some who are attached to these schools, with regard to what are, at all events as yet, matters of theoretical belief and not of ascertained fact.

It should not prove to be an impossible task to distinguish between facts which are so clearly revealed as to be unmistakable under any reasonable view of the meaning of Holy Scripture, and interpretations which are not universally accepted by those who acknowledge its full authority and are willing to receive it in its plain meaning. It is well known that men equally faithful to the Word of God, and equally convinced of the plain facts to which we refer, are completely divided as to the interpretation and exposition of many passages. This is surely sufficient to present an unanswerable case for avoiding anything like a confident dogmatism regarding details of interpretation, as well as for a charitable attitude towards any from whom we may be disposed to differ in respect of such details; and, above all, for shunning anything like the erection of a standard and test of orthodoxy regarding them.

So far as these matters refer to the Second Coming of our Lord, we do well to pay heed to a story which has been told of the late Frances Ridley Havergal. It is stated that on one occasion she remarked that when He does come, no one will be able to say to his neighbour, "There! I told you so!" His Coming will be so wonderful, and so unexpected in one way or another, that all human anticipations will be exceeded, and more or less rendered nugatory by the event.

DANGERS ARISING FROM THE CONFUSION

The dangers which have arisen from the confusion referred to are very manifest amongst us. Many have been repelled from the study of prophecy because of the controversies which have been aroused. They know that confident predictions have been falsified, and they have witnessed the un-Christian spirit of bitterness which has too often been imported into discussions, in the religious Press or elsewhere. Undeniably, the prophetic Books of the Bible are among the most difficult, and the natural indolence of human nature is easily reinforced by the plea that it is evident that nothing definite can be discovered as to their actual meaning. It is happily true that date-fixing has fallen into wide discredit among students, partly as the result of painful experience ; but the general Christian public takes more account of the discredited forecasts of the past than of the sobered attitude of the present ; and it is, unhappily, true that dogmatism about particular theories does *not* tend to diminish, though it may be hoped that there is less bitterness.

A still worse danger is that many preachers and teachers are probably hesitating to speak about matters of prophecy, whether because of their difficulty, or through fear of contradicting someone's particular views. This is most serious when it leads to silence with regard to the Lord's Return itself. And how truly unreasonable it is to plead that because confusion exists on matters of detail, it is better to avoid the subject altogether—or, if not actually to offer such a plea, at all events to allow oneself to be consciously or unconsciously moved to maintain silence by a sense of uncertainty amid confusing interpretations, or even by the fact of such existing confusion ! The Second Coming of our Lord is a matter as plainly revealed as anything else in connection with His work. There have been confusing discussions about everything connected with His Person and His work. We do not hesitate to proclaim the Incarnation because Arius or Apollinarius long ago, or Modernists now-a-days, have raised intellectually or spiritually confusing issues regarding that vital doctrine. The Atonement, again, is unhappily as much as anything the subject of confusing theories : but it is to be hoped that none of us would therefore recommend a silent attitude towards the central feature in the work of the Saviour for our redemption. Or consider the

Resurrection, and its supreme importance in our witness in succession to apostolic testimony : yet spiritually confusing indeed are the current theories and discussions on this great subject ! But when the Return of our Lord is mentioned, it is pleaded that there is so much difference of opinion in connection with it.

Well, whatever may be said about the absurdity of extreme insistence upon disputed points of prophetic study and interpretation, any such absurdity is capped by the unreasonableness of *that* plea. Unreasonable as it would be at any time to make any one exception among leading points of Biblical doctrine, equally revealed and equally controverted, surely it is most of all unreasonable at the very moment when, through the unprecedented developments in world affairs, the fact of our Lord's Return is perhaps the very doctrine which needs most to be emphasized. This is not the moment to maintain what has truly been called " a tragic silence," upon so urgent a matter. What shall we say to our Lord, if He returns and finds people unprepared for His Coming *because we have never told them about it ?*

SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION

Not much need be said, in a paper of this kind, with regard to the main lines of interpretation which are adopted by the different " schools " of thought on the subject. Not only are they doubtless generally known, but it is very far from our purpose to discuss the different theories, or to attempt to decide which, among them, embody facts. We wish, rather, to emphasize the need of bearing witness to the clearly revealed and agreed facts, in distinction from disputed theories.

It is well, however, to remind ourselves that the main difficulty, so far as Evangelicals are concerned, arises from the strong support given, on one side or the other, to the " Historical " and " Futurist " interpretations. Not many Evangelicals, probably, adhere to the " Preterist " view, which refers the Book of the Revelation mainly to the past, as given for the benefit of those who had to go through the terrible early persecutions. Doubtless it had a message for those times, and a very strengthening message ; but we shall scarcely think that this can be nearly all. In distinction

from this view, interpreters on the Evangelical side regard the Book, according to their adhesion to one or other of the two methods before mentioned, either as in the main a progressive revelation of the course of history throughout the Christian era, or as in the main referring to events which have to be fulfilled in the future.

It should be added, however, that the number of those who hold that the Book may have its fulfilment along all the above lines, in different ways, is probably not negligible ; and that a further method of exposition regards the Book as designed to enforce spiritual and practical lessons, bearing upon the trials of believers, their sources of strength and consolation under those trials, and the sure victory of the Redeemer over all the forces of devilish and worldly opposition. This is an aspect of the Book which must surely not be neglected, whatever may be our views on the different lines of interpretation in other respects. It is an aspect which is supplementary to them all, and does not necessarily contradict any one of them.

DEFINITELY REVEALED FACTS

In all this, we have been referring to one Book of the Bible alone, because it is with regard to that Book that the divisions have mainly arisen. But the Second Advent of our Lord is a subject of frequent and reiterated reference in Scripture, and especially in His own teaching and in that of His apostles.

The subject of prophecy in general is, of course, a wider one. But the main questions arise regarding events connected with the Second Advent. It is in this matter that the most urgent need arises for the separation of facts from theories.

What, then, are the unquestionable facts of Divine revelation regarding the Return of our Lord ?

It is a fact that He is coming back in personal and visible reality. This is repeatedly declared or implied. We will not attempt any full list of references ; but here are two which are emphatic—Acts i. 11 ; Rev. i. 7.

It is a fact that His Coming will be at a time of world unrest and terror (Luke xxi. 25-28).

It is a fact that the world will be as preoccupied with its own affairs, as in the days of visitations long past

(Luke xvii. 26-30). (It is very remarkable that our Lord selected for reference, not the unquestionable enormities of iniquity in the days of Noah and Lot, but the complete obsession of their contemporaries with secular pursuits not unlawful in themselves—just as the great sin of our own day is “leaving God out”).

It is a fact that His Coming will therefore be quite unexpected by the world at large : apparently it is even foreshadowed that it will be unexpected also by the Church (Matt. xxiv. 43, 44 ; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4).

It is a fact that He is coming suddenly as well as unexpectedly. It will be no silent and unrecognized approach, as in the case of the First Advent (Matt. xxiv. 27 ; 1 Cor. xv. 52).

It is a fact that the day or the hour of His appearing is known to no man (Matt. xxiv. 36 ; Mark xiii. 32).

It is a fact that He is coming to receive His own people. This is definitely revealed and must be held—apart from all controversies as to what is involved in it (John xiv. 3 ; 1 Thess. iv. 16-18 ; 2 Thess. ii. 1).

It is a fact that He is coming to demand of all an account (Matt. xxv. 14-30 ; Rom. xiv. 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 10).

It is a fact that He is coming to right all wrong (Matt. xiii. 41-43).

It is a fact that He will set up a Kingdom which will never be overthrown. This, like one of the facts mentioned above, has been interpreted along the lines of different expositions ; but the fact itself is unquestionable, and can be proclaimed without entering upon any such matters (2 Tim. iv. 1 ; Rev. xi. 15-18 ; xix. 11-16).

Here, then, are ten clear and positive facts of Divine revelation, at least, regarding unfulfilled prophecy. What is to hinder us from proclaiming them, without dogmatizing as to details which are not so clear ?

AN EXAMPLE OF DIVIDED INTERPRETATION

Now let us turn from facts to theories. Not that one has any intention of attempting any such summary in this matter as the above—imperfect as that may itself perhaps be. It will be more helpful to take one example—one that is especially prominent as a cause of difference, and, it is to be

feared, sometimes even of bitterness. And I will try to practise what I preach, and to avoid undue dogmatism.

Christ our Lord is coming, we have just seen, to receive His own people. That is certain. But some hold that He will remove them before a great final tribulation; others that the Advent is one single majestic manifestation at the close of whatever troubles may yet have to be witnessed or even suffered. In the former case, the Coming is understood as having two *stages*: He is coming, it is said, first *for* His people and then *with* them. Under the latter interpretation, the Coming is regarded as having two *aspects*—deliverance and rest for those “in Christ,” judgment for others.

There is perhaps no question regarding which the criticism is more called for, that passages are quoted as conclusive which are in reality far from being so. For example, one will not seldom hear the great passage 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, referred to as if it could only refer to the former view. But, when we go “to meet” a friend, we do not stay with him at the place where we meet him: there is a striking parallel in Acts xxviii. 15, where the same word is used, and Paul’s friends may be presumed to have returned, with him, immediately to Rome. (The very slight difference in Greek construction can scarcely be held to affect the parallel.) So, may it not just as reasonably be urged that the passage suggests the very reverse, viz. that the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord and to return with Him immediately to the earth?

The passage, of course, would harmonize with the other interpretation, if it can be convincingly supported in other ways. For this purpose, two passages are often relied upon—Luke xxi. 36 and Rev. iii. 10. Now these passages *may* mean what they are thus supposed to mean; and one may well hesitate, especially when things so amazing are already taking place, dogmatically to declare that what is known as a “pre-tribulation rapture” is not foreshadowed by them. But it is a fact that close consideration does make it appear that these two passages may also signify being “kept safely through and out of” such a period of trouble. Though the language is perhaps not exactly parallel, it is worth noting that Jer. xxx. 7 speaks of Jacob being “saved out of” trouble which has clearly to be endured.

On the other hand, it is extremely difficult to suppose

that the "rest" and the "affliction" which are linked in 2 Thess. i. 7 (R.V.) as to be experienced "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire" are to be separated by an interval; or even that the "rest" which is promised in this passage is at a different period from the "rapture" in 1 Thess. iv. And further, the view that there are two stages rather than two aspects of the Second Advent involves assigning to the word "elect," in Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, 31, a meaning different from that which it ordinarily bears in Scripture—a meaning in which it actually occurs in the same Gospel, in the record of words spoken by our Lord, apparently on the very same day (Matt. xxii. 14, Greek). Can this be thought likely? In the same great prophetic context, the remarkable Greek verb for "shall gather together" (Matt. xxiv. 31) corresponds with quite arresting exactness to the noun used for "our gathering together" in 2 Thess. ii. 1—which unquestionably refers to the "rapture."

It is not our purpose dogmatically to decide between the two views. But it is right to urge that the matter cannot be settled by quoting passages whose application is itself not certain; and that whenever personal opinions are expressed, they should be expressed as such, and not as dogmatic facts. It is far more important that we should consider whether we are ready for our Lord's Coming and earnestly desiring it, and also whether we are doing what He calls us to do in the time which remains, than whether this or that interpretation is correct, in a matter which may purposely be concealed from us. A speaker at a Prophecy Investigation Society's meeting, not long ago, strikingly quoted a little-known Scripture passage—"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing" (Prov. xxv. 2). If He should call us to pass through tribulation, we shall only be following in the steps of His saints in all ages—and elsewhere in this age. He will give grace, as He always has done, for whatever may have to be endured: may He not also shield us from its fierceness, if that be His will?

Perhaps it may just be mentioned that a suggestion has been made that there may be many *stages* in reducing a rebel world to order *after* the Advent of our Lord, viz. stages of judgment. One wonders whether this can in any way indicate a clue.

A PRACTICAL REMEDY

In the light of all that has been said, what is the true line to take in Advent preaching and teaching? How shall we best serve our Lord's purpose, in regard to a matter so especially important for a world in chaos?

