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Alfred Barclay Buxton



It is with profound regret that we have to report that our brother and colleague, Mr. Alfred Buxton, was in a restaurant on Monday evening, October 14th, with his brother, Mr. Murray Buxton, when a direct hit by a bomb was made upon the building, and both Mr. Buxton and his brother were killed.

The present issue goes out just as it had been so far prepared by Mr. Buxton, who was acting Editor. It is due to Mr. Buxton's enterprise that this number contains several articles by fresh writers for "The Churchman" who are warmly welcomed. Mr. Buxton had only been acting Editor for a few months, but subscribers will have noted that his pioneer spirit has been in evidence in each recent issue. His enthusiasm and keenness are not often found, and it will be impossible to replace him.

Readers will doubtless remember in prayer the two widows and the other members of the family who are left.

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The Bible As Revelation

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUE

THE REV. A. M. STIBBS, M.A.

EVANGELICALS are divided on the Biblical issue. This issue has split our ranks. (So "Ignoramus" truly asserted in the *Church Gazette* of February last). Nor is such a result anything but inevitable as long as our differences of attitude to the Bible are so radical. For to some the Bible is absolutely unique and from above—God-given; while to others it is only outstanding and from beneath—man-wrought. To some it is, and makes ours, an indispensable revelation, without which men cannot see the truth about God; it provides a final standard or court of appeal, by which all claims to have found the truth can and must be judged. To others it is rather the product of the spiritual discernment of men of old, a discernment which by the same Spirit men to-day may not only equal but even supersede; so that a man enlightened by the Divine Spirit may so discern fresh or fuller truth as to be able rightly to criticize and even to discard parts of Scripture. To some the Bible is special God-given revelation. Its words are, like its Author, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. It is the appointed medium through which all men of every age may hear the authentic voice of the Divine Spirit. To others the Bible is, however greatly inspired, still a product of men, something historical, the work of a particular age, which like all human thoughts or deeds cannot in every part win the same credence or reverence from every subsequent generation. The Spirit of God may have to say to men now other, if not better, things than were written aforetime.

These different views cannot both be right. They are not merely complementary aspects of a larger whole just waiting to be united. Rather, as experience has proved, they will not mix. Nor is there hope of vital unity among us until we are afresh agreed in the conviction that the Bible, which is history, is like the Incarnation absolutely

unique history, because it is also and first of all special God-given revelation. For just as sinful men have been reconciled to God by the one perfect God-given sacrifice, offered once for all for ever, so spiritually blind and misguided men have been enlightened by a written word, equally God-given, and once for all delivered to the saints. It cannot therefore be anything less than unbelief and presumption to question or to try to add to the sufficiency of either. Consequently, those who would in effect take from or add to the canon and authority of Scripture are not simply exhibiting a spirit of praiseworthy enquiry; they are tampering with essential foundations. Such action cannot but be viewed by many with serious misgiving. With what result is all too obvious. Confidence is undermined. Men who ought to be leaders are no longer wholeheartedly trusted and followed. Financial support is withdrawn from evangelical societies. There are suspicion and division in the camp. Groups become occupied in self-defence against one another instead of in united advance against the common foe. Opportunities for aggressive evangelical witness are lost. It is surely time, therefore, that we faced the situation afresh, not for further mutual criticism, but in order to renew among us an all-absorbing loyalty, which is both true to our Lord Himself, and adequate to reunite us in active co-operation in His service.

Obviously the Bible is historical. It is both a product and a record of history, a book or collection of writings written like other books by men and about men. Its various authors were each and all of them men of their own particular age and environment. Much of its contents is a record of events, a description of things that have happened. Simply as a historical record the Bible is worthy of a place in any library. It is a history book.

But the Bible is no ordinary history. It has, again quite obviously, special and unique characteristics. Its writers suggest, and their record implies, that the history they report has been ordered by God to further ends beyond the immediate ones common to all happenings in time and circumstance. Further, the facts recorded have been specially selected and presented to fulfil a higher purpose than that of providing information and understanding concerning events and people of the past. The object of this record is rather to give the reader moral instruction and spiritual

enlightenment. The record is history ; but it is more, it is prophecy, it is revelation.

There is inevitably a fundamental difference between history viewed wholly as history and history viewed primarily as revelation. In the latter case, what matters most is not the facts themselves but their prophetic interpretation, the deeper meaning read into them by spiritual insight. This insight was the distinguishing characteristic of the prophet or seer. The words of the prophets of the Old Testament make it plain that they could not but speak because of what they had seen. They were aware that their understanding was the consequence of Divine unveiling. They spake the word of the Lord that they saw. They were even aware at times that the word, which they could not but speak, contained more of truth and revelation than they themselves could penetrate and fathom. They were more sure of the truth and of the Divine origin of the vision than they were of their own power to understand it ; but proclaimed and written down it must be. Nor are there lacking in the New Testament confirming indications that in the light of the fuller revelation given through the coming of Christ, and by the outpouring of the Spirit, many words of the Old Testament were seen to have a significance beyond anything comprehended before. The words of the prophets mean more to believers in Christ than they did or could mean to the prophets themselves or to the men of their own age ; not unto themselves but unto us did they minister (1 Peter i. 10-12).

Perhaps the most remarkable illustration of the difference between words regarded as history and words interpreted as revelation is to be found in the utterance of Caiaphas—his only utterance recorded in the New Testament. To his fellows of the Sanhedrin he said, " It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not " (John xi. 50). In their historical setting the meaning of these words is obvious enough. They were a counsel of political expediency. It was better, as Caiaphas saw it, to make Jesus a scapegoat and sacrifice one life, than risk a popular Messianic rising. That could only call forth drastic Roman intervention, and then the priestly aristocracy, to which Caiaphas belonged, would be the first to suffer. But his words were thought worthy of a place in

the Gospel record for an entirely different reason. The evangelist interpreted them prophetically. To him they were revelation—a revelation all the more remarkable because it was so completely hidden from the mind of the man who uttered the words. “This he said not of himself : but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation” (John xi. 51). The high priest had a unique yearly office, which only he could fulfil. It was his responsibility on the day of atonement to enter alone into the most holy place, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people (Heb. ix. 7). And it was none other than he, who fulfilling his office in a way far beyond his knowing, gave counsel to the Jews that in this year, the year when all types were fulfilled, it was expedient that a man—not an animal victim—die for the people (John xviii. 14). He put his hand, as it were, on the Sacrifice which was to take away sin and procure salvation. And these words of his are in the holy Scriptures not because of their importance as history, but because of their significance as revelation.

Other illustrations are not far to seek. As a historical figure, a man of his age and environment, Melchizedek was possibly a person of little or no significance. No ordinary writer of world history would think him worthy of mention. His significance in Scripture is wholly due to features which are apparently arbitrary or incidental. His name happened to mean king of righteousness. He happened to be king of Salem ; and Salem means peace. He also happened to combine in his person the offices of king and priest—a combination not found in Judaism. Also the very brevity of the mention made of him in Genesis left him without record of his birth or death. He simply appears as one living and in office. In all these features the inspired writers see revelation. The Messiah is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. For Melchizedek in figure or as revelation is “made like unto the Son of God” (Heb. vii. 1-4). He has no beginning nor end, he follows none, he is superseded by none, he abideth a priest continually ; he is a priest upon his throne ; he is first king of righteousness and then king of peace. Melchizedek, therefore, has his place in the Old Testament story, and is still worthy of study by the Christian, not primarily as history but as revelation, not for his own

sake but as illustrating the office and work of Jesus the Son of God.

Again, in writing to the Corinthians, Paul deals at length with the practical question of eating meat offered to idols. As history this was then a current issue in the Corinthian Church. To many who now read the words, the problem as history is no longer a present one. It provides a study from which the reader is completely detached. It does not concern him personally. But as revelation the chapters (1 Cor. viii-x) in which Paul deals with this question illustrate the practical application of guiding principles, by which Christians ought always to determine their conduct. It is this use of the Scriptures as revelation, rather than the reading of them as mere history, which gives them their abiding value. An understanding of the historical setting of their first composition is not unimportant ; but a prayerful desire to apprehend, and a devout determination to apply, the underlying spiritual principles are much more important. It is to enable us to learn not merely historical facts but spiritual and moral truth that, by Divine ordering and grace, the Scriptures have been written and the illuminating Spirit given.

True devotional approach to the history of the Bible will therefore make more of its moral or spiritual significance than of its immediate historical features and circumstances. Not that an understanding of the latter can be disregarded ; but it becomes subservient to the apprehension of the former, and not an end in itself. Further, such approach is impossible without due recognition of the place of analogy in giving instruction. The use of figure, type and parable is an effective because concrete method of making meaning plain ; and it is certainly made more effective when the illustration chosen is itself fact and not fiction. The use of such a method of teaching was freely and widely adopted by our Lord Himself. The first reason justifying the method is the inherent correspondence between the governing principles of God's work in nature and God's doing in grace. And the second reason is that in realms outside man's direct knowledge the use of allegory or figure is the most effective way of conveying to men that limited measure of understanding which alone is possible to them. The ascended Lord seated at God's right hand is difficult to

visualize as concrete history in time and space. But as revelation no better expression of the truth about Christ's present position and relationship to God is available to finite minds. We darken understanding when in fancied superiority of judgment we discard such figurative language as obsolete.

There is need, therefore, of a return to reverent appreciation, and positive interpretation of Scriptural "figures of the true," and foreshadowings of the truth. For their function in giving insight into the fulness of truth is easily impaired by historical criticism, just as the reflection of the heavens seen in a pool disappears from view when the surface of the water is disturbed: or just as a telescope ceases to give men a vision of things far distant and otherwise out of sight, when people are turned aside to investigate when and how and by whom the telescope was made.

Allegorical interpretation and reasoning from analogy may, of course, all too easily be overdone. Alone they would prove nothing; therefore, justification for each particular case must be found elsewhere in Scripture and not in the allegory or analogy itself. But, when their use is legitimate, they do help and illumine understanding as nothing else can. And more, there is a use of them which is consecrated and authorized by the New Testament writers. Our teaching, therefore, ceases to be apostolic, and even becomes anti-apostolic, if by criticism of Old Testament passages we undermine the force of New Testament references to them. By this we prevent present-day readers from seeing Christ's person and work illustrated in Old Testament figures, and foreshadowed in Old Testament prophecies. For example, supposing we doubt and question the historicity or Divine origin of Numbers xxi. According to this chapter the people, bitten by snakes, were told by God's command to look at a serpent of brass; and those who looked lived. If we discredit the story, we have only made it the more difficult for ourselves and for those we teach to see any value or meaning in the words, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 14). Yet these words are attributed to our Lord Himself; and were certainly accepted by the evangelist and by the early Church as an explanation of the

purpose of Christ's death. The story of Numbers xxi. should still be of value to the Christian not so much as history, but rather as revelation, as a figure of the true. Yet how few preachers to-day ever proclaim from this analogy that "there is life for a look at the Crucified One."

Not that one wants to encourage excessive allegorical interpretation, but only to secure a full and balanced use of every portion and manner of the Divine speaking in the prophets. Unquestionably, in our study of Bible stories, the chief interest should be not in fanciful theoretical interpretation, but in practical moral application. This we see illustrated forcibly in Nathan's "Thou art the man," or in our Lord's "Go and do thou likewise." Without the frequent reiteration of this moral emphasis there is danger lest some become so absorbed in, and satisfied with, interpreting the pictures of Scripture that they neglect to practise its precepts.

There is yet another common way in which modern critical approach to the Bible has largely detracted attention from the revelation and the helps to spiritual understanding to be found in the Scriptures. Students have become absorbed in a professed attempt to get nearer to the history, by investigating origins and authenticity. Increase in historical understanding has been pursued to the neglect of spiritual apprehension. For example, the endless pursuit of a solution to the Synoptic problem may be a fascinating task for academical research; spiritually it has proved itself virtually a blind alley. By going inside the focus registered by the inspired writers in an attempt to get nearer to the original history, spiritual vision of the revelation given in the Gospels has been blurred and distorted. Our supposed quest of the Jesus of history has impaired our ability to see in all its fulness in the Gospels the God-given revelation of the Christ, the Son of God. We have handled the first three Gospels with too much criticism and too little faith. We have studied them too much by the limited natural sight of the scholar, and too little by the indispensable spiritual insight of the believer. We have studied them with too much self-confidence and too little reverence.

This tendency and deficiency in modern Biblical scholarship are shown still more outstandingly in the widespread failure to appreciate the Fourth Gospel. For this Gospel is

admittedly more revelation than history. It is still history ; and yet it is history written by one who cannot but bring out and make plain the revelation which he has seen in the history. For example, he records words of Jesus spoken when He cleansed the temple, " Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." That is history ; it is what was actually said at the time. The evangelist adds, " He spake of the temple of his body. When therefore He was raised from the dead his disciples remembered that He spake this ; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said." That is revelation ; it is what convinced disciples afterwards saw in the words by faith. Things recorded in this Gospel are written not just to give information about the historical facts but to promote faith in the revealed Person. Such is the climax of its own record. Doubting Thomas was offered the sight and touch of the historical facts—the print of the nails in the hands, the pierced side. He responded in worship as one who had received a revelation. Thomas answered and said, " My Lord and my God." From henceforth he was a believer. These things in the Fourth Gospel are written that we may share his belief—that is, that we " might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His name." The true reader of this Gospel, the reader who realizes the object of the writer, is the man who rises from its study not merely conscious that he has learnt history, but overwhelmingly aware that he has received revelation, and in awe and worship acknowledging it. This is the object for which all Scripture was written.

How then, do we approach and use the Bible ? That is the spiritual issue on which so much depends. Christian believers down through the centuries have unquestionably regarded Scripture as primarily conveying revelation rather than as merely recording history. The Bible has been to them the sufficient and authoritative medium through which the Spirit gives knowledge of God in Christ and insight into the fulness of truth. But are we letting the Bible be the same to us ? For such a conviction about the character and purpose of the Bible, once it is firmly established and given its proper place, cannot but affect one's whole approach to its study. The man with this conviction is prepared to find

that parts of Scripture, which may by modern scholarship be judged of inferior value and of little import as history, may as revelation afford to the diligent seeker light and insight obtainable nowhere else. He believes with Paul that the things written aforetime were written for our learning and that rightly used they can bring us comfort and hope. He therefore approaches them as a humble disciple expecting to be taught ; not as a self-confident critic, ready to pass judgment.

It is here that the roads divide. For once a passage of Scripture has been depreciatingly criticized as history, it is not easy or even possible for most men sincerely to turn to it as something capable as revelation of proving itself profitable for instruction in righteousness. One interest inhibits the other. The inevitable law operates, To him that hath, more is given : from him that hath not is taken away that which he seems to have. The Scriptures do not enlighten the critical, any more than our Lord's parables enlightened the unfriendly or the merely curious. They see, but they do not understand.

In our approach to Scripture, therefore, we have to decide which interest is to predominate, and to direct the study we pursue. There are, for instance, many events of which there are more than one account in Scripture. How are we to approach these different narratives? The critical historian is easily induced to set one against the other, to make much of their differences, and even to insist on their inconsistencies, thus forcing the conclusion that they are, at least in some particulars, mutually exclusive, and that they cannot both be true. But if both narratives are equally accepted as inspired and written for our learning, surely the reverent disciple ought to adopt an entirely different attitude. It is for him to approach the narrative with a mind prepared to accept both, and expecting to obtain a fuller meaning from the two together, and so to gain more understanding than can be obtained from either alone. Architects' drawings commonly give an elevation as well as a plan. As illustrated by a stereoscope, bifocal vision enables men to see things in perspective. In the same way, duplicate narratives in the Bible are meant to help understanding and increase insight ; not to provide material for setting Scripture against itself. There are parts of the Bible which, as a result of critical

scholarship, are now only heard by many as a discord : whereas rightly directed scholarship and teaching ought to help Christian believers to hear in such passages not only the dominant air, but also the richness and balance of a larger harmony. " He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." That is the crux—the spiritual issue.

It is this humble, reverent, believing attitude to Scripture, the attitude of the submissive disciple, of the expectant and willing learner, which has been so largely undermined in our day. As hearers and readers of the Word we sit too much in the seat of the unresponsive if not of the critical. There is need for us all to practise in much fuller measure, and to encourage in others, a devout use of the Bible with a view to practical spiritual profit. It was the faith and experience of the Reformers that the Scriptures could be used by any and every seeking soul as a personal means of grace, as the God-appointed medium for realized fellowship with God in the Spirit. " The Scriptures were for them a personal rather than a dogmatic revelation." " To them the chief function of Scripture was to bring Jesus Christ near us." It is this use of the Scriptures that is not encouraged and practised as once it was ; and in place of which the tendency is to reintroduce (supposedly to our help, but actually to our peril) the so-called altar and the priest. The quest for God cannot be suppressed. But it is a tragedy indeed, if, in this erstwhile land of the Book, men and women, and still more children, are no longer taught to find God and to learn His ways in and through that Book.

The attitude of the Church of England to the Bible is plainly expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles, particularly, of course, in Article VI. The Holy Scriptures are there declared to be sufficient, and to contain all things necessary to salvation. They set the limits as well as the norm of Christian doctrine. " Whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith." But it is not enough to give solemn formal assent to such a declaration. What is needed is a renewed positive loyalty to this conviction both in personal discipleship and in public ministry. It is not enough to be inspired by a vague inherited Christian sentiment. It is still less satisfactory to preach such sentimental idealism, and to imagine that we

are thereby propagating the Gospel. What is needed is a renewed appeal to, and exposition of, Scriptural truth and Scriptural standards. The imagined leading of the Spirit may only result in departure from the highway of truth and life unless it comes through, or is plainly confirmed by, the teaching of Scripture. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

This is the established experience and traditional conviction of the Church. The Bible is the sufficient and final authority in all matters of doctrine, the unquestioned rule of faith and of practice. But too many of us have ceased fully to regard it, or continually to use it, as such. We do not go as we ought to the Bible for our guidance. We do not let the voice of the Spirit through Scripture settle things in our hearts or in our assemblies. We pay more heed to what this Committee "finds," or that Professor thinks, than to what the Bible says. We are not united as we ought to be because we have ceased to let the inspired word of Divine revelation be the final arbiter of our differences and the practical guide book of our counsels. We hear little of what the Spirit saith to the Churches, because we listen so little for His voice in the one place where it can most certainly be heard—in the Scriptures.

It is not that we are not often reading from the Bible. What is at fault is the spirit in which we approach its study or hear its message. The word, if it is to save our souls, needs to be received with meekness and responded to obediently. We have acquired too much of the detached mind of students, whose satisfaction is found in knowing all about it. What we need is a revival of the devotion of whole-hearted disciples, who have left all to follow Christ; and for whom His word is law. In fact, we cannot be true disciples, nor can we know the truth and be freed from our misconceptions and our bondage, unless we abide in His Word (John viii. 31, 32.)

Further, we ought frankly to face up to the Bible's own claims for itself. These claims ought to be neither evaded nor exaggerated but humbly accepted. For such submissive acceptance of the Bible's own self-authentication is fundamental to its right use. It is the indispensable test and evidence of our sincere acceptance of Scripture as the rule

of faith. There is surely no practical honesty in our professed readiness to accept the ruling of Scripture on other matters equally outside man's natural powers fully to investigate and decide, unless we are equally and indeed first of all ready to accept the testimony of Scripture concerning its own character. It is an inevitable characteristic of the supreme authority that it must be self-authenticating. Its word is the last word : the final and decisive word. Writings which make such claims for themselves as the Scriptures do must either themselves be a sufficient and final authority, or else their statements on other matters ought to be rejected as equally presumptuous. There is no middle ground for those faced, as we are, with the practical question whether as Evangelicals we will once again let Scripture be our final court of appeal in all matters of faith and practice.

There is need, then, for us to set ourselves, and to encourage and help others, not merely or primarily to turn to the Bible with trained natural powers and intellectual equipment to discover its literary origins and to evaluate and criticize its history as history ; but rather to go to it in a spirit of faith in God, believing that by His providence and through the activity of the inspiring Spirit, it has been written and preserved for our practical moral instruction ; to go to it expecting that through it the ever-present Spirit will make known to the humble and diligent seeker the character and ways of God ; to go to it praying that in and through the Book (though it is largely a book of past history) we may see and hear for ourselves the word of present revelation.

It is on such a basis, the constraining bond of a positive, practical, spiritual loyalty to the authority of Scripture (rather than by any fresh attempt to penetrate the unknowable in order to produce a more widely acceptable theory of inspiration) that there is hope of fresh union and corporate advance among Evangelicals. We shall act together, with respect for each other's scruples, and with confidence in each other's motives, when we are each and all persuaded that the one common rule of faith and practice, the rule by which, according to the light given us now or hereafter, we shall abide, is the word of God written. The relinquishing of one-sided prejudices, when it becomes necessary as indeed it must, will then no longer be a reluctant, unconvinced yielding to men of different mind, but instead a glad and

humble surrender to the compulsion of revealed truth ; that is, to the compulsion of God's Spirit ; that is, to God Himself.

For there remaineth yet much more light to break forth from God's Word. But, if we are to enjoy and benefit from its illumination, we must be as those who look for the light. We must be wholeheartedly prepared to examine ourselves by it, and then to walk in it ; otherwise, we shall be as the scribes of old, who, having the key of knowledge, entered not in themselves and hindered from entering the many who, granted a little guidance, would gladly have entered. For unquestionably with the open Book in our hands we have the key to the situation. The question is how are we using it ? May God give us the grace so to use the key of knowledge, that we ourselves, and leading multitudes after us, may enter in and follow on to know the Lord through the Holy Scriptures ! For they are still able to make us " wise unto salvation." But only " through faith which is in Christ Jesus." We can only enter in by faith, not by sight. We need, therefore, to read and to preach the Word in faith. For without faith the Bible ceases to be revelation ; without faith it is impossible to please God.