Let us begin our answer to this question by asking another. *What is our object in Advent testimony?* Is it not that the message may be used on the one hand to awaken sleepers, and on the other to purify the life and hope of the believer, and to stir his evangelistic zeal? Surely this purpose is most likely to be attained by proclaiming the sure facts of Divine revelation, of which we have already spoken, and by impressing the practical and spiritual lessons which are linked with the subject. What need is there, in ordinary Advent preaching, to enter upon disputed details which may divide (if they do not even mislead) rather than edify?

It is a very striking feature of the Advent references in the New Testament that they are so characteristically linked with *practical lessons*. We find this feature markedly in our Lord's teaching on the subject, and also in that of the Apostles. How urgently He impressed upon His followers the Advent call to *watchfulness*, and to *faithfulness*, and to *loving service* (the three sections of Matthew 25 illustrate these three lessons, following the same three-fold practical application, in chapter xxiv. 42-51, of the prophetic discourse in verses 4-41). As examples from St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, consider the deeply practical messages of Rom. xiii. 11-14; 2 Pet. iii. 11-14; 1 John ii. 28; iii. 3.

The trouble is that Advent addresses are sometimes speculative rather than practical. This is the very antithesis of Bible treatment of the subject. It encourages the dangerous tendency in human nature to be deeply "interested" in the subject, without being spiritually moved, or rendered more holy and more zealous in evangelistic and other Christian activity. Just as every good thing can be misused, there is a risk lest Christian people should become so absorbed in the speculative side of the subject that they spend time upon it which should be devoted to seeking for souls. And there is even a danger lest prayer and work alike should be paralysed by the thought that the Lord Himself is coming, and will put all right. But what of those who are unprepared

to meet Him, and whom we might be used to rescue from their peril? And what of the still unevangelized areas of the world's surface?

Another legitimate and profitable topic is the indication of any special signs that the Lord's Coming may be drawing very near. Doubtless there is some danger of unwarranted speculation here also: nevertheless, it is a fact that He Himself blamed the Jews for *not* discerning the signs of His First Advent, that He also gave us certain signs of His Second Advent which must be similarly intended for our careful attention, and that those who were awake to the signs of His First Coming received a special blessing. Truly, there are sufficient indications in this distracted world, and in the almost equally distracted Church, to turn our attention very markedly to certain passages, e.g. in Luke xxi; 2 Timothy iii, and 2 Peter iii.

To avoid misunderstanding, it is well to add that there is no intention of suggesting that disputed interpretations should not be the subject of discussion (in all tolerance and charity) at proper times and in proper places. The Prophecy Investigation Society, for example, affords an admirable opportunity for these discussions, in an atmosphere of quiet charity, such as is more easily maintained at gatherings of that nature. But the pulpit or the platform is not the best place for discussions which may confuse or disturb hearers. Private study of these questions is of course also profitable. Certainly all Scripture is written for our learning; though, if even Daniel was not allowed to understand it all at once, we must not expect to do so either. Certainly it should be studied at appropriate times and in appropriate ways. And, even then, it must be remembered that adding to what is revealed is as sternly forbidden as is taking away from it (Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

THE ADVENT TESTIMONY MOVEMENT

As is well known, much attention has been given to these matters during the past twenty years or so—especially since the foundation of the Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement. Indeed, the remarkable developments in world affairs have been quite sufficient to arrest the attention of Bible students to this aspect of Bible teaching. A great

amount of literature has been pouring from the Press on the subject of prophecy, and many gatherings have been organized, in one way or another, for its consideration.

To what extent have these gatherings fulfilled the practical purpose of which we have spoken? It is a difficult question to answer. Let us take, for example, the most widely known of such organizations, the movement named above. It has done good service in many ways. It has kept the subject prominently before the Christian public, testifying faithfully to the main fact of the personal Return of our Lord in literal reality, indicating signs of the probable nearness of His Return, and sounding the call to holiness of life and to zeal in evangelizing the unready, as well as the urgent need for awakening and repentance. These, as we have seen, are the main points which need to be stressed, and there can be no doubt that the movement has been blessed to the conversion and fuller sanctification of many. Meanwhile, it has carefully avoided the snare of "date-fixing." In such a case, criticism must indeed not be too lightly offered.

Yet there is one matter with regard to which one may venture to offer a suggestion—with all due respect for the earnest devotion of the promoters, and with full recognition of what has been accomplished through the movement. The platform is at present entirely in the hands of one school of thought. Many feel that it should be open to any who are prepared to take the practical and spiritual line of Advent testimony which is mentioned above.

There are certainly grave difficulties in the way. In order to avoid misrepresentation, I have made careful enquiries, and have received information from an unquestionably authoritative quarter. Apparently the movement was founded with the full intention of thus including members of all schools of interpretation, and the result, in practice, proved to be the very confusion which has been the bane of all efforts to keep this important topic before the public. It seems to have been concluded that there was only one way of avoiding this evil. *But is there really only one way?*

Would it not be better to make it absolutely binding upon speakers to adopt only the spiritual and practical line, and to invite as speakers all who are prepared thus to testify to the personal Return, its probable nearness, and the call to repentance, holiness, and earnest Christian service? That

would be an impressive demonstration of unity amid diversity, and we might see the windows of heaven opened with even greater blessing than has yet attended the movement.

Especially might this be the result in one particular direction. It is very doubtful to what extent *the outside world* is at present being reached by these gatherings. There may certainly be a number of instances of the kind, but as a rule they seem to be attended mainly by an inner circle who are already convinced of the truth of the Lord's Return and of the importance of the subject. This is not the primary purpose of *Advent testimony*. Greater unity in actual testimony (as distinct from entering into details) might lead to greater blessing, wider awakening, a more real "preparing the way of the Lord."

There is one other drawback to the present arrangement. It means that the particular line of interpretation which is adopted by those who take part *can* be freely expounded from the platform; so that, as a matter of fact, details which are not universally accepted by many devoted Bible students are dogmatically declared, at certainly some of the gatherings. That is to say, controversy is excluded by giving free scope to one particular line of controversial opinion.

Surely it is legitimate to suggest that, however great the service already rendered by the movement, the fullest measure of divine blessing might be granted in response to a united agreement, on the part of members of all schools of interpretation, to leave disputed details for other occasions, and to reserve public addresses for pure testimony and spiritual appeal.

CONCLUSION.

The essence of the situation is this. Here is a world in chaos; the Church of Christ torn by dissensions and crippled by inconsistencies; and a message from Divinely revealed truth which is urgently needed for just such a time as this, but is, in the main, effectively reaching only the people who presumably (though by no means necessarily) need it least. At all events, vast numbers of those who unquestionably do need it most are either not getting it, or—speaking generally—are "put off" by the prevailing confusion in interpretation of non-essential details. The pity of it!

One other point will form a fitting conclusion to our thoughts, recalling us to the heart of the whole matter, as of everything else in connection with the Christian revelation. Advent study, and the study of prophecy in general, can only be profitable in so far as it draws us nearer to Christ in personal devotion. It is possible to be so absorbed in prophetic matters as to make *them* the centre, instead of *Him*. Is *He* the Centre of our Advent hope? Certainly He was, for St. Paul (Titus ii. 13, and many other passages).

Are we looking for His Coming as a deliverance from trouble, or as a preliminary to reunion with departed friends, or even as the solution of a needy world's distress—all of them, in their place, lawful objects of hope—or are we looking for *His* triumphant vindication, and for *Himself* as the Centre of our heaven? In a word, as we think of His Coming, are we thinking of *it*, or are we looking for *Him*? There is probably enough in that question to call for heart-searching in most of us.

ADDENDUM

(on the above comparison of Luke xxi. 36 with Rev. iii. 10 :)

It may legitimately be objected that the Greek in Luke xxi. 36 suggests, more definitely than in Rev. iii. 10, complete "escape" from the *experience* of tribulation. But it does not seem impossible that it *may* mean, in that case, deliverance from the experience of what others have to suffer, and thus being brought safely through a terrible period without such acute suffering.

Aspects of the Black Death

F. D. COPE.

(The corruptions in the Church of the fifteenth century have been excused on the grounds of the great mortality among the Clergy, caused by the Black Death. Mr. Cope gives a convincing answer to this over-simple explanation of scandals covering centuries.)

THERE are periods in history when the current of events seems to flow like a placid stream apparently unchanging in its course. Then an event occurs which converts the placid stream into a furious torrent tearing down all the familiar landmarks of life in its headlong course. But, in reality, the change is not so sudden as it appears. Forces have been gathering momentum, perhaps for centuries previously, to move towards a given end, and the event which is regarded as their cause is in reality their culmination. Such was the Great War of 1914-18 and so is the war in which we are now engaged. A similar cataclysm occurred in the later Middle Ages when there swept across Europe a plague as devastating as any which has occurred in the history of Western civilization. When in 1348 it reached our shores, it disorganized the entire community and threw the whole machinery of mediæval life out of gear.

The Black Death, to adopt the name given to it by later historians, did not itself initiate changes, but accelerated those already in being. During the period from 1066 to the end of the thirteenth century, society had been more or less static in its condition. The gradual fusion of the Norman and Saxon elements in the community was completed and for the first time an English nation was in existence. But during the long reign of Edward III many changes were

apparent. Feudalism and its economic counterpart, the Manorial System, were dying. In place of custom and a definite grading of individuals, there appeared the modern idea of wage labour and the cash nexus. The rise of the towns, the triumph of the craft-gilds over their older rivals, the phenomenal growth of the woollens industry, and, above all, the growth of a national spirit which found its expression in the literature of Chaucer and Gower.

Chaucer in the Canterbury Pilgrimage has left us a brightly coloured picture of fourteenth century life. Every aspect is represented in that wonderful narrative. The various grades of clerics, the knight, the miller, the prioress, with her love motto, "*Amor vincit omnia*," engraved on her brooch; these are but a few of the many characters which flit through Chaucer's immortal pages.

Life moved then with a placidity which might well be the envy of the present generation. Of that age scarcely any traces remain unless it be the church bells which, as Froude reminds us, "fall upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world."

But there is a darker and more sinister side to the glittering pageantry of life depicted in the Canterbury Tales. The pilgrims represented, for the most part, men and women of leisure, sauntering by easy stages on a pilgrimage which, as the years passed, became more a fashionable pastime than a religious duty. The lives of the bulk of the population were perpetually menaced by poverty, disease and cruelty. Starvation must have been no uncommon fate when the local harvest failed. The towns were squalid and their condition insanitary. Diseases of all kinds were rampant and the winter diet of salted and dried meat and fish must have provided a fruitful breeding ground for the many epidemics which scourged the Middle Ages, and of which the Black Death was merely the worst. Already there were patent signs of the disintegration of feudal society.

It was in the rural districts where the effects of the plague were most obvious. The mortality may have been greater in the towns, but it does not appear to have disorganized urban life as was the case in the country districts. Rural society at this time was made up of three chief classes. The villeins, who were serfs in all but name (though a villein could hold property and employ free labourers):

the labourers, who were freemen and who could sell their labour to whom they chose: the leaseholders or free tenants, who were a much smaller class.

In the fourteenth century the lord usually let out his land to a bailiff who was responsible for its management.

In two years the Plague reduced the population of England (estimated at three millions), by over one-third. This reduction had many important social results. Owing to the scarcity of labour, its price rose. Natural economic laws came into play. Labourers demanded and obtained higher wages, double and in some cases treble what they were before the plague. Thus for a time the standard of life rose and there was for the English agricultural labourer a short-lived golden age.

In modern times a rise in real wages and the standard of life means prosperity. But in the mediæval world such changes had the effect of disorganizing a social system built mainly on custom. Economic laws were but little understood. Men could not disabuse their minds of the idea that Society was composed of rigid strata in one or other of which each member of the community had his or her appointed place. Even as late as the sixteenth century, Edward VI maintained that, "Men . . . had been placed by God in ranks or orders, each with his own work to do and each with its own appropriate mode of life."

After due consideration of the matter, Edward III and his Council, a year after the outbreak of the plague, issued the Proclamation of 1349. This was confirmed by the Statute of Labourers two years later.