LIVING RELIGIONS AND A WORLD FAITH.

Hibbert Lectures by William Ernest Hocking.
(George Allen & Unwin.) 10s. net.

In this series of lectures the varied emphasis of the great world religions are discussed, and the reason for their emergence. Opinions are expressed on missionary method and approach : the evangelistic aggression of Christian missions is admired in some aspects but discountenanced as a policy, an attempt to discover common factors in religious experience without regard to divergent theological positions being preferred. In his final conclusions the lecturer bases his hope of an ultimate world faith on the acceptance by all of " the Christ symbol " which " as a privilege will draw all men, as a threat never." There are helpful thoughts concerning a sympathetic approach to adherents of other faiths ; but Dr. Hocking's evident disregard of the heart of the Christian message, the necessity of regeneration, his failure to point out the total lack of redemptive power in any other " world faith," or to expose the evils connected with some of these religions (the treatment of women, the caste system, temple immorality, priestcraft), leave the reader in an atmosphere of the kind of vague liberalism which has sapped the fervour and stolen the power of many a modern missionary.

NORMAN GRUBB.

Dublin's Dean

A STUDY OF JONATHAN SWIFT,
THE IRISH CHURCHMAN.

Being the Annual Memorial Discourse (slightly abridged)
delivered in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin, for 1940.

By R. WYSE JACKSON, LL.D., LITT.D.

Rector of St. Michael's Church, Limerick.

IT is in the character of Churchman and under the title of Dean that we are thinking of Jonathan Swift to-day.

He was a man of many parts, many titles, many characteristics. Few eighteenth-century characters can have had so many contradictory strains in their composition.

Jonathan Swift in his time revealed many facets to his personality and gained many assorted kinds of titles—"Poor Dear Foolish Rogue" by Stella; "The Drapier" by the Dublin Man-in-the-Street; "Gulliver" and "Bickerstaff" by his literary cronies in London; a man who "put his apostasy out to hire" by Thackeray; the pastor who "literally followed the steps of his Blessed Saviour and went about doing good" by Patrick Delaney, Fellow of this College.

It is as Doctor of Divinity, as Irish Churchman, as Pastor, Prophet and Priest, that we think of him to-day—and this was as real a side to Swift's nature as all the others. It is the happiest side—and it is the character for which he himself struggled against the odds of his own self-tortured soul.

It is not within the scope of this short discourse to attempt to unravel all the strands of Swift's tangled personality. It is not an easy undertaking, nor one particularly likely

to be successful, to attempt to psycho-analyse a man two hundred years dead.

But at least we can be sure of one thing—and the evidence does show it clearly—that ruling and guiding a tortured spirit and tortuous mind there was a very simple practical Christian creed, uncritically and faithfully believed and devoutly followed, which did bring forth its fruit of good works through that simplest and most powerful of means—prayer.

That Swift had a very real spiritual life and that he did believe in prayer is certain. Admittedly this knowledge is something which has to be dug painfully out of his life story. Many of his contemporaries looked upon him as an infidel and too few would have echoed Dick Steele's phrase and called him "a man of wisdom as well as piety." They can hardly be blamed, for Swift had the not uncommon psychological trait of being shy about showing off his religion. In its most extreme form persons like Swift often pretend to indifference, material-mindedness—a very unfortunate nervous twist for a clergyman.

But when we examine the matter more closely we find that Swift's daily prayers, quietly and regularly said in his bedchamber with his servants, were an essential part of his spiritual life. For some years before his death his last coherent words were an effort to continue his daily worship. His attendance at Holy Communion was regular and devoted, if unobtrusive. We are told, too, by Delaney, that he never missed the opportunity of celebrating the sacrament at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and that his transparent sincerity in that spiritual act was something particularly inspiring.

If we will, we can easily feel the sincerity of Swift's attitude towards the Holy Communion by reading between the lines of his scathing remark in the *Journal to Stella* :

"I was in early to see the Secretary, Bolingbroke, but he was gone to his devotions and to receive the sacraments ; several rakes did the same. It was not for piety but for employment, according to Act of Parliament."

"Some people," wrote Swift, "take more care to hide their wisdom than their folly." It was certainly Swift's misfortune that he did so, and then he only shows us his greatest depths of spiritual feeling in moments of real need, at the sick beds of his friends, to reassure those who were

in trouble, or at Stella's death-bed, when his prayers reveal a very real spirit of faith.

I should like before passing on to quote Swift's customary pupil prayer :

"Almighty and most merciful God, forgive us all our sins. Give us grace heartily to repent them and to lead new lives. Graft in our hearts a true love and veneration of thy Holy Name and Word. Make thy pastors burning and shining lights, able to convince gainsayers and to save others and themselves. Bless this congregation here met together in thy name. Grant them to hear and receive thy Holy Word to the salvation of their own souls. Lastly, we desire to return Thee praise and thanksgiving for all Thy mercies bestowed upon us ; but chiefly for the fountain of them all, Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is essential to full understanding of Swift, to realize, once for all, that in his work as a clergyman of the Church of Ireland, he was not a hypocrite nor a mere ecclesiastical politician, but a sincere and hard working member of his order.

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The time has now come to run through the more tangible part of Jonathan Swift's career as a clergyman. As we know, he was a Dubliner ; born in 1667 ; a child of unusual and somewhat unhappy upbringing ; an obscure and unsuccessful student of Trinity College, Dublin ; a back-secretary in a great house (the kind of position which entitled the chaplain to eat at the lowest place at the high table, but not to remain for dessert), and at last, in 1695, a parson in a parish of sorts.

This was Kilroot, a union of at least four derelict parishes in County Down, outlying and neglected, and as far as we can see, without any congregation.

The lot of the parson of this kind of parish was miserable in the extreme. It entailed poverty in a thatched cabin, and enforced exile from educated friends, no position worth mentioning. (A parson, "being only a gentleman by profession is inferior to him who is a gentleman by birth," as a pamphlet of 1700 says.) Swift's situation in Kilroot reminds one of that unfortunate curate who, a hundred years later,

“ . . . on every Sabbath day
Through eight long miles he took his way,
To preach, to grumble and to pray ;
To cheer the good, to warn the sinner,
And, if he got it, eat a dinner.
Thus were his weekly journeys made
'Neath summer suns and wintry shade ;
And all his gains it did appear,
Were only thirty pounds a year.”

Fortunately for Swift's sanity he soon deserted Kilroot in despair. The presbyterian bias of the district left him no scope for work and filled him with wrath.

His next benefice was the union of Lavacor in the Diocese of Meath, to which he was appointed in February, 1700.

This quiet place was Swift's favourite haunt in Ireland, and his parish for 45 years. He remained incumbent all through his Deanery days, appointing a resident curate to do the duty during his absence in Dublin. What one likes about Swift's attitude towards Lavacor was his refreshing and rather surprising willingness to enjoy simple things. His ability to make all his Lavacor geese into swans. His mud-floored cottage and truckle-bed on "half an acre of Irish bog" meant as much to him as his imposing Deanery house in Dublin. The cherries were more luscious in his garden and the trout plumper in his stream at Lavacor than anywhere else in the world. There he achieved that first essential of the clergyman's life—the loving of his people. They were a tiny handful ; fifteen of them, "all gentle and most simple." His parish might have become an intolerable source of inertia, with its dozen and a quarter churchgoers, plus a lunatic shopkeeper and two overbearing landlords. But happily (and this must be placed to Swift's credit) the entire parish flourished. We read how Swift even attempted to hold weekday services on Wednesdays and Fridays, a rare enough undertaking in those days. We all know the sequel—"Dearly Beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me"—but at least the effort was commendable. To do Swift justice as a country parson, we have only to contrast with the state of Lavacor entry after entry in typical early eighteenth-century Visitations. There are many—too many—notes such as the following by dispirited bishops,

“ Body of church fallen down ; Font has no pedestal ; Bible out of binding ; surplice thirty years old and mouldy ; churchyard slovenly ; curate non-resident deacon.”

It was at this period of Swift's career that Archbishop King made the suggestion that Swift, “ for his own interest as well as duty ” might bring out a book on “ some serious and theological subject,” and to get for himself some fitting “ station that may make a man easy and prevent contempt when he grows in years.”

That was a suggestion which was definitely not adopted by Swift ! But despite his refusal, he certainly was not idle. For in spite of the obscurity of his “ hedge parish,” it is obvious that Swift was already making himself known as one who would be a keen worker for the Church of Ireland. That is clear from the fact that in addition to their two official representatives (two English-born Irish bishops), the Convocation of the Church thought it advisable to entrust Swift with a kind of roving commission in Lavacor to secure the remission of the First Fruits and Twentieth Parts from Queen Anne.

On her birthday, February 4th, 1704, Queen Anne had thought fit to mark her devotion for the Church of England by making a really munificent gift—the remission of two burdensome taxes on the clergy which had been annexed to the crown by Henry VIII. It meant that she abandoned her legal claim on the first year's income of all benefices, plus one tenth of all further stipends, and it produced in due course a capital sum of money which now pays to the clergy of the Church of England no less than one hundred and sixty thousand pounds annually.

Naturally the Church of Ireland was more than a little anxious to gain a similar concession, and Swift was appointed as their supplementary spokesman.

He entered energetically into this task. Indeed, it seems quite clear that Swift was sincerely in sympathy with all that religious revival movement which marked the reign of Queen Anne.

The opening of the eighteenth century was signposted by the foundation of those twin societies the S.P.G. and the S.P.C.K. Under the benevolent eye of “ Goody Anne ”—(a sadly under-estimated sovereign) sundry societies for the Reformation of Manners were founded in quick succession.

Dozens of old institutes were invoked to prosecute sabbath-breakers and swearers. The complaint was made, that "no one but a person of quality could safely swear in a public place." Floods of tracts filtered through the country; a pamphlet for hackney-coachmen entitled, "Kind Cautions against Sweating," was succeeded by a similar one for bargees entitled, "Kind Cautions for Watermen." The Irish Convocations of 1703 and 1709 entered into the movement with an effort to encourage teaching and preaching in the Irish tongue—an enterprise which unfortunately proved to be only a flash in the pan. Swift used his peculiar talents for satire to produce some excellent and scathing Church pamphlets, notably "An argument against abolishing Christianity," "A true and Faithful Narrative of what Passed in London" (1708) and "A Project for the Advancement of Religion" (1709).

Further, to Swift is due the scheme for building fifty new churches in London and Westminster—a plan which actually passed Parliament, secured a grant of £350,000, and resulted in at least a dozen much-needed church buildings in the city.

Among these edifices which owe their begetting to Swift's pen, and which still survive, are St. Mary-le-Strand, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and that peculiarly odd church of St. George's in Bloomsbury, which is crowned by a statue of King George I.

Jonathan Swift believed in Queen Anne—perhaps more than Anne believed in him! He went so far as to plan to make her the focal point of a great revival movement. Such is the scheme of his "Project for the Advancement of Religion." It might have come about as he had planned, but for her untimely death and the coming of a century of humpish Hanoverian inertia.

However, in the meantime he did succeed in securing for Ireland the remission of our own First Fruits and Twentieth Parts. It was a slow and humiliating task that he undertook; it meant hours of intrigue and waiting in the ante-chambers of the great; it made him sigh in the stuffiness of London for the willows and quicksets of Lavacor; but he held out to the bitter end, and he was rewarded by the signing and the sealing of the grant on February 7th, 1711.

In all surveys of Irish Church history this achievement of Swift's deserves kindly remembrance. It certainly

proved an inestimable boon in the early days of the nineteenth century when the call came for scores of new church buildings throughout our countryside.

After this exploit it was inconceivable that Swift should be left much longer in Lavacor. Less able men, and men who had done no such service for their church had achieved the purple, including a whole horde of Lord Lieutenants' chaplains. But unfortunately for Swift, there was a barrier to promotion; the fact that Queen Anne and Archbishop Sharpe had read and had been shocked by "A Tale of a Tub." Reading it to-day, it is hard to blame them; it must be said that Swift's satire in this book exceeded all the limits of decency. But strangely enough Swift appears to have failed to understand Queen Anne's objection, and protested (quite sincerely and honestly) that the object of the tale was "to celebrate the Church of England as the most perfect of all others in discipline and doctrine," and that he would "forfeit his life if any one opinion could be fairly deduced from that book which was contrary to religion or morality."

To correct abuses was indeed the aim of all Swift's satirical writings (except for certain cases in which his own abnormal characteristics have obscured his vision). His intention was to chastise vice and to shame sin into repentance. Throughout his writings he is a prophet, with all the characteristically violent fire of the true prophetic line, whether it be Amos tilting at the "Kine of Bashan that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy," or John scourging a "generation of vipers," or the Dean himself flaying the oppressors of the peasant, and snarling, "I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children." (A Modest Proposal.)

His cruel cutting satire was his usual method, as he confessed himself.

His main plan for reforming men seems first to have been the application of the cauterizing power of ridicule to make sin uncomfortable, and secondly the power of habit to make a constrained fondness eventually become second nature.

Lord Orrery expresses this aim clearly in his "Remarks":
"To correct vice, by showing its deformity in opposition

to the beauty of virtue ; and to amend the false systems of philosophy, by pointing out the errors ; and applying salutary means to avoid them, is a noble design. This was the general intent, I would fain flatter myself, of my hieroglyphic friend."

He was actuated in his satirical writings by a burning passion for justice and truth and by a hatred for selfishness, cruelty and wrong. That is the motive power of his Irish pamphlets rather than any kind of naturalistic ideology. But sheer humanity and Christian justice drove him to lash the oppressors of the Irish people with all the virulence of a bitter tongue. It was not in his nature to observe with complacency the contrast between what the Irish peasant was potentially—a cottager of "good sense, humour and raillery"—and what the Irish peasant had been made—"a wretch . . . forced to pay for a filthy cabin and two ridges of potatoes treble their worth," and "brought up to steal or beg for want of work." ("Maxims controlled in Ireland.")

It is time for us to return to Swift's ecclesiastical life. We left him securing the grant of the First Fruits for the Church of Ireland, and by way of reward he was appointed by warrant of April 23rd, 1713, to the Deanery of St. Patrick's.

In his clerical work he proved himself full of energy and enthusiasm, and his tireless work in Dublin raised the religious standard of the Cathedral out of all recognition.

The brief space available in this article allows of little but a cramped catalogue of some of Swift's activities during his thirty-two years of Deanship.

In the first place, he improved the quality of the services immeasurably. He restored the weekly Communion—for a century St. Patrick's was the only church in Dublin where this rule prevailed. He inaugurated a Sunday afternoon Evensong with sermon. He attended the French Huguenot service held in the Lady Chapel. He himself endeavoured to correct and train up young preachers. Dr. Delaney's account of Swift's method is quaint—how he pulled out pencil and paper when anyone got into the pulpit, "and carefully noted every wrong pronunciation or expression that fell from him. Whether too hard, or scholastic (and of consequence not sufficiently intelligible to a vulgar hearer), or such as he deemed in any degree improper, indecent, slovenly or mean ; and those he never failed to admonish

the preacher of as soon as he came into the Chapter House." To assist neophyte preachers he published an admirable treatise on the subject—a Letter to a Young Gentleman Lately Entered into Holy Orders. He himself was a careful and simple preacher, and if not a great orator by nature, he certainly succeeded in attracting his hearers, for on the fifth Sunday of the month when he preached in St. Patrick's, his congregation numbered not less than one thousand.

He drilled and dragooned a lazy, insubordinate choir, scoured England for new voices, and watched them and ruled them with a rod of iron, until at last he created that splendid body of vicars-choral which assisted Handel at the first production of the Messiah in 1742. Swift was not by nature musical, and those who doubt his religious sincerity may well be referred to that letter which he wrote to Lady Cateret on the use of music in the Divine Service: "For my own part, I would rather say my prayers without it. But as long as it is thought by the skilful, to contribute to the dignity of public worship, by the blessing of God it shall never be disgraced by me; nor, I hope, by any of my successors."

It ought to be held to the credit of Swift's good taste that he did appreciate his great gothic church in Dublin. He was, perhaps, almost alone in his enlightened attitude in that age when Deans pulled down their mediaeval cathedrals, as in Waterford; or stripped the roof off, as in Caspel, or let them fall down, as in Kildare; or plastered them with cheap pseudo-classical ornament as in Limerick. Swift did none of these things, but worked hard and spent money lavishly to improve St. Patrick's.

Although (for almost the first time in history) Swift built up a credit balance in the economy fund, the receipt books of St. Patrick's are full of items which show his care and his desire for decency and order. For instance, during one year, 1736, the following list of improvements is recorded: Painting; draining and cleaning of the Poddle sewer; timber covering laid over the Poddle; smith's work; five brass clasps for Bibles; repairing the bells; mason's and carpenter's work; carver's work done on the organ; painting the church doors; gilding and painting the choir; glazing; brasses for the tenor bell; transcribing the choir books;

a green bag for the chapter books ; taking down and cleaning the candelabra.

The list could go on without end—all kinds of improvements and additions innumerable were made by him through the thirty-two years of Deanship. Almost at random we note his preservation of ancient records and search for lost documents ; his planting of the churchyard with elm trees ; the bell, clock and fire engine which he provided ; his rebuilding of the organ ; the campaign to preserve and erect monuments.

When we consider how little needed to be done in those days by a Dean ; when we contrast the condition at the same period of Christ Church, Dublin, or St. Canice's, Kilkenny, which was reported as dilapidated, dirty, and having only one service a Sunday, we cannot help feeling that Swift's heart was in his work as a dignitary of the Church of Ireland.

But it is possible to be a good cathedral administrator and a brilliant writer of Christian propaganda without being a real pastor. Jonathan Swift was all three things. And as a slum parson, Swift was unsurpassed.

The Liberty of the Dean of St. Patrick's—the slum area around the Cathedral which was inhabited by the weavers of Dublin—was a notoriously lawless and poverty-stricken district. Around its narrow malodorous streets toiled Swift, the perfect "walking parson," "absolute Monarch of the Liberties and King of the Mob," as he said, idolized by his simple people, saluted by all, and conscientiously returning the bows of his parishioners until he wore out his hats before their time—he often said that the Liberties ought to pay him 40s. a year for wear and tear in beavers caused by acknowledging salutations !

His interest in these poor people was not solely a courtesy or a spiritual one. He worked indefatigably to foster their industries and to improve their business standards ; out of his own pocket he founded a system of loans to put struggling tradesmen in the way of earning a living ; he badged and organized and provided for the beggars ; he built an almshouse for widows at his own expense ; he started a charity school for boys ; he ministered daily to a long queue of human derelicts.

It is said that Swift gave not less than one-third of his

income in charity. The receipt books of St. Patrick's are full of entries like that of March, 1720—"Ordered that forty pounds be given to the poor weavers as their charity." His pockets were always filled with an assortment of coins to be distributed to his poorer people, and at every street corner lived one or other of the quaint old women whom he financed—"Stumpa-Nympha," without arms or legs; "Flora," who sold bunches of violets; Pullagouna, who plucked at his coat tails and begged for sixpence, and many another. "Here," said Dr. Delaney, Swift's friend and contemporary, "he literally followed the example of his blessed Saviour and went about doing good."

JOHN FOXE AND HIS BOOK

By C. F. Mosley, M.A. (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.) 12s. 6d.

This is a useful, straightforward scholarly book. It contains four chapters on the martyr's life, five on his book, and a short chapter in conclusion, summing up results. The first chapter is occupied in proving the genuineness of the memoir of Foxe, made by his second son, which was seriously disputed over a hundred years ago by Dr. S. R. Maitland with sufficient success to discredit it and its subject in the minds of most historians since. The family life of John Foxe, his exile, and his career subsequent to his return are followed with sympathetic interest. We are shown in some detail Foxe's plans for his great book and his methods as an author. A chapter is devoted to his opponents, and two to special features of the book's contents that call for elucidation.

It is very refreshing in these anti-Protestant days to find Foxe and his work so ably and convincingly defended and the Protestant public is under a debt to the author. The book is excellently annotated and authorities are given in a way which shows the careful mind of the trained historian. The work will appeal to the scholar and its influence in helping to re-establish Foxe in his rightful place in the esteem of historians and of the general public should be considerable. The book should also be appreciated by a wider public, and ought to be in the possession of all those who are interested in our great Protestant heritage and who strive to hand it on unimpaired. It will be very useful as a book of reference. It lacks vitality of style, which, perhaps makes it difficult to read from beginning to end, yet all who so read it will be well repaid.

B. E. C. A.

Baptismal Disgrace

THE REV. ALEC R. VIDLER.

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I LATELY came upon this sentence in a novel: "She was *a large vague lady*, who seemed to spend her days in forgetting what she had just done, and meaning to do something which she never had time for." It is a sentence that may be applied without injustice and, I hope, without impropriety to the Church of England, not to mention other churches, in regard to the theology and practice of baptism.

In the theological section of a library, with which I have reason to be familiar, there is a whole stack of books on the subject of the eucharist. On the shelves reserved for the subject of baptism there are precisely twenty volumes, none of which was published since 1925, and only two of which were published in this century. This fact is a symbol of the neglect into which the subject has fallen.

I have, however, recently derived some encouragement from the discovery that among the younger clergy there are some—perhaps many—who are determined to think this matter out and, so far as it lies within their power, to bring practice into line with principle. When I was myself a parochial clergyman, my conscience was uneasy on this score.