The preamble of this recited that :

"Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, lately died of the pestilence, many seeing the necessity of masters and great scarcity of servants will not serve unless they may receive excessive wages and some rather willing to beg in idleness than by labour to get their living."¹

This Statute aimed at keeping wages at the level maintained two years before the plague, despite the increase in the price of food, but it did not achieve its purpose. It was not only broken by the labourers, but also by many lords and their bailiffs, who naturally preferred their harvest

¹ *The Economic History of England.* E. Lipson. Vol. I. p. 44.

to be gathered in at higher wages than to pay no wages at all while it rotted in the fields.

In many ways the Black Death struck a fatal blow at the older system of agriculture. Dr. Eileen Power, who has devoted much time to the study of the subject writes :

“ The Black Death came upon a rural world which was already changing. Almost from its inception the manorial system had contained within itself the seeds of decay. . . . The agrarian world, then, was changing all through the century before the Black Death, and the increased use of and demand for money during that century promoted the change. . . . Into this changing world there crashed the Black Death. In many parts its immediate effects were cataclysmic ; there was complete temporary disorganization and a rise of prices which brought with it a rise of wages and a serious labour problem.¹

The smouldering discontent occasioned by economic and social stress, coupled with the imposition of a Poll tax, burst into flame twenty years later in the Peasants' Revolt, an extremely well-organized movement which nearly succeeded in achieving its purpose. But the Peasants' Revolt was more than a fight for better economic conditions, important though these were. The question of personal and political liberty was also involved. It was, moreover, essentially a religious movement. In the Middle Ages there was not that divorce of the religious from the secular which exists at the present day. Religion permeated almost every action of the lives of the individual and the community. The Peasants' Revolt represented a movement towards a better conception of Christianity than the Church of the Middle Ages could provide, as Professor Trevelyan writes :

“ The general tone of the rising was that of Christian democracy.”²

When we turn from the economic to other aspects of the national life we see that in these, too, the fourteenth century was a period of change. The Church especially was in an appalling state. In theory the mediæval Church had been helped by the State to free itself from some of the worst features of Papal domination. The Statute of Provisors, for example, had struck a blow at the interference of the Pope

¹ *History*. July, 1918.

² *England in the Age of Wycliffe*. Chapter VI. p. 202.

in the election of English bishops, but it was often evaded and for many years to come the bishops were bound to the Papacy.

The bishops occupied nearly all the great offices of State. The famous William of Wykeham, for example, was Lord Chancellor of England for four years. This was not a fault in itself, but it tended to weaken the influence of the Church, as the bishops were officers of State first and servants of the Church afterwards. The various grades of clerics represented a State within a State, for, through the ecclesiastical courts, they administered justice among their own members as well as in certain cases among the laity also.

“ In a population of three millions the ecclesiastics numbered between 20,000 and 30,000. Their ‘ spiritualities ’ in dues and offerings amounted to twice the King’s revenue.”¹

The scandal of “ benefit of clergy ” was a crying one in the fourteenth century, but we can trace the growth of the King’s justice in a diminution of the number of offences which came under the jurisdiction of the spiritual courts. Serious offences like high treason, murder and rape were now tried in the secular courts even if committed by clerics.

The lot of the parish priest in the fourteenth century must have been hard. The majority of the parish churches had insufficient incomes owing, in many cases, to the fact that the local monasteries took a large part of the endowments. The monasteries also disorganized diocesan affairs as they were largely independent of the bishops. Livings were farmed out in the same manner as land and the parish priest was miserably paid in comparison with the more highly placed officers of the Church. This was the reason why so many of the priests sided with the rebels in the Peasants’ Revolt. Everywhere in this period we can observe a tendency for the material progress of the Church greatly to outstrip its spiritual influence. Commutation of penance, for example, was a regular practice and as common as the commutation of the feudal dues. The Summoner spied on individuals and reported their delinquences to the spiritual courts.

The friars, a picturesque feature of fourteenth century life, were disliked on account of their habit of prying into private houses and also because of the fact that they were

¹ *A Short History of the English People*. J. R. Green. Chapter V. p. 234.

under the jurisdiction of the Papacy, thus being largely independent of the English Church. They were specially disliked by the parish priests, for they trespassed on their domain. The theory that the corruption which had crept into the Church and Christendom in general was the result of the Black Death is discounted by the fact that these abuses were of long standing, and could not have been caused by any single catastrophe, however great.

Cardinal Gasquet states that :

“ In dealing with this subject it is difficult to bring home to the mind the vast range of the great calamity, and to duly appreciate how deep was the break with their existing institutions. The plague of 1349 simply shattered them. . . .”¹

This gives the impression that all the evils which existed in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were due to the effects of this pestilence. But these evils were of earlier and slower growth. All over Christendom the same thing was taking place. Corruption was rife. In Italy, the Church reached a depth of infamy which we can be thankful had no parallel in our own country. Browning's poem in which the dying Bishop plans a tombstone on which shall be engraven figures of “ Pans and Nymphs,” is a typical example of the degeneracy of the times in Italy.

Movements for the reform of the English Church were, however, not lacking. Chief among these was that initiated by John Wycliffe, though for at least a century before his time there had been stirrings in that direction. Wycliffe's attacks were at first concentrated against the most obvious abuses of the Papacy. In the early days he had the support of John of Gaunt and the barons, who coveted the enormous wealth of the mediæval Church.

“ The problem of Church and State in John of Gaunt's mind assumed the simple form, how best to plunder the rich ecclesiastics for his own ends : Wycliffe's position in the matter was that endowments were an innovation, and a hindrance to the proper spiritual purpose of the Church. The ideas of the two converged only in their common dislike of the endowed classes whether of priest or monks.”²

Later, however, when Wycliffe proceeded to attack Transubstantiation, he lost the support of his distinguished ally.

¹ *The Great Pestilence* (A.D. 1348-9). Chapter X. p. 217.

² *Wycliffe and Movements for Reform*. By R. Lane Poole. pp. 76-77.

The day for a complete break with the Papacy on questions of doctrine had not arrived. Wycliffe's courage and endurance, however, never failed him. In 1377, he was arraigned before Convocation in London on a charge of erroneous teaching. The trial ended in a riot, and no satisfactory conclusion as to the heresy or otherwise involved in his teachings was reached. In the next year occurred the Great Schism. This made Wycliffe more strongly opposed to the Papacy and at this time he formed bands of preachers who, travelling from village to village, promoted his teaching among the inhabitants, thus forming the background of a Protestant tradition which had great influence in the sixteenth century.

It was in 1381 that Wycliffe attacked Transubstantiation, the mainspring of the Papacy and the Mediæval Church. Oxford University supported him, but the forces against him proved too strong. His supporters at Oxford were forced to recant their heresy, or else abandon their offices. The decline of Oxford as a centre of learning and culture dates from this time (1382). Thus, during his lifetime, the public influence of Wycliffe declined. He retired to his parish of Lutterworth, where he died in 1384, just after he had been summoned by Pope Urban to proceed to Rome to answer a charge of heresy.

After his death his enemies were more active and in 1398 his remains were removed from their grave, burned and the ashes thrown into a nearby river. It is perhaps a symbol of the influence which Wycliffe's teachings were to have on the world, that from this river his ashes were to flow into the boundless ocean. Thus if, in his own country, the ideals and teachings of Wycliffe were to receive a setback, their dissemination abroad was destined to achieve great results.

Jerome of Prague, who had studied at Oxford, introduced Wycliffe's writings into Bohemia where they exercised a great influence on the Czech nation. Thus the nation which in modern times has produced such men as President Masaryk and Dr. Benes, was among the first European countries to profit by the teachings of a characteristically English reformer.

A study of the history of the fourteenth century gives one a sense of frustration. Great schemes of reform in Church and State seem to be on the verge of fruition, only to come to nothing. We see Peter de la Mare leading the

Commons against the tyranny of John of Gaunt ; Wycliffe protesting against the increasing errors and materialism of the Church ; Langland against the social injustices which characterized the times ; and the Peasants' Revolt, so full of promise of economic and political freedom, only to be broken by a reactionary king and barons.

As it was, our country had to wait until the sixteenth century for religious freedom : until the seventeenth for the triumph of parliamentary institutions ; whilst even in our own age, the social problem is still only approaching solution. In the fourteenth century the forces of reaction were too strong for the reformer. Lack of the printed Word and the absence of reliable information and statistics made nation-wide reform impossible. But the seed of progress was already sown and the succeeding centuries were to see it come to fruit. The degeneracy of the Papacy had rendered the idea of the *Repubblica Christiana* impracticable and the rise of the national State was assured.

Professor H. J. Laski writes :

" For the existence of separate and right-claiming nationalities had become (or was becoming) an inescapable fact. Præmunire and Provisors in England, the Pragmatic Sanction in France, were the index to a modernity which had escaped the swaddling clothes of mediæval thought. . . . Once there had been the captivity of Avignon, the Great Schism, and the Councils, pluralism in government was only a matter of time. The Reformation only set the seal upon ideas that an earlier generation had made inevitable."¹

On the Black Death has been laid the blame for many of the evils with which fourteenth century England was assailed ; among them the break-up of the manorial system and the corruption of the mediæval Church. It is a convenient though somewhat faulty method of reasoning, to ascribe to a single event the blame due to slow changes, imperceptible perhaps to the generation in which they occur, but patent to a later age. As it is, the Black Death has cast a glamour upon the minds of some historians under which its effects are unduly exaggerated. Others, after a closer study of the available evidence have assigned that calamity to its rightful place and viewing it in due perspective, decline to make it responsible for evils which originated elsewhere.

¹ *Political Theory in the Later Middle Ages. Cambridge Mediæval History. Vol. VIII. Chapter XX. p. 620.*

Czechoslovakia, Yesterday and To-day

“ JINDRA,” a Czech.

(As Huss was a disciple of Wycliffe this appropriately follows Mr. Cope's article).

IN September 1938, when all Czech citizens were under arms, the fateful decision of Munich took place. This gave Czechoslovakia two alternatives, either to fight by herself against overpowering odds, or to submit to Hitler. In the course of history the Czechs have often fought valiantly for liberty, but this time the whole future existence of the people was at stake.

I can still hear to-day the fateful words of the Czech radio announcer, when his breaking voice pronounced the last decision of Dr. Beneš, the President. It was indeed a difficult and historic decision, but Dr. Beneš realized that battle would be hopeless, whereas the preservation of the people was of supreme importance for they would eventually regain their independence.

Before we enter further upon the consequences of the overthrow, I would like to look back upon the varied history of Bohemia and Moravia and their religious development. This testifies amply to a nation well deserving freedom and independence.

By the 9th and 10th century, during the times of Good King Wenceslas (a figure well known in England!) the Czech people were converted to Christianity. The Faith gained ground rapidly, and the Czech Church made every effort to spread the gospel amongst the people and to further the cause by means of culture and the blameless life of the clergy.

When in the 14th and 15th century disorder, culminating in the papal schism, occurred in the Catholic Church, the

Czech Catholics were the first to try to reconstitute the Church.

Wycliffe in England worked first for the reformation of the Church. His influence and teachings gave Jan Huss, who was Wycliffe's pupil at Oxford, the basis for his own doctrines. They were introduced into the Prague University and from there were spread amongst the Czechs. Although Wycliffe's doctrines were accepted in many countries, nowhere did they find more followers than in Bohemia, where the ground was already prepared for a reformatory movement.

The spiritual leader of these reforms was Huss. He became not only for the Czechs, but also for the rest of the world the symbol of the unassailable warrior for Divine truth. His motto, inscribed on the walls of many Czech towns became the watchword of the nation: "Pravda vítězí" "Truth prevails." Thomas Masaryk also took it for his slogan in recent years and it has since been quoted by English politicians. After the martyrdom of Huss the ensuing Hussite wars were the most famous historical events in Czech history. They gave a vivid example of the ability of a people to prevail against force, when it is aflame with the Christian creed.

This convinced pure Christianity, the legacy of the Hussite times, prepared the ground for further development. Christian teaching was already so deeply rooted on this relatively small territory in the 16th century that various sects existed peacefully side by side. Apart from the Catholics there were the Lutherans, the previous Hussite Church, and the new Protestant Church. This last dated from the famous times of the Hussites, and was called the "Bohemian Brotherhood." They started in a small way in the 15th century, but soon became the recognized proclaimers of the Christian faith; so that by the 16th century they attained to the spiritual leadership of the Czech people. Later some of their most outstanding members also filled the leading political positions in the Czech state.