If we turn to Holy Scripture, as we are bound to do, we are met by the initial difficulty that the teaching about baptism which it contains refers apparently to the baptism of adults, whereas our problem to-day is connected with the baptism of infants. I intend to keep my remarks close to that connection, but I would first observe that the theology of adult baptism is comparatively straightforward and its practice comparatively free from anomalies.

It is when we turn to consider the theology and practice

of infant baptism that the particular problems plainly arise to which I wish to call attention. If infants were baptized at all in New Testament times (which is quite doubtful), it was as members of Christian households. Adult baptism was the norm, and infant baptism was exceptional, and it continued to be so with certain variations of custom until the so-called establishment of the Church under Constantine. But with us infant baptism is the rule, and not the exception, and as a matter of course we baptize children who are born into households which even the most brazen latitudinarian would hesitate to call Christian. What, then, do we believe about baptism? The grace of baptism is said, in the Church Catechism, to be "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." How is that so in the case of infants? In the case of adults, the baptized have actual sins for which they are penitent and of the forgiveness of which they are by means of the sacrament consciously assured. But infants have no actual sins, nor are they conscious of any benefits received.

What about original sin? Does that need to be forgiven? Far be it from me to deny that sombre truth about our human condition which the unhappily chosen term "original sin" is designed to assert. We cannot, however, assert it now in quite the same form as our forefathers did. In their view the doctrine of original sin was dependent on an historical fall of Adam, on the literal truth of the story in the Book of Genesis. Christian theology is handicapped by a failure to have reasserted this doctrine in a form that commends itself to the intelligence of those who are willing enough to acknowledge the truth which it expresses. Clearly, there is no shortage of material out of which to reconstruct the doctrine of original sin.

What, however, is less clear is that, when the doctrine has been thus reaffirmed, we shall still be able to attribute to infants sins which need to be forgiven or guilt which needs to be remitted. If new-born infants were guilty before God and in danger of condemnation to hell or only in danger of going to limbo (whatever that may mean), and if baptism were the only means known to us by which that guilt could be remitted and that danger averted, then obviously it would be a duty to baptize as many infants as possible. We ought in that case to baptize infants not only

as indiscriminately as we do at present, but far more indiscriminately. We ought to imitate the curious stratagems said to have been employed by the Jesuits in North America, who, under cover of conversation with the parents, would secretly flick a few drops of water on a child, as they whispered the baptismal formula.

On the other hand, if, as I maintain should be the case, the only children to be baptized were those born into a household or the household of faith, it would still be true to say that baptism is for the remission of sins, but in a somewhat different sense—namely, in the sense that by baptism the infant is admitted into the redeemed community, the community whose characteristic function it is to receive, witness to, and mediate the forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus. Baptism is the rite by which children enter this community, but the rite is significant and its potency becomes effective only if it is followed up by education within the community.

Tertullian quaintly said: "We little fishes, after the example of our great fish Jesus Christ our Lord, are born in the water, nor are we in a state of salvation except by abiding in the water." The Church has no right to allow children to be born in the water unless it has taken every possible step to see that they are going to be kept in the water. Baptism is the supernatural means by which children are declared to be children of God and enabled to live under His kingly rule, but it is this on condition that upbringing in a Christian home or within the Christian family is assured. It is the initiation of churchmanship or it is a sheer anomaly. Divorced from its consequences and treated as a separable rite, it is deprived of its proper significance and effect, and admits of no theological justification. The word "magic" might be applied far more appropriately to the popular attitude to baptism than to any forms of eucharistic devotion, and bishops who wish to regiment their under-shepherds and their flocks would find better scope for disciplinary action here than there.

It is true that the judicious Hooker and the most esteemed Anglican divines of the seventeenth century held, when the question was raised whether the children of unbelieving parents ought to be baptized, that they ought to be. And within the terms of the motion as it then stood they were

right. For, on the one hand, the point then in dispute was whether the regeneration of infants in baptism was dependent on the holiness of their parents—that is, on human merit—or whether it was due to the unmerited mercy of God. And, on the other hand, in those days it could reasonably be assumed that the children of unbelieving parents would be brought up as Christians. If they were not born into *a* household of faith, they were born into *the* household of faith. The national Church with its all-embracing parochial system could be relied upon to do in general what particular parents might fail to do. Those conditions no longer hold good.

I must now turn to consider some of the objections that will be raised against the practical proposals which would result from an endeavour to act upon the theological principles which I have asserted.

First, it may be said that, while theoretically it may be difficult to justify our present practice, yet it is the genius of Anglicanism to subordinate logic to life, and one must be prepared for some anomalies in any church system, and anyhow it is a good thing that people should respect the Christian religion if only to the extent of wishing to have their children baptized. To that class of objection I would reply, first, that I do not dispute the genius of Anglicanism, but just because that is its genius, the abuses to which that sort of genius is prone want watching for all the more carefully. Secondly, I agree that there will be anomalies in any church system, but that is no reason for acquiescing in any and every anomaly, and the question here is whether we have not to do with an anomaly which ought not to be tolerated any longer. Thirdly, with regard to the question of retaining what respect is shown for the Christian religion, anyone who takes the theology of baptism seriously will see at once how derogatory it is to the sacrament simply to use it as a device for retaining respect for the Christian religion. Moreover, if indiscriminate baptism is held to be a good way of making or keeping contact with people who otherwise do not come to church, why should not the holy communion be treated in the same way? I have yet to learn that one sacrament of the gospel is more sacred than the other. Yet there are, I believe, Anglicans who adopt a rigorously exclusive attitude to the admission of devout

Nonconformists to holy communion in *all* circumstances, and who at the same time are willing to baptize children from non-Christian homes in almost *any* circumstances.

Secondly, the objection may be raised that it will be unreasonable to restrict baptism to the children of parents who "communicate at the least three times in the year," if indeed that should be the test, and at the same time to go on marrying non-communicants in church. With this I agree, but I deny that it is an objection. I would add that, if our baptismal discipline is to be reformed, it should be accompanied by a reformed discipline in regard to confirmation as well as marriage.

Thirdly, it will be said: Why make the children suffer because of the sins or shortcomings of the parents? But the child will suffer anyhow from the lack of a Christian home; baptism, so far from preventing that, will only camouflage it. Or it will be said that we have no right to refuse children the benefits of baptism. We should remember the text: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." This objection springs from sentimentality. There is no benefit in baptism out of the context of churchmanship.

I want in conclusion to consider what prospect there is that action will be initiated on the lines that have been indicated. It may be thought that we ought to wait upon the hierarchy for a lead; if that were given it would probably be more effective than any other course that can be proposed. But the bishops, it seems, are kept much too busy amid many obstacles in keeping the existing ecclesiastical machinery running to take an unprompted lead in radically reforming it, especially at a point where little hard thinking has been done by their advisers and which they may shrewdly and justly suspect would add a fresh hornets' nest to their difficulties.

May we then look to the inferior clergy not merely to talk and to agitate but to act—or even to the laity? The laity at present have little say in the conduct of church affairs, except the few who find clerical company and a clerical outlook congenial. I have been led to suppose that there is a number of the inferior clergy who are giving much thought to this matter and whose opinion is hardening in favour of taking some such provocative action as might force the issue to a head. It is interesting to observe that

keen sensitiveness to this issue cuts across all the older party alignments in the Church, just as all schools of thought have been equally offenders in the past. It may be that we should need to see some clergymen being persecuted or giving up their livings for faithfulness to theological convictions about baptism before the conscience of churchmen would be sufficiently stirred to forward a general reform of ecclesiastical discipline.

It would be the duty of any clergyman, who despaired of being given a lead and who felt impelled to take such action as was open to him in conjunction with others who had a similar determination, not only publicly to explain what he proposed to do and why he proposed to do it, but also privately to interview all parents who sought to have their children baptized. He would try to show them that "baptism is meaningless unless the child is . . . to be brought up in the household of faith," and that in existing circumstances there can be no assurance that this will probably happen unless at least one of the parents is living as a member of the Church. Would it be disingenuous for him to recall that an Englishman is not a hypocrite? He means what he says, whereas apart from this condition the baptism service involves saying what he does not mean.

This would have to be done with a resolute conviction, but also with sympathy and discretion, for it is not the parents who are to blame for the present state of affairs. The whole Church, and not least the clergy themselves, are to blame. It is only as part of a penitent and radical endeavour to reform the discipline of the Church that the abuses connected with baptism can rightly be approached. Such an endeavour would have to begin somewhere.

In one way or another we must assert that the Church depends for its true life not on its popularity, nor on its numbers, nor on the efficiency of its organization, but on its faithfulness to the Word of God. Upon that depends its moral power, which to-day is conspicuous by its absence. A Church which set about taking itself and its principles seriously would be an offence to many; it may be that in the present situation the Church will have either to become an offence to many or to cease to count for anything.

Original Sin

THE DEFENCE OF AN UNPOPULAR DOCTRINE.

T. MILLER NEATBY, M.A., M.D.

(Continued from the July number.)

III

INEXTRICABLY associated with the doctrine of Original Sin is that of the Fall. Now the lower his original status is presumed to be, the shorter the distance the First Man had to fall. Hence some evolutionistic theologians do their best to represent the Adam of the Garden as something not too far above the level of the brutes. The idea, apparently, is to hunt with the Darwinian hounds and at the same time to enable the Genesis hare to get away without too much loss of fur. To change the figure, let us see what success they have in their attempts to save something from the wreck of Eden.

The view of Augustine, called by Emil Brunner "the classical doctrine," regarded Adam "as a mature, highly developed being, with a soul endowed with original righteousness, endowed with the *liberum arbitrium* (free choice), a perfect creature." We are told that natural science has destroyed this picture. But the Bible is not responsible for the pictorial flights of St. Augustine.

Dr. Hitchcock reminds us that Irenæus described Adam as *nēpios infans*,¹ regarding him as "in a child-like, undeveloped condition"; that Clement of Alexandria said that "he was not made perfect in respect of his constitution, but in a fit condition to receive virtue"; and that Adam is nowhere represented as perfect in canonical or patristic writings. This is certainly nearer the truth of Scripture than is the Augustinian doctrine. We shall see presently that Adam was hardly child-like as we understand the term.

¹*nēpios* is the word used in Gal. iv. 1-5 of the child under age, not yet enjoying the status of a "son"—not "on his own," but in the tutelage of guardians "appointed of the father."

But "perfect" in the Scriptural sense of "mature," "of full spiritual growth" (*teleios*) he certainly was not; nor had he, strictly, "original righteousness." We cannot regard as "perfect" or "righteous" an untried being, a being to whom good and evil are terms of no significance. He is rather "innocent" than righteous, like a child before the age of responsibility. At the same time, having been created by God "upright" (Eccl. vii. 29) and "very good" (Gen. i. 31), and therefore destitute of all bias towards evil, he differed to that extent from every "child" that has lived since then. But he has the *liberum arbitrium*, the free choice postulated by Augustine, upon which, indeed, the story of the Temptation hinges.