Religious freedom was dealt a heavy blow after the defeat on the White Mountain in 1620. It meant the end of this freedom, the centuries of struggle seemed in vain. All progress stopped abruptly and the nation, more than 80 per cent. Protestant, was subjected to terrible persecutions. In consequence the first big emigration occurred, and thousands

of the Bohemian Brethren sought refuge and new freedom in Prussia, Poland and the Netherlands. Amongst these emigrants was the famous Jan Amos Komensky. He was a truly great thinker, philosopher and teacher, one of the outstanding personalities of the 17th century. As the last bishop of the Bohemian Brotherhood, he wandered for more than 40 years in strange lands, hoping to liberate his own country from the domination of Austria. But whilst seeking allies for this cause, he turned all his thoughts to the future education of his Bohemian countrymen. He hoped to employ all the systems which he had successfully used in strange lands for the betterment of his native country. But death overtook him abroad.

We have chosen the following quotation, picked at random, as an example of his high ideals: "Not only the children of the rich and noble, but all without difference, highborn or lowborn, rich and poor alike should be sent to school in all cities, towns, and villages. And this because, those who were born human, were so born mainly for the purpose of becoming intelligent creatures, showing their resemblance to the Creator."

Apart from Komenský little is known of the religious activities abroad of individual priests. Only the work of the Moravian Brethren who represented a part of the Bohemian Brethren and had settled in Prussia achieved noticeable success in a revival of the Brotherhood Movement. They founded a religious community in Hernhut and adopted the name of Moravian Brethren, as a large number of them came from Moravia. Since that time they have done wonderful missionary work throughout the world.

Until towards the end of the 18th century, in theory only Catholicism existed in Bohemia: in fact, however, there were continual attempts to revive Protestantism but they were always rigorously suppressed.

Gradually the attitude of the Catholic Church of Bohemia altered, contrary to that of the other Church bodies. It became involved in the Nationalist movement and began to play an important part in the unification of the Czech nation. And as at the time of Josef II other Church bodies were tolerated, so the repressed sympathies of the people revived and a large part of the Czech nation returned to Protestantism. In spite of great difficulties with the Hapsburgs and

the existing laws, the Protestants fought their way into the leading ranks of Czech politicians.

The political and religious development of the country reached its high water mark after the World War. The Czech nation, united with the Slovaks, became a separate country. As a result of the hard struggles of Professor Thomas Masaryk and his righthand man Dr. Eduard Beneš an independent democratic state, Czechoslovakia, was evolved. All forms of religious development flourished anew. Co-operation between the State and the Church was re-affirmed. The State helped the Church not a little in its work of reconstruction, and the old ideals which had been the foundation of the former Czech freedom were aroused.

The teaching which Jan Huss centuries before had brought to Bohemia from England found another prophet in Komensky: and Komensky's ideals were brought to fruition through Masaryk who was also a protestant. These three names—Huss, Komensky and Masaryk—epitomize the whole of Czech culture.

The importance of Komensky to Masaryk is seen in all his writings. He regards Komensky as an apostle to the nation: "To us Komensky must be more than he has hitherto been. We can recognize in him not only the philosophy of the Bohemian Brotherhood, but the philosophy of the Bohemian people, and of Bohemian history as well. In him we see not only an upright Bohemian, than whom there can be no better but also a Bohemian working for the whole of mankind. He writes in Bohemian, he writes in Latin—for the smaller circle of his people, for the large circle of the universe. . . . In Komensky we have the best example of real, sublime, ardent love for one's country based on a general view of life, well considered and confirmed. The love for his own country and his own nation, however, does not prevent him working to unite all men as brothers."

Masaryk's basic idea for the formation of the Czech State was the thought that although the Czechs and Slovaks form only a small nation, yet this fact must be balanced by religious and moral depths, by spiritual development and a high standard of culture. These particular qualities represent the significance of the Czech people. In this he reverted to the old principles of the Czech Reformation which he

perfected with his own views of humanity and pacifism. All Church bodies had complete religious freedom, both the Catholic Church which included over 70 per cent. of the population as also the smallest sects numbering only a few hundred followers. In addition there was no antisemitism ; and the Jews enjoyed complete religious freedom. So passed the ideal years of Czechoslovak independence. It was however impossible to celebrate the 20th anniversary with unrestrained rejoicing and enthusiasm for already the dark clouds of Nazi-ism were lowering over the peaceful woods and fields of Czechoslovakia. And then took place those events which I have already sketched at the beginning.

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I thought it necessary to give this short historical review of a people who for centuries have struggled for the freedom of their country and their religion. Only after this introduction can one understand the terrible catastrophe which has burst upon the Czech Nation and realize what a cultural inheritance has been destroyed and how many years the clock has been put back. The Czechs are a sorely tried people. But they have never lost their capacity for resistance, and we Czechs are convinced that the present situation is only a passing one.

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With the end of the political independence of Czechoslovakia religious toleration ceased automatically. The Nazis were very conscious of the fact that the Czech clergy as well as the Czech teachers represented a strong opposition to their rule.

For this reason immediately after their occupation the persecution of the Church began. Hitler came to Czechoslovakia already well schooled in brutality, by many years' experience. It was immediately enacted that the Church should become subject to the Nazi authorities. Outspoken preaching was forbidden : and all clergy brought under the strict control of the Gestapo, the German Secret Police. This applied equally to the Catholic and the Protestant Churches.

In spite of this pressure the Church began to strengthen her activities. The Clergy preached emphatically in her

sermons of national tradition, culture and the Christian life in all churches and open religious meetings. They encouraged the people to stand firm and not to give up hope. But this courage of the spiritual leaders was and still is being rigorously punished. One of the most terrible incidents which overtook the Czechoslovak Church was the manner in which Dean Soucek was arrested in Kladno. The Gestapo suspected him of having influenced the inhabitants of that town against the Nazis. Troops occupied the church and arrested the Dean who had just finished a service. In the most cruel manner he was dragged through the town, past weeping women and children, to the headquarters of the Gestapo. From there he was taken to Germany and put into the concentration camp at Dachau ; and there he remains.

This is only one of many incidents, but my pen is loth to describe what revolts Christian feelings and what one would prefer not to believe.

The Czechoslovak Church had to suffer most, because it was the Church which had been constituted at the time of the founding of Czechoslovakia. It consisted of the Lutheran church, the Bohemian Brotherhood, the Calvinists and several smaller sects. The very name of this democratic, religious organization was a thorn in the side of the Nazis. They have already asked it to change its name. An alteration or dissolution of her constitution has also been demanded. This would rob a million people of their spiritual home, and make them an easy prey to the godless hands of the Nazis.

The Church has a hard struggle to face. The vital question arises, whether it is possible to be a true Christian under Nazi rule, and to fulfill God's will without becoming a victim of their drastic treatment. This applies particularly to the Protestant and Free churches. Their highest duty is the preaching of God's Word and the interpretation of living Christianity. But how can Christians fulfill these duties when they are forbidden to apply the teaching of the Scriptures to every-day life : when they are compelled to preach in the presence of a Gestapo agent, who weighs up every word and has the priest arrested or not according to his mood. Thus a few weeks ago two young priests in southern Bohemia who had studied in England were arrested in their pulpits. It is a daily occurrence for priests to appear before the Gestapo, after holding a service.

But news which has reached us from neutral sources tells how the Czechs are more than ever seeking comfort in prayer, and spiritual support through faith. The organ of one former Czechoslovak Party, even though controlled as all other papers by the German censorship, says: "The Nation is returning more than ever before to religion and to the Church. After deep disappointments in political life the people take refuge in God. The working class which showed after the World War a certain indifference to religion, feels to-day the value of faith for each individual, and for the strengthening of the national spirit." The organ of another Party discusses the general unity of the Czechoslovak people, emphasizing that a country once famous for its religious controversies is to-day free from any religious division. "The solidarity of all faith, without exception, puts the interests of the Nation and its future above all. They forget all that separated them before."

When after the bloody revolts in November the Nazis ordered the closing of all Czech Universities the theological faculties were also involved, and therefore the Hussite-Protestant faculty. Where previously the knowledge of God was taught now the Gestapo has set up its offices, according to the latest reports.

All this was a further cruel blow for the Church, because she is now faced with the impossibility of educating the rising generation of ministers. This lack will soon make itself felt because of the brutal methods with which the Nazis treat the clergy.

The persecution of the Church by the Nazis does not only concern their spiritual liberty, but also their material possessions. Quite a considerable number of estates belonging to the Church have been confiscated, divided into lots and given to the German farmers from South Tyrol and Poland. So far particularly valuable treasures known to belong to the church have not yet been confiscated, but the Nazis have made a record of these.

It is impossible to-day to publish a list of those Protestant members of the Church who have been arrested or who languish in the concentration camps in Germany. In their own interest this must be kept silent. Some priests whose position was particularly dangerous have left the country: but most of them are persevering, full of self-denial for the

sake of Czechoslovakia. They are spiritual refuges for the Czech people in these trying days, and help them to remain firm in hope.

Before the worst persecution started some of the prominent personalities of Protestantism succeeded in fleeing across the frontier. In danger of death and through terrible privations Senator Vojta Beneš, the brother of Dr. Eduard Beneš managed to escape to Poland. From there via France and England he reached America. Switzerland gave shelter to Dr. J. L. Hromadka, professor of Divinity at the Hussite Charles University, and now he also has arrived in America with Dr. J. B. Kozak and Dr. O. Odložilik. All these eminent Protestants have given their services to Dr. Beneš. As in the last war when Thomas Masaryk was the leading spirit of the movement for liberation of the Czech Nation, so we find to-day prominent Czech Protestants in the front line of the struggle against Nazi-ism. They are better able than anybody to speak, for they well know what deep ethical and spiritual changes the Czech people have had to endure.

All of us to-day stand under arms against Nazi-ism. Czechoslovakia was not the last victim. Poland too had to suffer brutality, cruelty, everything of which only the Germans are capable, trampling humanity and Christian love in the mire.

This reminds me of a quotation from Komensky in his *Testament of a Dying Mother of the Brotherhood*, whose prophetic sense has already once come true: "I also trust in God, that after the tempest of wrath, which was brought upon our heads by our sins, the rule of thy affairs will return to thee, O thou people of Bohemia. . . . Live, thou nation consecrated to God; die not. May thy men be without numbers. Bless, O Lord, its gallantry and upon the toil of its hands look with favour. Break the loins of its foes and those who hate it, so they rise no more. . . ."

May the Lord above make these words come true once again. . . .

Infant Baptism *in the Church of Scotland*

ARTHUR N. PRIOR, M.A.

IN an address to the General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System, Lord Tweedsmuir has suggested that Presbyterianism may "play in the future the part of what the Germans call a 'bridge Kirk' between Churches rich in historic accretions and Churches which lack them, since it has been resolute both to discard and to retain."¹ One may be reasonably confident that he would not disagree if one added that no branch of Presbyterianism seems more likely to fulfil this function than that in which he himself has been brought up, the Church of Scotland.

I wish here to illustrate his suggestion by outlining the historic teachings of that Church on the thorny subject of infant baptism, since here especially it has been resolute both to "discard" the "Catholic" notion that the salvation of infants directly depends on their having been baptized, and to "retain" the practice none the less with singular tenacity. But I shall not apologize for devoting more space to certain preliminaries than to the discussion of baptism itself, since here the shortest way home is quite certainly the longest way round, and one cannot help feeling that the countless special defences of infant baptism which have been made in the Church of Scotland have frequently been very "lame" just because they have passed over these preliminaries so lightly.

¹ Lord Tweedsmuir, *Presbyterianism Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow*, p. 16.

I

To understand its characteristic attitude to infant baptism, it must first be pointed out that the Church of Scotland is and always has been (apart from the few centuries under the domination of the Papacy) a *national* Church. The first Scottish Reformers, and the Covenanters of the period which succeeded theirs, were all very emphatic on this point. "A National Church," said James Durham, "is not only not inconsistent with the flourishing estate of the Gospel in the world, but is concomitant with it; yea, is a manifest proof of it, and a great ground of rejoicing to God's people and of praise to Him."¹ It is because it has thus emphasized its national character that its teaching on infant baptism is perhaps easier to understand than what is in essence the same teaching when put forward by many other Presbyterian Churches.

This does not mean, however, that the fathers of the Scottish Church attempted to combine the Christian faith with a fanatical nationalism or racialism. Pseudo-scientific cut-and-dried theories about precisely what constituted a nation were unknown to them. They simply took the Scottish nation for granted as a group with a history of its own and a government of its own which therefore formed a convenient unit for the Church's work, and the largest unit practicable at the time. "Kingdoms becoming His, is to be understood as the like phrases used of Cities and Families, their becoming His;"² but if the Church's unity can be made visible in the field of a single family or city, it is better still for it to be shown throughout a nation. They certainly did not deny, but emphatically affirmed, that it would be better still again if expression could be found, through a properly constituted "General Council," for the unity of the Church throughout an even larger field.

It was not with an "inter-national" Church that their "National Church" was to be contrasted (though it was certainly to be contrasted with an "imperial" one), but with a *sect*, in the technical sense in which this word is used by Troeltsch, and more recently by Dr. Manfred Björkquist

¹ J. Durham, *A Commentarie upon the Book of the Revelation* (Amsterdam 1660). p. 511.

² *Ibid.* p. 512.

of Sweden in his contributions to oecumenical discussions. In the "great national Churches," Dr. Björkquist pointed out at the World Conference of Christian Youth at Amsterdam, "the Church" is not conceived as a certain number of people clearly separated from others (e.g. "all those individuals who have submitted to the See of Rome," or "all those who have been converted,") but as a "field" in which certain things occur. "Where the word and the sacraments are rightly administered, there is the Church, for the word cannot return empty." C. H. Smyth¹ has drawn attention to the way in which this conception is reflected in the actual definitions of the Church given in various Confessions of Faith, particularly in that of Augsburg, and in the English Thirty-Nine Articles, which state that "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, *in the which* the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly administered."

That the Church of Scotland began with this conception is plain from its first Confession of Faith of 1560. "The Notis of the Trew Kirk of God we beleve, confesse and avow to be, first, The trew preaching of the word of God. . . . Secoundlie, the rycht administratioun of the sacramentis of Christ Jesus. . . . Last, Ecclesiasticall discipline uprychtlie ministred. . . . Whairsoever then these former nottis ar sene, and of any tyme continew . . . thair, but (without) all dowbt, is the trew Kirk of Christ."² Not "The Church consists of those who . . ." but "Where these things take place, there is the Church." If they take place in Scotland, then unquestionably "the Church" has been set up in Scotland, and there is a "Church of Scotland." And this, is should be noted, is true independently of the Church's "establishment."

When this Confession was replaced in the succeeding century by that of Westminster, this mode of defining the Church was unhappily dropped. "The visible church," says this Confession, "consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion." Still more unhappily, when the modern Church of Scotland produced a "Short Statement" of its faith, this definition was taken over essentially unaltered. In practice, however, the idea behind the

¹ In *The Parish Communion*, p. 294

² *The Works of John Knox*, Laing's Edition, vol. II., p. 110.

definition in the 1560 Confession has never been dropped. Even in the Westminster documents it makes itself evident through an addition which fits very badly into the context of the part of the definition so far quoted, but which the Church of Scotland has insisted upon retaining, for reasons of which perhaps it has not always been conscious. The full Westminster definition runs, "The visible church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, *together with their children.*" This addition is also in the Short Statement. It is difficult to see what babes in arms can have to do with "professing the true religion." But they may very well be concerned with a Church which always exists "where" the Word is preached, the Sacraments are dispensed, and discipline is administered.

Further evidence that the "feeling" for this form of expression is by no means dead either in the Church of Scotland or in her daughter Churches is afforded by a "Proposed Method of Instructing Young Communicants," based on the recent Short Statement, and put forward by the Rev. J. T. V. Steele, of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. In this "catechism" only the "invisible" Church is defined in terms of persons, and the visible Church is defined in answer to the question, "Where is this true Church visible?" the answer being, "The one true Church is visible wherever the gospel is preached truly and sincerely, the sacraments administered according to God's holy ordinance, and wherever a government which is founded on and not contradictory to the Word of God is maintained in decency and in order."¹ During the Westminster period also, the divines of Scotland in practice ignored the Westminster definition, and dealt with the visible Church in terms of God's entering into a "covenant" with nations, cities and families by setting up His ordinances in their midst.

How far this conception is removed from a superstitious exaltation of the nation, may be gauged from the fact that Karl Barth is a very decided "National Churchman" in this sense. In the heyday of the Reformation, he says in his "Dogmatik"² the means by which the Scriptures really

¹ J. T. V. Steele, in *The Outlook* (New Zealand), Feb. 18th, 1936.

² K. Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, pp. 139-40.

became the Word of God to men was the public proclamation of the Church—preaching and the Sacraments. For them, as F. D. Maurice also pointed out, the Bible was first and foremost a “preacher’s book.”¹ The task of theology in this context was to see that everything was in order with the preaching and the Sacraments and discipline, the public “ordinances,” which God had set up in the world. But at a later date the continued power and life of the Bible was conceived in terms of “the knowledge, faith, sanctification and holiness of the individual,” and theology became primarily an attempt to correct, criticize and help the individual’s spiritual life. Barth considers it one of the first needs of theology to-day to revert to its earlier function. “The direct object of a present-day dogmatics must be just Church proclamation.” This line of thought is surely little else but a paraphrase of Björkquist’s “Where the word and the sacraments are rightly administered, there is the Church, for the word cannot return empty.”

It is not unimportant to notice that the definition of the Church which this “national” ideal suggests is of a type which only recently received systematic treatment at the hands of professional logicians. It is characteristic of ordinary definitions that they can be substituted for the term defined in any given sentence, without the rest of the sentence being altered. If “Universal,” for example, is the definition of “Catholic,” then “The Universal Church teaches the validity of infant baptism” means exactly the same as “The Catholic Church teaches the validity of infant baptism.” But there are many words for which definitions of this kind simply cannot be found. Sometimes this is because they have no meaning at all—we really do talk much more nonsense than we realize. Sometimes it is because they are among those simple, ultimate words in terms of which everything else must be defined—for the process of definition must certainly stop somewhere. What such logicians as Bertrand Russell and John Wisdom have now taught us to emphasize, however, is that a word, without being senseless, may be neither definable in the ordinary way nor yet undefinable like a simple “ultimate.” It may be capable of what is variously called a “definition in use,” a “description” or a “reduction.” This is a quite precise process in which one sentence

¹ F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ* (1842), p. 84.

about a term of this kind is said to be exactly equivalent to a *different* sentence about other terms ; so that while the whole sentences have the same meaning, no one term in the second can be equated with any one term in the first. Thus a statement about "England," such as "England is at war with Germany," can be exactly equated with a number of different statements about the various doings of individual Englishmen in the war, though "England" can neither be equated with a number of individual Englishmen nor regarded as a kind of enlarged individual itself. We can say "*When* Tom, Dick, Harry and Mr. Chamberlain are doing this and that, *then* England is at war with Germany," and this is a "definition in use," and may be a thoroughly precise and accurate one on which strict and definite arguments can be based and other arguments criticized.

It is plain that not only "the Church" but also "the State" needs to be defined in this way—we might do it by saying, "Where Law is administered in a regular way, there is the State." The same is true, indeed, of most of the key conceptions of the social sciences, including theology at the points at which it comes under this head, e.g. where it discusses the relations between Church and State, between different Churches, and between Churches, States and individuals.¹ Much meaningless discussion and inconclusive argument on these subjects might have been avoided had we not attempted to conceive Church and State either as sums of individuals or as "ultimate" individuals themselves. We might, for instance, have avoided deducing from the fact that Churches cannot persist without Confessions of faith, the falsehood that individuals cannot find salvation without an explicit or "implicit" assent to such Confessions. We might also have avoided inferring a similar necessity of baptism for each individual's salvation from its necessity for the continued existence of the Church. (The salvation of individuals, indeed, is in the long run bound up with the continued existence of the Church, but there is not a direct connection between the baptism of a particular individual, or his assent to a Confession of Faith, and the salvation of *that* individual.)

¹ I have discussed some of the more obvious implications of this fact in the general social sciences in an article on *The Nation and the Individual*, in the *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy* for December, 1937.

II

An immediate consequence of this "national" idea of the Church—"territorial" is perhaps a better term—is that when a person seeks to be assured that he is "in the Church" he does not in the first place examine himself to see if he has some peculiar marks separating him as a Christian from non-Christians, but turns away from himself to the "means of grace," and listens to God's Word telling him that he is His. Here alone must he look for "assurance," whether he be in a country which has been counted a part of "Christendom" for centuries, or in one where a missionary has for the first time preached the Gospel in his own tongue.

This is, indeed, the practical meaning of the "freeness" of the Gospel. As soon as God's preached Word places us in the position of raising the question as to whether we are Christians or not, we have the right to answer Yes to it—God *calls* us to answer Yes to it, and it is His call and nothing in ourselves that makes us His children. As for those who have never yet heard of Christianity, those who have never yet had occasion to ask the question, it is not our business to speculate about the answer. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." It must be confessed that among the earlier Scottish writers this "reserve" was taken in the more grim sense—they emphasized the fact that we have no warrant for believing that such people are numbered among the redeemed, rather than the fact that we have no warrant for believing that they are not. But the essential thing was the reserve, the refusal to speculate about what cannot concern us as Christians. Dr. John Macleod of Govan was not far from the position of earlier writers when he said, "It is at least presumptuous for us to bind ourselves to conclusions relating to the eternal destiny of such as have never heard the Gospel, nor been incorporated into the Church of God. The Holy Scriptures are written to guide us in matters that pertain to the present stage of the Divine dealing—which is that of gathering and perfecting the Church. When that stage is past we shall doubtless know more. Meanwhile, however, we must not allow our apprehensions of what appears to be clearly revealed regarding God's method in bestowing grace upon His people, to be hindered through

speculations as to how He may deal with souls whom these methods do not embrace."¹

On the positive side, no piece of advice is more common in the volumes of spiritual guidance written by the Scottish Reformers and Covenanters, than this advice to seek no "assurance" in ourselves, but to rest on the faithfulness of God in His objective promises. John Knox, in an "Admonition to the Professors of God's Truth in England" written in 1554, compares the waves of persecution which seemed then to be overwhelming these "professors of God's truth" with the waves which began to overwhelm Peter when he attempted to walk across the water to Christ, and says, "So long as Peter had his eyes fixed uppōn Christe, and attended upon no other thyng but the voyce of Christe, he was bolde and without feare. But when he sawe a myghty wynde . . . then began he to feare, and to reason, no doute, in his herte, that better it had bene for him to have remained in his bote, for so myght Chryst have come to hym; but now the storme and rage of wynde was so vehement, that he coulde never come to Christe, and so he greatly feared. Whereof it is plain, that the only cause of oure feare that have left our bote, and through the stormes of the sea wolde go to Christ with Peter, is, that we more consyder the daungers and lettes that are in our journey, then we do the almyghtie power of Him that hath commaunded us to come to him self."²

In the Covenanting period Samuel Rutherford similarly complained that "We trust possession on our part, more than the law, and the fidelity of the promise on God's part. Feeling is of more credit to us than faith; sense is surer to us than the word of faith . . . God's law of faith, Christ's concluded atonement, is better and surer than your feeling. All that sense and comfort sayeth, is not canonic Scripture; it is adultery to seek a sign, because we cannot rest on our husband's word."³ The strongest testimony to the prevalence of this way of thinking among the early Scots is perhaps to be found in their fondness for the tenth chapter of St. John, in which Christ's "sheep" are described, not as those marked

¹ J. Macleod, on *The Holy Sacrament of Baptism*, in *The Divine Life in the Church*, vol. I., p. 182.

² Knox, *Works*, vol. III, p. 313.

³ S. Rutherford, *The Trial and Triumph of Faith*, pp. 33-4.

by some brand on themselves which they or others can perceive, but as those who *know His voice*.