"It is clear," says Dr. N. P. Williams, "that the physical and mental state of the first man is not conceived as being very far exalted above that of the beasts."

To most readers of the first two chapters of Genesis this will seem anything but "clear." It may seem even less "clear" when they learn that it is based on the story of the animals being brought to Adam to be named (Gen. ii. 19). True, Dr. Williams omits to mention that that was the purpose of the gathering. Instead, he states that "the sole object of the creation of the animals, according to the Yahwistic narrative" (but might not E or P or some ingenious combination of E or P with R, or possibly R₁ or R₂, furnish an equally reliable source?) was to provide Adam with a suitable companion. The fantastic suggestion seems to be that the beasts did not look so different from Adam and that one of them might have "done." "The various existing species of brutes," says Dr. Williams, "represent so many unsuccessful experiments made to this end by the Creator." But Adam was apparently hard to please. It was as if a man wanting a pair of shoes had been shown by his bootmaker a large assortment of hats and fancy goods, and after trying to adapt them to his feet had insisted on a pair made on his own last. Dr. Williams's Yahweh must have been the most incompetent demiurge ever dreamed of in the wildest mythology. He even brought the "fowls of the air" (v. 19) if haply Adam might find a likely consort among them.

But let us consider seriously what Genesis tells us about Adam's status. What he was like physically, we are not

told; we are merely told that God created him a man. Concerning his mental and moral status we are entitled to make several inferences. He was made "in the image of God"—an expression which, taken in conjunction with the incidents of the story, must connote (whatever else may be implied) the capacity of the man to hold converse with his Maker. This surely is an indication of a mental status far above the highest of the beasts.

He was put in charge of a large and beautiful garden, "to dress it and to keep it." This surely implies a status far above that of the most intelligent of the anthropoid apes. That the animals were brought to Adam to be named, implies in him an intelligent insight into the habits, powers and uses of the various species, which enabled him to give them appropriate names. The use of appropriate language, of course, presupposes the faculty of speech.

Adam, then, was made by God "very good"—of good understanding, endowed with the faculties of speech and language, untainted by evil, unbiassed towards sin, able to commune with God, but indiscriminative of good and evil—a being of high excellence in an order not the highest.

All this clearly lifts the Adam of the Bible immeasurably above the beasts and reveals the gulf that yawns between him and that Adam of the evolutionists after which these theologians would seem to hanker.

The modernizing views of the Fall and of Original Sin have plainly been formed under the influence not of a closer study of the Bible, but of the teaching of evolution. No philosophical theory has done so much to disintegrate the Christian faith as the doctrine of the evolution of man from the lower animals. The doctrine of sin, under its onslaught, is the first to suffer, and is in danger of an almost complete eclipse. Oliver Wendell Holmes, for example, a theist and a religious man in his way, inferred from Darwin's theories that man's responsibility and consequently man's sin had greatly shrunk from what they had been thought to be. "Original" sin, in particular, has disappeared altogether, camouflaged as the survival of animal propensities.

There is, however, another reason than the pseudo-scientific for the revolt against "original sin." It is thus expounded by Dr. Hitchcock: "This doctrine has weakened the sense of responsibility for sins we have actually

committed. For if the evil that is in us can be even partially traced back to some universal moral catastrophe, moral evil, which is thus attributed to an inherited bias, is extenuated."

Dr. N. P. Williams (*op. cit.*) writes: "The hypothesis of an inbred tendency to sin, with the element of qualified determinism which it must always involve, would have been profoundly uncongenial to them (the great prophets) as apparently offering an easy excuse for continuance in evil-doing to the indolent and the hypocritical."

Dr. Simpson (*Fact and Faith*) speaks of original sin as a condition which "robs those acts that are dependent upon it of a portion of their spontaneity and therefore of their full right to be regarded as sins," though he allows that Christian theology has always refused to regard "original sin" as a mitigation of personal guilt.

The contention, in short, is that the doctrine of original sin tends to deprive man of responsibility by determining his actions. It may be doubted whether any man with an awakened conscience, like David when he wrote the 51st Psalm, ever felt that the sinful bias of which, like David, he was conscious excused the sinful act. It may be doubted whether such an one ever attributed the "moral evil" of his conduct to "an inherited bias" or a "universal moral catastrophe" or considered that his evil acts had lacked anything of "spontaneity."

That "the indolent and the hypocritical" and other unconscientious people have often pleaded the original infection of their nature as an excuse for wrongdoing is doubtless true. In ignorance of theological doctrines, they have often pleaded their inherited nature as an excuse for their personal acts.

But can we regard such an excuse as valid? A bias towards evil in our nature provides a test of our virtue. It may not be the only test, but it is a test. Is a man entitled to bar any test of his virtue?

Man, biologically, is exposed to two influences—heredity and environment. If he may bar heredity, may he not equally bar environment? May he not plead that the "moral evil" of his conduct is due to the pressure and bias exerted by an unfavourable environment? May he not claim that an evil environment for which he is not

responsible has robbed his wrong acts "of a portion of their spontaneity?"

As a matter of fact, that is precisely what men are doing every day. They are not only asking, "How can I do right with the handicap of a sinful nature?" but they are asking, "How can I do right when so much in my environment is hostile to the right?" "How can I do right in an office or a workshop where the atmosphere is charged with profanity and obscenity?" "How can I do right when I live in a slum?" And so on, and so forth.

Adam's position was different from ours in that he started without any "original sin," without any bias towards evil. But he became in his fall the father of a race, the members of which were bound to him and to one another by ties that are expressed both in heredity and environment and that make up what we call the solidarity of the race. Dr. Hitchcock seems to admit this when he says, "The human race being one organism there is a racial evil in which the race as a whole is involved and in the effects or liabilities of which it shares." And he adds: "The solidarity of man in sin seems to be the contradiction of personal responsibility."

Our position, then, is different from Adam's at the time of his fall, in that he was an unrelated individual, whereas we are members of a race, inheriting, along with all manner of physical, mental and temperamental tendencies and aptitudes, the testing handicap of a sinful bias. It is the height of ineptitude to quarrel with the constitution of nature. When Margaret Fuller announced, with strange lack of humour, her intention to "accept the universe," Carlyle said, drily, "'Gad, she'd better." Heredity is there, and we must "accept" it. The principle was familiar to those of old who said that "the fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge."

The fact that the greater prophets, whom Dr. N. P. Williams quotes, laid "insistence upon individual freedom and responsibility" in such sayings as "In those days they shall say no more 'The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge,' but . . . 'every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge'" (Jer. xxxi. 29), does by no means disprove the saying that the children's teeth are set on edge by the action of their

fathers—does by no means prove that the prophets themselves denied the truth of the saying.

The Jews of Jeremiah's day were doing what the carnal of all times have done and are doing—seeking a shelter for their carnality in inherited predispositions, the grapes that their fathers had eaten. The scourge of the prophets fell upon them, reminding them with imperious force of the twin truth that the carnal were themselves eating sour grapes and setting their own teeth on edge.

IV

The reconciliation of the solidarity of the race with the full responsibility of the individual is an old problem which is ever with us ; but it is a problem that certainly cannot be solved by getting rid of original sin. Paul teaches individual responsibility with unsurpassed directness and power. He also teaches, as we are about to show, our moral solidarity in the sin and death of the First Adam, and not only, in Dr. Hitchcock's words, " our moral solidarity in the righteousness and life of Jesus Christ."

One last word before passing on to the direct witness of Holy Scripture. The apostle speaks of those " who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," meaning those who, not having received a formal and explicit law, could not be regarded as law-breakers. But Adam's sin was in another respect unique and even miraculous—in that, having a sinless nature, a nature unbiassed towards evil, he embraced the evil when it presented itself. To reject Original Sin means that that miracle must be repeated in every son and daughter of Adam to remotest time. From such a multiplication of miracle the reason revolts.

The Witness of Scripture. What is the Biblical evidence of the doctrine of Original Sin ?

Dr. Hitchcock says : " The Scriptural warrant at present of the ecclesiastical doctrine seems to be an erroneous rendering of two Greek words."¹ But this is to underestimate very gravely the Scriptural warrant.

That the Old Testament contains no direct reference to the story of the Fall is the old argument, always precarious,

¹ The reference is to the words *eph' hōi* in Rom. v. 12, correctly translated (A.V. and R.V.) " for that " : mistranslated (margin) " in whom."

from silence. It might similarly be argued that the Jews had no knowledge of Adam himself, because he is not referred to at all after the early chapters of Genesis (except in the doubtful instance of Job xxxi. 33). But if the Old Testament makes no reference to the Fall, it certainly refers several times to that "fallenness" which implies a Fall.

"Who," asks Job (xiv. 4), "can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" So defiled, through and through, is the nature of man that a clean thing cannot be got from it. Again (xv. 14, 15), "What is man that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? . . . The heavens are not clean in his sight." And again (xxv. 4), "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Jeremiah, too, says (xvii. 9) that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."¹

Of Psalm li. we have already spoken.

The often-quoted passage from the second book of Esdras does not carry canonical authority, but it points to the prevalence of the belief amongst the Jews that sin is an hereditary transmission from Adam. "A grain of evil seed was sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, and how much wickedness hath it brought forth unto this time!"

Allusions of this sort are all that we should have any right to expect from the Old Testament. Only after the coming of the Second Adam can we look for a formulated doctrine to show that, as the sin of the race is related to the disobedience of the First Adam, so the redemption of the race from that sin is related to the obedience of the Second Adam.

Dr. Hitchcock asserts that the New Testament does not teach the Fall of Man, and makes play with the fact that St. Paul speaks of a "fall" of the Jews but not of a fall of Eve, whose sin is called a "transgression." But how does this benefit Dr. Hitchcock? If a thing is there, what matter about the name? A fall by any other name will bring a man with just as unpleasant a bump to the bottom. We are wont, quite rightly, to characterize the change from a state of

¹ Dr. N. P. Williams's note on this is curiously unconvincing. He says the verse "does not affirm a radical evil in human nature; it is merely a practical aphorism." Not a radical evil?

innocence to a state of sin as a "fall." And where the state of sin becomes the fixed inheritance of the race, we may well call it the Fall of Man.

That there was such a Fall is the clear—one might almost say, the express—teaching of St. Paul, both in Rom. v. 12-21 and in 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. The teaching of the second half of Rom. v. is easy as to its main gist, but (largely owing to defective translation from a somewhat obscure original) difficult in its details. This passage teaches quite unequivocally that death came into the world through sin (v. 12, "by one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*"). But in vv. 15 and 17 it is stated that "through the offence of one many be dead" ("the many died," R.V.) and that "by one man's offence death reigned by one" ("through the one," R.V.). Death being due to sin, it is clearly implied that "the many" have themselves become infected with sin. As this is through the offence of one, the argument is complete—"the many" have derived their infection of sin from "the one." But it is not only implied that "the many" have been thus infected; it is categorically asserted that "all have sinned" (v. 12).