Nor did any of these men believe that the Shepherd's "voice" was to be heard anywhere else but at the meeting-place He had Himself appointed—in the Scriptures, and in the proclamation of the Church. Unquestionably the "looking unto Jesus" and away from ourselves which they enjoined upon their readers and hearers, meant concretely a looking unto Him in His appointed Churchly ordinances. No doubt this was the inner ground of their strict Sabbath-keeping. The Scots at their best observed the Sabbath because they knew that they could not live and think as God's people by staying at home and looking for the marks of God's ownership in themselves, and that they had to go to Church again and again and be *told* to Whom they belonged.

III

If we learn to see ourselves as Christians only by looking at God's objective claims upon us and promises to us, made and given in His public ordinances, we will see a certain special significance in the *beginning* of this life in the Church, in the "place where" the Word and Sacraments are set up. And that life visibly begins with God's first visible claim on us—with the first time when He visibly reaches out, lays His hand upon us and names us as His. This beginning can lose nothing of its significance through its having taken place before we were conscious of it—it is still a real claim of God to which we can look back and say, "There God declared me to be of His household and Kingdom."

This "first claim" and "first promise" is, of course, under normal circumstances, our Baptism in infancy. In the whole context just outlined, infant baptism is the most natural thing in the world. If, indeed, the Church is essentially a club of those who do certain things or undergo certain experiences—if the last word is said when we say that it "consists of those who profess the true religion"—then infant baptism is indeed an anomaly. But if "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," and the Church exists wherever the Word may be heard, infants may be brought into that "Church" quite naturally. They may be brought into the place where God's ordinances have been

set up and where His saving work goes on, and may quite sensibly look back later to their first entry into this sphere as the true beginning of their Christian life.

That this *was* the context in which the Scottish doctrine of infant baptism was developed and defended, may be easily gathered from a perusal of one of the most vigorous defences of it, Samuel Rutherford's "Covenant of Life Opened." Rutherford here vigorously repudiates the idea, unfortunately suggested to many by the language of the Westminster Confession, that infants should be baptized because their faith may be naturally "inherited" from believing parents—as if faith were a matter of chromosomes. To eliminate this superstition, Rutherford insists that not only the children of believing parents by birth and blood have a right to baptism, but all those who are brought within the reach of the Word of God. "The man's being born where the call of God is, does the task, as much as the faith of the Parent. For by the root is not necessarily meant the Physicall root, the father. For *Abraham* was not the Physicall root and father, nor *Cornelius*, of all the servants and friends in the house" who were circumcised or baptized.¹ This conception of "National Churchmanship" is certainly far removed from racialism.

It is in this context also that we must understand the Scottish insistence that baptism, even that of infants, must, like the Lord's Supper, be accompanied by preaching. This does not mean either that grace can somehow flow into an infant more readily from a sermon than from the sprinkling of water, or that the entire ceremony, sermon and sacrament alike, is more for the benefit of the parents than that of the child. Baptism, like the Supper, is the "seal" of God's claim on us and promise to us, and the claim and promise must first be announced before the "seal" is annexed to it. But in these claims and promises God Himself really meets us and enters into fellowship with us; and that is the only fellowship with Him that is promised to us here on earth. The Church visible is no merely artificial structure quite unrelated to the true Church of God; it is His actual and appointed means of being present to us and active towards us and in us in this life. And we have His promise that in our baptism and the words which precede it He really

¹ S. Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, p. 84.

enters into fellowship with us, even though we only realize it afterwards. To quote Dr. Macleod again, "The dates in the Kalendar of our spiritual history, in the accuracy of which we may most trust, are precisely those which mark not what *we have realized*, but what *God has sealed*."¹

If we think in these terms we will not imagine that some kind of magical substance is infused into us at our baptism which will make us fit for heaven (unless we lose it later), and without which heaven's doors will be closed to us. The Church of Scotland since the Reformation has never believed that baptism is so essential to salvation that when it cannot be administered in the ordinary way it must at all costs be administered somehow, even by persons who are not called and appointed to dispense the ordinances of the Church. The true Scottish doctrine is admirably expressed by Willison when he says that "It is not the *Want*, but the *Contempt* of this Ordinance that exposeth to Damnation."² It is the ordinance by which God normally first lays His hand upon us—by which He first says to us that we are of His household. It would be foolish to worry ourselves if through one accident or another He does not first claim us in this way but in some other way, hidden or known—if, for example, through some irregularity which is no fault of our own we have begun to take Communion without having been first baptized; or if a child dies before a minister is available to baptize it. But if parents deliberately hold their children back from this ordinance as it is offered to them, then they are trying to hold back from God, and are themselves turning away from Him, and doing what in them lies to bring about a state of affairs in which His ordinances are taken from their midst, leaving them "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

¹ J. Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

² John Willison, *A Sacramental Catechism*, p. 42

The Centenary of Faith Healing

C. G. S.

THIS spring just 100 years ago a movement began which has become amazingly important for the whole Church and the influence of which is still increasing more and more. In this country, Moore Hickson started this movement in 1882. But not very many are aware that 40 years previously a German pastor had been led by God to renew this gift of healing in the name of Jesus. It is not too much to say that at this date a new chapter of Church history began. One of the most strange things is that Mr. Hickson himself did not apparently know anything about his great predecessor Blumhardt. I have, however, found some references to Blumhardt's work in Britain. Firstly, a Swiss friend reported about Blumhardt at a meeting in Belfast in 1859. Secondly, in 1881 Rev. W. Guest wrote a booklet entitled *Pastor Blumhardt and his Work* in which he used Zuendel's biography. In the same year Rev. W. E. Boardman mentions Blumhardt in his booklet *The Lord that Healeth*. Thirdly, Blumhardt's brother wrote an introduction to Guest's booklet. This brother was trained in Basle and became a missionary in Abyssinia. Later he worked for an English Mission in India, and finally lived as a minister in Tonbridge.

It was therefore J. C. Blumhardt, pastor of the little village of Moettlingen in the Black Forest of Germany, to whom God first entrusted this gift of healing.

Moettlingen was privileged to have for a century the uninterrupted ministry of godly men.

The first of them is said to have prayed again and again for blessed successors. In Wuerttembergia, to which this part of the Black Forest belongs, rationalism was partly overcome by

a living pietism led by men such as Bengel, Oettinger, etc. Blumhardt himself was brought up in an evangelical family, reading the Bible from his earliest childhood. However, he wrote later of those days. "I was struck with the great difference between the Christians of the Scripture and those of our day. How much the Lord and the Apostles say about the Holy Spirit! But I could not find Him living in our Church in the same way as they record. In fact, I could not find the gifts of the Holy Spirit possessed by the early Christians at all. Even in good devotional books I found something missing which the Scriptures contain; above all I did not find the words of the Bible verified in the lives of the Christians. . . . In my younger days I was longing for the fullness of the Holy Spirit which I could not find either in the doctrine or in the articles of the Church. I was longing to have the Holy Spirit within me, and I felt a poverty which should not exist after 1800 years of witness to Christ and His Apostles. I thought all Christians must be conscious of this same lack." He was "hungry for reality" and reality came into his life. His influence upon his congregation was strong from the beginning. A group of pietists who had kept away began to attend his services—They realized that he "taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

It was in the spring of 1840 that a pious girl in his parish showed very strange signs of devil possession. Although she prayed in her conscious life, suddenly evil spirits cried out from her against her will and she could not help it. For a long time Blumhardt was very perplexed, for not having had any experience in this realm he did not know how to help. Once the doctor, who came from another place asked: "Is there no clergyman in this village who can pray? I can do nothing." This and other suggestions moved Blumhardt to pray continuously what God's will was and what He wanted him to do. As a result he and a small circle of friends joined in a prayer fellowship. Blumhardt received the conviction that he should not cease praying for the girl and should lay hands on her in the name of Christ, being Conqueror over all demons to-day just as much as 1800 years ago. He described his first step in this unknown country as follows: "A kind of groaning caught me, suddenly it came upon me from above without my own thinking. I leapt forward with firm steps, took her stiffly cramped hands, and calling her name with

a loud voice, said in her ear, although she was unconscious: 'Clasp your hands and pray "Lord Jesus, help me."' We have seen long enough what the devil can do, now we will see what the Lord can do.' Immediately the girl awoke, spoke the words he had told her, and became quite normal. Although this was not the last step in the struggle which continued for several years, it was the turning point in Blumhardt's life. He said later: "At this time the Saviour stood at the door and knocked. I opened the door and He said: 'I will enter with all the power of grace which My Father has given Me. I will enter your heart to prepare for My full coming. When I knocked before nobody heard My voice. You were all too busy with your political and theological quarrels.'"

But meanwhile Blumhardt was tested for a long time, during which even most of his friends warned him not to go further on. One demon having been driven out, a "legion" of others came back and tortured the girl and her whole family. The more they felt the coming decision, the more they fought against Christ. Once when Blumhardt called the name of Jesus the voice cried "That name I cannot hear nor bear." More than once the poor girl tried to commit suicide, but on two occasions, lightning, sent at the right moment, prevented her. We cannot here give fuller details. Some things which happened were so dreadful that even Blumhardt's friend and biographer did not publish them.

It was Christmas 1843 when the famous last scene in this strange warfare took place. The girl's sister suddenly shouted for 15 or 20 minutes with a voice so that most of the village heard it. "Jesus is victor, Jesus is victor." After that not only was the family freed once and for all from devil possession, but also from all bodily diseases (e.g. a shortened foot, and other things). From then onwards the family became Blumhardt's most fruitful helpers.

This cry "Jesus is victor, Jesus is victor" became the motto and watchword of the German movement of Spiritual Healing. What does it signify? Let Zuendel answer: "Blumhardt experienced the powerful interference of the living Christ exactly the same way as he had read of it in the Bible when a child. He realized that as much of Divine redemption comes into a man's life as there is a believing desire for it. To his friends who had warned him not to

continue in this way he wrote: "You think that the supposition that there is a Saviour should not be taken too strictly. This is exactly the point. Is it an exaggeration or not, to believe the words of Christ, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.'"

Some days after the victory he wrote to his best friend, and antecessor Chr. Barth: "I dared to go on, for how could God fail to fulfil that for which I had cried daily for years according to His word. Whether I believed rightly or not, the day of judgment will make clear; and the Lord's mercy will justify me, as He did justify me." We can imagine what happened after the victorious conclusion of this struggle. Blumhardt wrote; "Everything concerning illness in my parish began to be changed. Seldom did a medical man appear; the people preferred to pray. Certain diseases, especially amongst new-born children, seemed entirely to cease; and the general state of health became better and better."

We refrain here, as Blumhardt did during all his life, to quote healed cases, though we could give an enormous number. Jesus Himself knew why he forbid those who were healed to say anything to men about His healing. The mystery and the blessing of it could be destroyed. Blumhardt used to say speaking to friends, "You know, *this* is not Moettlingen." But what else was Moettlingen? Not the struggle with the evil spirits but the result of it, namely, the revival. Blumhardt built his great hope for the whole Church on this revival.

It began in this way: A week after the healing of the devil possessed girl a man of very loose and deceitful character came to Blumhardt to confess his sins. After having found forgiveness he went back a changed man, and brought others to the minister. After that there was no break in this movement of penitence, although Blumhardt did not press anybody in the least, but simply went on praying and preaching. He wrote: "The impression which his forgiveness made upon me and upon this man, I never can forget. It was an inexpressible joy that beamed out of the face of the man. I seemed to be drawn into quite a new and unknown sphere in which holy spiritual powers were working. I could not

explain it and did not try to do so, but I went on in a simple and cautious way; and other sinners followed to ask for forgiveness."

He realized that the connection between the struggle and the revival was not small but very close indeed. As he wrote, "The latter is won by the former in the fullest sense. It was by the struggle and the victory that the satanical powers were broken so that they cannot do more for the present. Penitence is not made by man, but has its origin in God. It is the Gospel that works penitence. What is flowing out of my own penitence is working penitence in others. Even if I preach the pure Gospel, but it does not come out of my own penitence, it is like a bubble of soap working against the walls of a fortification."

Zuendel took part in this revival which began in Moettlingen, and describes it as follows: "The Kingdom of Heaven would conquer the earth with the same glory as was revealed in the Apostle's time, but is covered with a veil. Yet now in our days this veil seemed to be lifted slightly and a beam of the glory of Christ's Kingdom seemed to have shined as through a break in the clouds."

What distinguished Blumhardt from nearly all contemporary Christians can best be explained in his own words, "Why should all Christian life always remain so poor? Why do even believers, seeing a revival, say that only very little of it will remain? Why such unbelief? Why should we not experience something quite new?—Yes, we must, and we shall, when we have a new outpouring of the Spirit. So I lay the burden upon you to pray for it; and then we shall see great things happening both here and far off."

As his hopes grew higher for great things, he himself became more humble. The revival went on to Bad Boll and all who saw him there in his splendid new home realized his simplicity and humility amidst all the miracles. These were happening every day afresh, and attracted people from all continents, poor as well as rich. "The miracle," he wrote, "of the constant presence of the Lord Jesus was the usual, so that this miracle became the natural, and we did not make much fuss about it." Is this not the real view of the New Testament?

With regard to the question of Spiritual Healing it caused the same revolution of thought as that which the New Testa-

ment always causes but which is often forgotten for many centuries. It was the simple truth that illness is not the natural but the unnatural because it is the result of sin. Not necessarily, of course, the sins of the sick man, but the sin of all mankind, and that the works of God should be made manifest. Blumhardt was the first man for centuries to realize that Christendom is wrong to acquiesce in disease and suffering. It may be right for the sufferer himself, for all things work together for good to them that love God ; but that certainly does not mean that the other Christians in the world may be unbelieving and lazy.

Thus Blumhardt says : " If any one tells me that some evil comes from God with such and such a purpose, but that faith is the remedy : if that person is too lazy to pray with faith, such an absence of faith is sin. It is to be noted that laziness is the cause of a great deal of unbelief. We would rather run 40 miles to be cured in some profane way, than faithfully bend the knee and pray with fervor. It is much easier to resign to God's will than to push away the bars which stop God's help."

Blumhardt realized too that we usually are not honest in this respect. For although we do not dare to ask for God's help yet we do run to the doctor or even to the magician. But how could the medical man replace with his art what those who carry on the Gospel ought to know and do? Blumhardt is here thinking especially of mental diseases, but not entirely. He acknowledges the work of doctors who though mostly not believers in Christ, worked more faithfully than Christians who were content to say to the suffering people, " Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled . . . notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful."

Blumhardt was convinced that the gift of Spiritual Healing which the Lord gave to the Apostles and to the Church, never would have been lost if the Church had not lost her full faith. And is it not true the living body of Christ should have the gifts which the early Church had? If not, something must be wrong with the Church. It is not an excuse to say that the gifts have changed in the course of history and that the Holy Spirit has sent other " gifts " instead, e.g. the " gift " of monasteries or the " gift " of science or the " gift " of missionary work, etc. As long

as diseases are a reality (and not imaginary only as the so-called "Christian Science" falsely teaches to this day). and we need it, we need the gift of healing, not as a gift of nature but as a gift of the Holy Spirit to help sufferers through Christ's love and to show the world, as Blumhardt said, "The devil has done much, but the Saviour can do more."

Although the New Testament seems to imply that this gift is granted only to certain members of the Church, Blumhardt, as well as the English healers (e.g. Hickson, Maillard, R. Spread), have said otherwise. The following is typical, "I have always taught that no person has any special gift of healing which may not be the possession of others : and I have emphatically disclaimed any special gifts of my own. I have confidently affirmed that all Christians can be channels or instruments of Divine healing, since all can pray and become transmitters of the love of God" (J. Maillard).

There are still many questions unsolved which we cannot even touch here, e.g. how far can doctors and clergy cooperate in Spiritual healing work ? or whether or not any limitations exist for Spiritual healing ? To the latter I would be inclined to answer, "Not any more than there was limitation to the Lord and His disciples." However, the main thing and the most important question is not theoretical, but practical. Are we prepared to become immersed to the same degree with the Holy Spirit as a man like Blumhardt, living 100 years ago, attained ? Do we really believe that all is possible with God ? If we believe this, as all great Spiritual Healers have and do ; then there is no need in the world to-day, which could not be met and healed by faith. Spiritual healing by Christ's disciples is a testimony to the fact that Christ is living and that He is coming again. It is proof that He will be on earth as He is in heaven.

Book Reviews

A PROPHECT OF THE SOUL : FYODOR DOSTOIEVSKY
*by Zenta Maurina, translated by C. P. Finlayson from
the Latvian. (James Clarke & Co.) 6s.*

Is Dostoievsky also among the prophets? Karl Barth says, yes ; and links him with Abraham, Jeremiah, Socrates, Grünewald, Luther and Kierkegaard (Romans Eng. trans. p. 117). Prince Mirsky says, No ; " the real Dostoievsky is food that is easily assimilated only by a profoundly diseased spiritual organism " (History of Russian Literature p. 358). Miss Maurina agrees with Barth : Dostoievsky is " a prophet of the soul."

Her book finely translated, is a real charisma from Latvia to England. Miss Maurina is inside her subject ; but she can see the wood as well as the trees. Her sympathy with Dostoievsky not only makes her portrait a living one ; it also inspires her readers to go to Dostoievsky himself to see " whether these things are so," few people could have so clarified the vision or given such real clues to the understanding of the agony of Dostoievsky's struggles in his search after truth.

Compared with what she has achieved such blemishes as a possibly misplaced first chapter, the lack of a table of dates and the cover of the book seems insignificant. The influence of Dostoievsky upon European thought might have come in better as an appendix and could well have shown more clearly its effect upon its theology as well as its literature. For example, and significantly, in Barth's great commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Eng. trans.) there are far more references to Dostoievsky's than to any other extra-Biblical writer.

As the title of her book suggests, Miss Maurina sees Dostoievsky's greatness pre-eminently in his understanding of human life in all the range of its manifold experience. His characters, grouped by her into (1) the criminals, (2) the rebels against God and (3) the apostles of Christ (p. 121) show his ambition to get at the soul or " inner face of a man " (p. 113). She shows clearly that it is people that

Dostoevsky knows and is interested in—almost to the complete exclusion of nature, times and seasons—and if the tragic element preponderates, we must remember the author's grim experiences not only of personal moral failure, but also of Siberian exile and its legacy of epilepsy.

Dostoevsky loved children—but his characters are always city children, pale, nervous and highly strung (p. 155). That after all is not surprising, in view of his own childhood, the spirit of which Miss Maurina has so wonderfully caught in her picture of the dawn. "There is sadness in the dawn. Such is the feeling of every man who has seen the bleak, silent, prelude to the sun's rising, of every man who does not go through life as a dreamer unawakened" (p. 36). This is not just Baltic flatland, Russian tragedy or jaundice: it is Job and Jeremiah; it is also a part of Gethsemane and Golgotha, for Mary, if not for Jesus too.

There is truth, if not the whole truth, in Oswald Chambers' remark that "the basis of things is not rational, but tragic: if it were rational, the Cross of Christ would be much ado about nothing." Could it have been found finer expression than in this interpretation of Michaelangelo's "Morning"?—"A powerful woman with sluggish ponderous limbs is already awake, but hesitates to raise her heavy eyelids, loth to admit the harrowing kaleidoscope of life. Her shoulders are broad, yet she shrinks from taking up the day's burden; her half-open lips are all too conscious; along with life's honey they must draw in its gall. And nowhere is there any escape" (p. 36).

Miss Maurina shows us that it is against such a background that Dostoevsky's religion of Life takes meaning, not many miss the ringing triumph of Christus Victor; not many miss the glorious challenge, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light." But from Siberian exile we get the picture of a man with "ruined digestion, epilepsy, rheumatism, and nevertheless—feeling well" (p. 61). Significantly enough the only book allowed him at this time was his Bible. We may miss, despite pp. 215 ff., something of that heroic ethic on which von Hugel set such store, but against the grim and sombre Russian background of his own experience it is no small achievement to have portrayed in living literature, if not altogether in personal life, the picture of religion as

"perpetual development and active love, with no trace of asceticism nor yet of compromise, a religion of freedom with the personality of Christ at its centre" (p. 210).

Here, whether from Dostoevsky or from Miss Maurina, is a clear challenge. Either the Evangelical doctrine of freedom in the spirit springing from the experience of free forgiveness finds expression in freedom of life or it is nothing but orthodox hypocrisy. Because our faith is too shallow, our roots too worldly, our outlook too fearful, have not many of us fallen into the pathetic Galatian *via media*? "Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?" (Gal. iii. 3). "If we ask who inspire us most, those who shun the cruel touch of life and shut their eyes to its horrors or those whose hearts are full of the arrows of Saint Sebastian and who nevertheless raise their hands to bless life? There can be only one answer" (p. 222). Here is shown to us all "a more excellent way"; here is "living water"; and, very humbly may I suggest, here is a tract for these times—and not least for us Evangelicals.

J. E. FISON.

THE CONFLICT OF THE CROSS

by O. E. Burton. (James Clarke) 3s. 6d.

The Rev. O. E. Burton has been for many years one of the most striking figures in the somewhat motley religious life of New Zealand. The winner of a Military Cross during the last war, he is now propagating a pacifism of an unusually thorough-going kind. In theology his mind is at least a very independent one. In the present work he dismisses as "unethical" many aspects of the Old Testament conception of God; but he is no ordinary modernist, and insists that the prophets so plainly predicted the Messiah's coming that their supernatural inspiration cannot be reasonably doubted. He regards the idea of evolution as decidedly overdone, and sees traces of a supra-historical "fall" in the cruelties of animal nature as well as in human sin. A burning devotion to Christ crucified inspires the whole book. But one cannot help wishing that his thought were governed less exclusively by his own inner fire, and more controlled by that written Word which is, after all, the one primary means by which Christ rules His Church from age to age.

ARTHUR N. PRIOR.

READINGS IN ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

Second Series : Chapters XIII—XXI.

By William Temple, Archbishop of York. (Macmillan & Co. Ltd.) 8s. 6d. net.

Those of our readers who were so fortunate as to read the first volume of these Readings in St. John's Gospel will rejoice to know that the second volume, which completes the Archbishop's study of the Gospel, is now available. It is a long time since the religious world was given the opportunity of acclaiming a great commentary, for such this fine study of the Fourth Gospel can well be styled. Not that the work is a Commentary in the strict sense of the term. It is not, as the Archbishop states in his original Preface, which he reprints at the beginning of this volume for the benefit of those readers who do not possess the first volume, "a systematic commentary or exposition; nor is it intended for scholars or theologians. . . . Again, it is not a series of devotional imitations, though it contains some of these. It has no distinctive and consistent character. But it is an attempt to share with any who read it what I find to be my own thoughts as I read the profoundest of all writings." Such is the Author's own modest description of the work. But in whatever way the work may be described, everyone will agree that we have here a most valuable study on the Fourth Gospel which will enrich the spiritual life of countless average Christians. For it is for the ordinary Christian that the Archbishop writes and he steadfastly adheres to the aim throughout.

This second volume deals with St. John xiii to the end. The Archbishop has divided the Gospel into a series of Acts—five to be precise—which serve to indicate very clearly the various distinctive sections of the Gospel and provide an analysis both helpful and illuminating. To give an example. Chapters xviii and xix represent Act iv. "The Conflict of Light with Darkness," and contain four sections styled successively: "The Arrest," "The Ecclesiastical Trials," "The Trial before Pilate," "The Crucifixion." Such is the kind of framework into which the Archbishop fits his observation on the Gospel. Incidentally so helpful are such analyses of New Testament writings, that we wish more writers inserted them.¹

¹This is one of the satisfactory features of the edition of the New Testament issued by the Lutterworth Press under the title *The Book of Books*.

It is very tempting in a book of this kind to make quotations to show the style and the method adopted by the author. The volume is full of sound expositions which time and again light up the meaning of the author of the Fourth Gospel, which, by the way, the Archbishop believes to have been not actually by John the Apostle—a view to which he inclined until recently—but John the Elder “who was an intimate disciple of John the Apostle.” But he adheres to the view “that he records the teaching of that Apostle with great fidelity; that the Apostle is the “Witness,” to whom reference is sometimes made, and is also the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” He concludes his slight discussion of the problem—a full discussion he rightly regards as out of place—by stating that “It is not possible to say which sections of the Gospel come direct from the Apostle; but I am sure that we are near the truth in maximising than in minimising these.