Let us look particularly at the 12th verse. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon ("unto" R.V.) all men, for that (*i.e.*, on the ground that) all have sinned."¹ The verbs translated "entered into" and "passed unto" are the same except for the prepositions that enter into their composition. "Sin *came into* the world by one man, and death [*came into* the world] through the sin, and so death *came across* to all men." But should a man die for the transgression of another? No, and lest any should think so, the apostle adds "for that all have sinned." If they die, they die for their own transgression.

But what of the words "and so" and the preposition "across"? These words, taken together with the assertion that "all have sinned," show that *sin* "came across" from

¹ "For that . . ." is undoubtedly the correct translation. The marginal reading "in whom," *i.e.*, in Adam [all sinned], on which Augustine is said to have based his doctrine that men were reckoned as having sinned in Adam ("imputed guilt"), cannot be admitted. Dr. Bicknell thinks that "there is little doubt that the words 'in Adam' are to be supplied in thought after 'for all have sinned.'" Our argument shows that such a gloss is destructive of St. Paul's meaning.

Adam to "all men" as well as death, indeed as causing death.

The case is perhaps made even stronger by the fact that "*condemnation*" is substituted for "death" in vv. 16 and 18. This effectually counters those who would allege that Adam's sin merely brought physical death. The death is evidently spiritual death, which is alienation from the life of God.

The clinching text of Rom. v. is v. 19, "By one man's disobedience the many were made sinners." How could the many be made sinners by Adam's sin otherwise than by the transmission of a sinful nature?

1 Cor. xv. 22 teaches the same lesson (in a different connection) in the brief statement that "in Adam all die." In the light of Rom. v. this clearly means that in Adam all men become infected with a sinful nature in virtue of which they themselves sin and so incur death.

Paul's teaching is thus not doubtful, and Dr. N. P. Williams, though he does not give his consent to it, candidly admits that the apostle conceived of Adam's transgression as standing in a causal relation to the subsequent death, sin, and condemnation of his descendants. "If, then, death and sin are inseparable associates (as is implied all through vv. 12-14), the Apostle must have held that sin also—in the vague sense of inherent sinfulness or propensity towards evil—is hereditarily transmitted."

We conclude, then, that behind the lines of the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, as well as of the witness of human experience, the doctrine of Original Sin is impregably entrenched.

THE MAN FROM HEAVEN

By *Alfred Cope-Garrett*. (*George Allen and Unwin*.) 8s. 6d.

This readable "modern" life of Christ is brimful of political and psychological explanation. The deft use of local colour and custom provides a splendid background for the thoughtful and stimulating narrative. Although the writer accepts a number of Gospel miracles as historic facts, yet one misses the note of joyful abandonment to the Divine will so characteristic of the gospels. Perhaps this faulty focusing is really due to the author's own outlook. If he could rewrite it as "the Lord from Heaven" and make it orthodox it would be a delightful book indeed!

T. L. LIVERMORE.

Baptists and Church Union

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THERE can be no useful discussion without a clear definition of terms. If words convey different meanings to different people, it is obvious that interchange of opinions and convictions becomes futile. The title of this paper contains three expressions whose meaning must be clearly grasped. Otherwise confusion must ensue. What do we mean, then, by the name "Baptists?" It will be observed at once that the title implies an aggregate of individuals characterized by some common belief or practice just as we might speak of soldiers, sailors, or airmen. This designation has been chosen on purpose in preference to such expressions as "The Baptist Church," or "The Baptist Denomination" for the simple reason that the administration of baptism constitutes a sharp line of demarcation amongst all who profess and call themselves Christians. The sacrament, or rite, or ceremony is one of initiation. It is always associated with admission into the Church of Christ. But there is a deep and vital difference of doctrine as to the fit subjects for baptism, and as to the proper mode. To obviate any charge of misrepresentation or unfriendliness, let me confine myself solely to the beliefs of those Christians who take what may be called the Baptist view on the subject.

That is concerned both with the subject of baptism and with its mode. Regarding the former the Baptist position is that only those who have intelligently and consciously surrendered themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Sovereign are truly qualified for baptism. The grounds for such a view are that the New Testament always regards baptism as the outward sign and seal of regeneration. It bears the same relation to conversion as his coronation to a king. He is not made more of a king by being crowned. There have been cases in history of uncrowned kings, and

they were kings none the less ; and yet there is a wonderful seemliness and significance in the ceremony of coronation which goes far to justify and sanctify it. The ordinance of believers' baptism, as Baptists love to call it, does not derive its value and validity from any such subjective grounds. It is the express command of Our Lord Jesus Christ from His own lips, and by the pens of those who were inspired by His Holy Spirit to expound His Gospel in the pages of the New Testament. The point on which attention must be concentrated is that, according to Baptist understanding of the New Testament Scriptures, the proper subject of the sacrament is the believer. That is irrespective of all question of age. The phrase, occasionally heard, "adult baptism" is a misnomer. Age has nothing to do with this matter. The sole factor is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. With regard to the mode of baptism, it is held that the true and proper method is by immersion. The basis of that belief is again found in the phraseology of the New Testament.

Baptism of the kind just defined is practised by all churches of the Baptist persuasion, constituting a religious body of enormous proportions when it is realized that their followers are found everywhere, and, in some parts of the globe, such as the Southern States of America, they are exceedingly numerous. In passing, it may be remarked that their numbers surely constitute an answer to the possible criticism that there is here nothing more than a form of religious crankiness. It is an invariable rule that cranks of all kinds are so few as to render themselves conspicuous. On the other hand, the persistence of the practice of believers' baptism in unbroken succession for very many centuries, and its prevalence at the present day surely prove that it must be rooted and grounded in abiding truth, for otherwise it would have long since perished. Baptists, in the narrower sense of the term, explained as members of a certain religious organization, by no means exhaust the number of those who may be so described. Thus the "Church of Christ" practises believers' baptism, and so do the "Brethren," and there are probably other bodies, especially in the United States of America, who hold similar tenets.

Turning now to the word "Church." It can be said without fear of contradiction that all Baptists regard the church visible as a society, instituted indeed by the Lord

Jesus Christ, and acknowledging His authority in all things, and worthy of all honour and praise, but whose genius is economic rather than essential. It must be distinguished carefully from the church invisible which constitutes the mystical Body of Christ with its unity in variety, and variety in unity like that standing miracle, the human organism. That is the true church within whose ample confines there is a multitude which no man can number, even of those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. It must be obvious that the individualism, implied in the doctrine of believers' baptism, as just defined, makes such a view inevitable. Indeed, in the case of most Baptist causes, the local church is a self-contained and self-governing unit. All Baptist churches are congregational in policy, and it is necessary to add that the more thorough organization which has come to characterize the Baptist churches of recent years has not affected them in this particular. While there is more centralization in some respects, it is largely concerned with the financial assistance of the poorer causes. The same may be said with even greater force of all religious bodies which make believers' baptism a condition of membership.

In view of this historic and distinctive position, the question naturally arises as to the attitude of all such bodies to Church Union, interpreting the term as formal and organic co-operation. There has always been a certain measure of union and communion amongst all believers, and there will always be. There have been times and seasons when it has sunk to a very low ebb, as during those periods of religious persecution which flame out like volcanic eruptions from time to time in the history of the church and of the world. There have been other ages like that of the apostles, and this present time, when a wonderful spirit of brotherliness and fellowship has been abroad. But that is a different thing from union as the word is commonly understood in these days, and as it is exemplified in the fusion of the Methodist bodies within recent years, and the amalgamations of great Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. One rejoices to find the organization of councils for deliberation and common effort, but all these fall short of union in the full acceptance of the term.

It must be only too obvious that organic union is an

impossibility as long as Baptists maintain their distinctive views, and these go deeper than a mere matter of method in the administration of a sacrament. The keystone of the Baptist position is that the Church of Christ is constituted by those who have been born again of the Divine Spirit. These words are written in no spirit of religious snobbishness, or Pharisaism. Baptists are only too conscious of their failures and imperfections, but they humbly request that they may be judged by their ideals rather than by their actual practice, even if that be hard to reconcile with some preceding sentences, as this case will clearly show.

I refer to the question of church membership when the applicant's name happens to be already on the roll of another religious body. For argument's sake, let us cite the instance of a Presbyterian who has felt constrained to seek admission to a Baptist Church. It may be remarked that in Scotland the movement is occasionally reversed. Baptists unite themselves with one of the Presbyterian bodies. But our concern is with the exposition of the Baptist position. Such a candidate could not be received as a member until he had given satisfactory evidence that he had been genuinely converted to God in the evangelical sense of these words. He would then require to be immersed on a public profession of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, although, in the case of some Baptist Churches, baptism is optional. But that is regarded as exceptional. It must be perfectly clear and plain that, as far as any scheme of church union goes, bodies of Christians, holding such views as those just indicated, could hardly participate in anything of the kind without surrendering almost all that is distinctive in their historic witness. As it is, Baptists are divided amongst themselves, and it seems to be impossible to draw them together into anything remotely resembling amalgamation. In every department of life, union with or without uniformity seems to be an impossibility as far as anything approaching a universal scale is concerned.

It has already been observed that, as far as general co-operation is concerned, Baptists are prepared to work hand in hand with all other believers, although some qualification must be made again. It stands to reason that the strength of conviction, implied in their characteristic tenets, is bound to make them narrow and intolerant in the best

sense of these terms. There is no lack of charity and humility and courtesy involved. On the contrary, it is but an illustration of a proverb which applies to every aspect of human life and experience. I refer to the saying that birds of a feather flock together. That is inevitable in view of their habits and constitutions. That analogy will serve to explain the reason why Baptists of the stricter sort hold aloof from their fellows in common effort. They are not prompted by any spirit of exclusiveness or superiority but by reason of radical incompatibility. Oil and water will not mix. These remarks do not apply to all Baptists by any manner of means. Very many are ready to live and labour with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

With regard to the question of Inter-Communion, there are some Baptists who demand as an indispensable prerequisite for participation in the Lord's Supper that the believer should have been immersed. Many others are prepared to admit all who can claim a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ to the Communion. I should judge that the tendency described in the last sentence is on the increase. As for other religious bodies, I should think that very few Baptists would refuse to join with members of other churches, provided that such a course were acceptable to those who were in positions of responsibility. The question is not one on which most Baptists feel very deeply. Their attitude to other believers is one of informal sympathy and good-will, the extreme individualism which is so characteristic of their system tending in that direction.

The general impression, conveyed by the foregoing, may seem to be that the Baptists represent an indigestible and unassimilable entity in Christendom, but that is due to their insistence on certain truths which they believe to be taught in the New Testament with sufficient emphasis to warrant their uncompromising attitude towards them. There is nothing to be gained by the sacrifice of conscientious conviction. Nothing is so expensive as compromise. But the last word must lie with Him Who is the Author and Finisher of the Church. It must ultimately conform to His plans and designs. When it does, we shall find still deeper meaning in the famous words that in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free : but Christ is all and in all."