The Archbishop in his Introduction has a good deal to say that is extremely helpful on the nature and character of the Fourth Gospel. To those who for example find difficulty in the obvious contrast in our Lord's method of teaching as represented by the Synoptists on the one hand and St. John's Gospel on the other will find the Archbishop's words in the section headed “Historical Reliability” most illuminating. And with that Section must go that on “The Johannine and Synoptist Picture of Christ,” for in it the Archbishop is emphatic that “the themes were actually handled by our Lord, and that the Gospel gives to us what His utterance was afterwards known to have contained.” And he proceeds to give a fine illustration on the difference between a mere fact of history and an historical fact interpreted.

These are days when we are all anxious for a revival of the study of the Bible. We could not conceive of a better way to encourage such a highly desirable revival than by a perusal of these two volumes. We would only add a request in conclusion. There are naturally many references in the text to the Johannine Epistles. Is it too much to ask the Archbishop to give us a third volume containing his thoughts on these writings?

C. J. OFFER.

THE NAZARENE

by *Sholem Asch*. (George Routledge & Sons Ltd.) 8s. 6d.

Any sincere and competent attempt to portray the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is assured of the interested sympathy of those who have found in Him the way, the truth, and the life. Sincerity and competence are evident throughout this volume, the work of a Polish Jew, who has given us the fruits of a generation spent in travel and study.

Mr. Asch's skill is to be seen, for example, in his use of psychological device to produce the framework of the story. A twentieth-century "theologian," victim of an anti-Semite monomania, finds himself in fellowship with a Jew whose excellences he grudgingly recognizes as marking him "the exception that proves the rule." From this association, by the medium of awakened "memories" and deciphered manuscript, there results the threefold telling of the life of Jesus. Cornelius, Roman Hegemon and Ciliarch of Jerusalem, begins the story. With sure and vivid descriptions he recalls the distant land and days of Jesus as a self-consciously superior but spiritually sensitive Roman must have known them. One of the finest chapters in the book describes the inward and emotional experience of one who, under the spell of the Rabbi of Galilee, so far forgot himself as to throw, for a moment, reserve and decorum to the winds. Judas Iscariot, still loyal, enthusiastic and hopeful, takes up the tale, his experiences revealing both his inward uncertainties and his Master's sympathy. The grand and awful climax of the story comes to us from a young disciple of Nicodemus, with whom we live in an atmosphere of realism and reverence.

From the point of view of Christian orthodoxy this book may not add much to our knowledge of the Incarnate Word or of "the Mind of Christ." But for two other reasons, it deserves warm welcome and gratitude. To read it is to know the world into which Jesus came. And to know that is also to understand the relevance of the Incarnation to human history and to human need. Secondly, it is a sign of our times, and a cause for special gratitude, that this so sympathetic and far-seeing account—at times it is almost an interpretation—of the life of Jesus should come to us from the pen of a modern and cultured Jew.

T. W. ISHERWOOD.

THE EPISTLE OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE

Studies in the First Epistle of St. Peter. By the Very Rev. E. G. Selwyn, D.D., Dean of Winchester. (Mowbray & Co.) 2s.

This volume is based upon that Letter which is closely packed with doctrinal and ethical teaching as relevant to-day as when it was written.

1. THE CHURCH AND THE WORD. The call is to holiness and also to the discharge of social and civic obligations. The Church is called to be world-renouncing, but it is not world-despairing (p. 33).

2. TROUBLE, HOPE AND DUTY. Christians were "strangers" and living "in complete lack of security, being exposed at any moment to slander, defamation of character, boycott, mob-violence, drastic action by the police, and even in some cases death" (p. 42). But the Christian "philosophy of trouble and how to meet it" is contained in the Apostle's statement "you *rejoice* in that you have now been somewhat distressed and troubled it may be by trials of many kinds."

The author speaks in high appreciation and rightly of Archbishop Leighton's comments in a former age. The Archbishop, however, most certainly was mistaken when he made the Hebrew of Isaiah liii. 6 mean "all their guiltiness *met together* on His back upon the Cross."

The third lecture is upon THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. Dr. Selwyn has some excellent things to say about the Apostolic doctrine of the Atonement by Christ the "sin-bearer". Christ is unique and alone but St. Peter urges his readers to copy the spirit of Christ in so far as the way lies open to them now to exhibit meekness. If converted and changed men can imitate Christ then they will do something towards winning the world for Him.

The volume before us is the work of a scholar with a knowledge of to-day and its needs. We gather that it is, as it were, the firstfruits of a larger production. Such a commentary will be most welcome. In the words of Dr. Selwyn "No Epistle has a more timely message or is more closely concerned with the things that go to make up the golden quality of Christian courage."

R. S. CRIPPS.

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER BOOKS

Here are five books edited by Dr. Oldham and published at 1s. each by the Sheldon Press. In various ways they suggest the Christian remedy for the spiritual, political, industrial, educational and ethical diseases of our age. The titles and authors are :

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by Canon O. C. Quick, Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, which is concerned with the ethical side of the present situation and inter alia has some wise words about pacifism.

The general teaching of these books is that the regeneration of human life might be accomplished by a body of men and women who believed to the last fibre of their being in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is, of course, much more in these volumes. There is much that is challenging about freedom and unemployment; democracy and security; education and totalitarianism. We earnestly commend these books to all who are thinking for themselves and not merely adopting mass opinion.

A. W. PARSONS.

THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH :**A Study of Distortion and its Remedy.***By Charles E. Raven, D.D. (Hodder & Stoughton.)*
8s. 6d. net.

Anyone acquainted with modern religious literature knows the kind of writing to expect from the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. His books are always learned, as we should expect from a professor, but, what we do not always get from professional sources, written in an attractive and vigorous style. And the present volume proves to be no exception. A subsidiary title indicates that the book is "A Tract for the times in preparation for the new Reformation." What exactly is to constitute the new Reformation we must leave our readers to discover for themselves. It is, however, obvious from the sub-title that Professor Raven regards historic Christianity as being very largely a progressive distortion of the original religion of Christ, and the book is an effort first to indicate in what ways the distortion is evident in history and then to attempt to make plain in what directions the Church of the future may emancipate herself from tendencies which modern life have proved disastrous to her influences.

Most of us would no doubt agree with a good deal of what the Professor maintains. We are all in varying degrees only too conscious of the deficiencies of the modern frustration of the Christian Religion by the churches of Christendom, with the possible exception of the Roman Church which, so far as outward signs give any clue, present to the now Roman world the appearance of complete satisfaction with his interpretation of the original Gospel. Dr. Raven regards the core of his problem as "the confusion between the dynamic faith of the Apostles' age, and the developments, accretions and distortions by which our presentation of it has been affected. In seeking a remedy for these historical results he rejects both the Catholic standpoint which denies or ignores their existence, and the Protestant which would advocate re-laying a foundation for Christianity *de novo*. He appears to desire to evolve a kind of *via media* or an Erasmian reformation of the existing institutions developed in the process of centuries. In embarking upon his task, Dr. Raven divides the present work into three parts, "first

to examine the characters of Apostolic Christianity ; then to show how the character suffers by distortion . . . and finally to examine the extent to which the distortion if admitted can be rectified." Needless to say the writer deals with each section of the subject with great thoroughness, and with a mastery of apostolic and pro-apostolic literature which he reveals by many generalizations illuminated by flashes of real historic insight. These make entertaining reading, but many will disagree with the writer's judgments, especially those in which he criticizes one or two of the books of the New Testament in trenchant, and somewhat dogmatic fashion. On the other hand, on more than one important problem many readers will be disposed to accept the Professor's guidance. It is good to see the importance of history to Christianity vindicated so forcibly. It is equally satisfactory to observe the stress laid on the incompatibility of pessimism with Christianity. Dr. Raven is disposed to maintain that the future of Christianity in the face of dominant ideologies depends very largely on a recovery of the due place of nature and history in the official presentation of Christianity. Some may feel that so simple a solution of the great and pressing problem of the estrangement of the masses from the Churches is hardly likely to achieve the desired results. No doubt much that the Professor says on this subject is extremely relevant to the existing situation. But a careful perusal of the third part of the book in which one is encouraged to look for indications of the way in which the main contentions are to become actual in modern religious life is somewhat disappointing.

For in spite of much distortion, obscurantism and ineffectiveness the historic faith of Christendom has still its ancient force. Christians can still draw on the unsearchable riches of Christ. The power of recuperation and revival is always present. There are not wanting signs that even within the moribund institutional Churches—if we are so to regard them—a new spirit is at work. But to achieve the Professor's aim of a new Reformation will demand in every quarter intensive prayer, study and practical devotion in addition to that re-orientation which he so ardently desires. Nevertheless, this is a valuable contribution to the life of the Church of the future.

C. J. OFFER.

RELIGION AND THE ENGLISH VERNACULAR

by R. R. Williams. (S.P.C.K.) 4s. 6d.

This is a useful little volume. It is an endeavour "to study a phase of English religious history from a new angle"; and the author traces the movement by which the English Bible replaced the Vulgate in the life of the Church, with special reference to the religious experience that lay behind it. The opening chapter on the mediæval background gives a vivid, and one would say faithful, picture of religious life in the fourteenth century; and in the chapter devoted to the New Learning and the Reformation there is a fine tribute to the work of John Colet. If, in a later chapter, we are not told anything fresh about William Tindale it may be because there is nothing fresh to tell. Mr. Williams makes his point that the Scriptures in the mother tongue have had an important influence on the development of spiritual experience.

JOHN A. PATTEN.

THE HEREAFTER IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

with special reference to *The Doctrine of Resurrection Moorhouse Lectures*, 1938. By Charles Venn Pilcher, D.D. (S.P.C.K.) 7s. 6d.

In his six Moorhouse Lectures the Bishop-Coadjutor of Sydney set himself the task of investigating New Testament teaching on the hereafter "in the light of that Jewish thought-world which forms their background"; in some cases he has thought it necessary to look at that thought in the light of the thought-world of the Ancient East. The final object of this comparative study is to "form a judgment as to what is the husk, what is the kernel of the teaching of Scripture." To those who accept Kraemer's dictum in "The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World" that "The origins of Christianity are irreducible," in other words, that it is useless to "seek to explain it as the outcome of religious development in the Jewish and Hellenistic world," this work will have little attractive in it. Even a purely objective reading of it, however, will find it distinctly disappointing.

The work's chief claim to notice is its treatment of rabbinic thought about the hereafter. The author has made

large and on the whole adequate use of Strack-Billerbeck's *magnum opus* on the Talmud, which is unfortunately only available to those who know German. When a comparison with Christianity is being made, a statement of facts is not sufficient; they must be interpreted as well. Here the three fundamental errors made by most recent writers on the subject are repeated. There can be no reasonable doubt that Judaism was profoundly influenced by the teaching of Christ and His apostles. This influence was both positive and negative. The fact that it is chiefly seen in the intensification of an already existing trend and that the rabbis took good care to hide the fact ought not to lead us to deny it. Then the author seems to ignore the effect on Jewish thought caused by the destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70) and the perhaps even more catastrophic suppression of Bar Cochba's revolt (A.D. 135). It is really meaningless to compare New Testament teaching with rabbinic teaching after the latter date. Then—we were tempted to write, of course—he has fallen into the pitfall so few Christian writers on the Talmud have avoided; he has not distinguished between *Halakah* and *Hagadah*. The former dealing with the interpretation of the law can always be taken at its face value; the latter gives us an insight into rabbinic thought and fantasy and normally needs to be taken with a pinch of salt or even the whole cellar full. One must be very careful in using *Hagadah* to establish doctrine. In fact, we very much doubt that the rabbis had any doctrine about the hereafter and the resurrection except the simple affirmation that they would be.

The author's treatment of the New Testament must be considered even more disappointing. In considering the *When* and the *How* of resurrection he discovers two self-contradictory strands in the teaching both of our Lord and His apostles. Any theory which has to be based on self-contradiction in Paul and above all in our Lord Himself must be suspect. This suspicion is strengthened by the author's finding the Empty Grave a difficulty and by his suggestions about the resurrection body, for which no word of support can be brought from the Scriptures.

Yes, this is a disappointing work, the more so as it contains so much valuable material, especially from apocalyptic and rabbinic sources.

H. L. ELLISON.