Totalitarian Christianity

By

ARTHUR N. PRIOR, M.A.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING Christians having been for the most part brought up to believe that "Barthianism" represents the supreme height of theological indifference to social and political issues, it has been something of a surprise to them to find Barth himself being as outspoken as he has been in the past year or two on the subject of Nazism as a political system. It is consequently not uncommon to find this new development in Barth described by English and American writers as a "recantation." Barth himself, however, is not very willing to accept this description of his latest writings; and it is plain that if his English-speaking readers are to understand him as he understands himself, a bridge of some kind needs to be built for them between the "Church Dogmatics" and "The Church and the Political Problem of our Day."

The key to a true understanding of Barth's apparent change of front lies, I suspect, in an appreciation of the fact that Barth's earlier attacks on the "social gospel," and severe restriction of his own interests to theology in a rather narrow way, at no time implied a denial of the possibility of theology sometimes having light to throw on social and political problems. What they did imply, however, and in a sense included, was a very rigorous *critique* of all pronouncements on such problems claiming to be "Christian." Before the crisis of September, 1938, Barth considered that the best service he could perform was the negative one of showing how very seldom such pronouncements really established this claim. In his lectures on "The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life," for example, he spoke very sarcastically of the easy way in which we talk about "Christian journalism," "Christian education," "Christian economics," "Christian sociology," and so on. More recently, however, he has felt a stronger responsibility to attempt to say one

or two things about the duties of the Christian as a citizen which, in his opinion, do come up to the strict conditions on which alone such utterances can claim to find a place in Christian theology.

If this reading of Barth's intentions is a correct one, the requisite "bridge" can best be provided by a statement of this critique of Christian social and political pronouncements which is implicit both in Barth's earlier writings on "pure" theology and in his more recent attempts to make such pronouncements himself. It can best be provided, in other words, by a statement of the principles by which Barth has all along evaluated the claims of utterances on social and political questions to be considered "theological" utterances.

Barth has always made it abundantly clear that his Christianity is intended to be an "all-or-nothing" Christianity. His best-known popularizer, Dr. W. A. Vesser t'Hooft, has aptly, if provocatively, called it "totalitarian Christianity." That is, Barth believes that in everything that a man thinks or does, either he thinks and acts as a Christian or he does not. There is no middle way. Christianity knows no second-bests. Of course, even the most faithful of Christians is never perfect, even in his faith, but that is what he must try to be. It is also true that we must exercise towards others the "judgment of charity," and recognize that in the last resort it is only God who knows whether a man is really trying to be a Christian or not—whether or not his actions are really done "in faith." The true Church is known only to God. But our own aim, for ourselves, must always be to act as Christians—to obey our Lord. Moreover, what we *call upon* others to do must never be anything less than to act as Christians.

In the language of Martin Buber, the absoluteness of Christianity is to be seen in the "dimension" in which we use the pronouns "I" and "Thou." Our "I" listens to the "Thou" of God and ventures to pronounce it to others, however cautious we must be in the other world of discourse in which we talk *about* people in the third person. Understanding the matter in this way, we can say that between Christianity and every other mode of thought and life there is an absolute gulf fixed, and anything that is not already inspired by the Spirit of Christ is not even on the way to becoming so. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

This "all-or-nothing" principle must be kept in mind even when we are considering our duties as citizens. We are very apt to say that patriotism, even when it is in no sense Christian patriotism, is still patriotism, and is a good thing as far as it goes. It is, as we say, a step in the right direction. But if Christianity is really as "totalitarian" as Barth makes it out to be—and as, I am convinced, the New Testament makes it out to be—this is absolutely false. It is trying to serve two masters, and tempting others to serve two masters.

Once again, we must, of course, exercise towards others the judgment of charity, and remember that no one but God knows whether any man's patriotism is really *Christian* patriotism or not. Perhaps often unexpected people—e.g., people who do not go to Church—are secretly moved by the Spirit of Christ. The real Christian patriot may be a man who is very shy of describing himself in these terms. It is also possible that the man who is most loud-voiced in describing his patriotism as "Christian" is deluding himself and others with words—saying "Lord, Lord" without really obeying or even sincerely attempting to obey Christ's will. You cannot make patriotism or anything else genuinely Christian merely by putting a Christian label on it. All this, however, does not alter the fact that patriotism which is not secretly or openly Christian is not a real virtue. Like all the other pagan "virtues," it is just, in Augustine's words, a "splendid sin."

Nothing in this whole world is absolutely sacred in itself. There is nothing sacred in itself even in our country and our national heritage. That does not mean that a Christian has no duty to love his country. It does not even necessarily mean that it is wrong for a Christian to fight for his country—Barth himself is in fact exceedingly definite in his opinion that it is *not* wrong. But if a Christian loves his country, and if he fights for his country, it must never be because there is anything sacred about his country in itself, but only because that is one of the ways in which Christ has commanded us to serve Him, and our brethren in Him.

It is wholly wrong and un-Christian to say that we must teach men to love and reverence their country first, and afterwards teach them the additional duty of being Christians. Patriotism is not a half-way-house to Christianity. Nor,

for that matter, is pacifism or socialism. There are no half-way-houses to Christianity. Patriotism may be a *part* of Christianity, part of the expression of our Christian faith and of our love to those for whom Christ died ; and it may even be the first part of it that some men wake up to ; but when it is *not* a part of Christianity it is certainly not a prelude to it but something entirely wicked and heathen.

The practical outward difference which these principles make will sometimes be very great, and sometimes quite negligible. For a large part of the time Christian patriots and other patriots, Christian citizens and other citizens, may be doing exactly the same things and doing them side by side. Perhaps, for example, people who are serving their country for the love of Christ and people who are serving it out of an idolatrous worship of their Fatherland are now fighting side by side on the battlefield. Perhaps pacifists whose action is being taken "in faith" and pacifists of quite a different kind are facing the same tribunals, and objecting to the same things. And it is not our business, it is not within our power, to judge who are performing their civil duties (whatever they may be) for the right reasons and who are not. In his letter to a French pastor on "The Church and the War" reproduced in "Theology" for March of this year, Barth said along these lines, "*Il faut en finir!*" said your Prime Minister in the hour of decision, and his English colleague repeated this declaration. The question as to how deep this resolve and this determination goes may safely be left to the sense of responsibility of these statesmen. It is certain that every Christian, too, who has followed the last years with his eyes and ears opened, must, just because he is a Christian, give his own Yea and Amen to this '*Il faut en finir!*'"

All that we can do, and this we must do, is to make sure that when *we* are performing our duties we are doing so for Christian reasons, and that when we appeal to others to do so—either individually or through the official spokesmen of our Church—our appeal is always on Christian grounds. Nor is this such a small matter as it may seem. It means, for example, outspoken words (when they are needed) on the appeals to un-Christian passions which even people in positions of responsibility are sometimes tempted to make in the stress of a struggle like the present one. And it

means equally outspoken words about pacifist utterances which appeal merely to self-interest and the desire to be comfortable.

Points are always reached, moreover, when our reasons for action do make a difference to what it is that we do and to the company in which we do it. It is not easy to lay down in advance where these points are, but we must be always on the watch for them, and never forget that being a Christian cannot mean merely doing what everybody else does (though, of course, it does not mean merely doing the opposite to what everybody else does either). It is plain that on matters directly touching the public confession of his faith the Christian's decisions are most likely to be distinctive, though even here hypocrites may make the same outward decisions as Christians, while on the other hand, we cannot exclude the possibility of distinctively Christian decisions being made at other points.

Perhaps, for example, a Christian will show a greater concern about what sort of a country it is he is serving than will a man who regards his country as sacred in itself; or, on the other hand, he may show less anxiety about this than a man who is so preoccupied with the visionary Utopia he would like his country to be that he has no time to help people here and now. On all these questions we must decide for ourselves in the light of God's Word, with as much help as we can secure from the Church as an institution and from individual fellow-Christians.

All these principles seem simple enough. And it is equally easy to see that they are in full accord both with Barth's earlier writings and with his later ones. Perhaps they will help to provide that "missing link" between the two of which his English-speaking readers feel the need.

Book Reviews

FIFTY YEARS' WORK IN LONDON (1889-1939)

By Arthur Foley Winnington-Ingram (Bishop of London, 1901-1939). (Longmans.) 10s. 6d.

A very entertaining book. It is not an autobiography ; it is anecdote with digressions. But the anecdotes are very good ; and some of the digressions are delightful. The book shows Dr. Winnington-Ingram as he is, and always has been : a fascinating boy who has never grown up. That fact is at once the secret of his perennial personal charm and the key to the irresponsibility that has shadowed his more serious work. If the good bishop is boyishly proud of all the fine things he has done and said—and they are many—and naïvely unconscious of the existence of another aspect of his career, who shall blame him ? From his earliest accession to power he has been surrounded by people who have not scrupled to exploit his innate kindliness of heart and the generosity of his disposition. Many of the clergy and even more of their wives and children have had great accession of happiness as a result of his amazing faculty of inspiring personal affection. He has also, at home and across the Atlantic, done much to give the man in the street, or the man in the Press, a view of a bishop's personality and humanness that has broken down evil tradition.

The fact that his administration of his unwieldy diocese has been hampered by his utter failure to grapple with ritual and ceremonial difficulties is not improbably due to the fact that he is not a theologian. So he has never grasped the real principles that lay behind those thorny questions. He has never understood Evangelical Churchmen, let alone sympathized with them, for the same reason. To him they have always been strange folk who obstinately refused to take him at his own valuation ; and as he was thoroughly impregnated with what we now call Anglo-Catholic principles in his formative days he has never even contemplated that those whom he did not understand might possibly be better instructed in the Faith than he was. All this comes out with refreshing candour in his own record of the things that have made the strongest impression on his memory. But when all has been said there remains the picture of a remarkable personality whose influence on his own generation it is much too soon to evaluate. He is still at work, in his own way. Like the old Roman, he will die standing !

A. M.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD :

Being Materials for the Historical Study of Christian Sociology.
Vol. ii. The Foundations of the Modern World.

By the Rev. Canon C. E. Hudson, M.A., & Maurice B. Reckitt, M.A.
(George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.) 7s. 6d. net.

This volume is a painstaking production, embodying a wealth of valuable material. It is, as the supplementary title indicates, a companion to the historical study of Christian Sociology. It covers the formative period of the modern world : the fourteenth century to the end of the eighteenth. It gives an account of the main political, philosophical, religious, and economic ideas during these centuries. The book commences with a brief historical outline of the Conciliar Movement. There follows an analysis of the various theories of Church and State held by different writers from the time of Machiavelli to that of Calvin. There is a useful chapter on the political philosophy of secularism, and the final chapter deals with the disintegration of the mediæval economic synthesis. In this concluding section there are some illuminating quotations from Puritan writers regarding Calvinism and Capitalism.

In the preface the authors state that they have "sought to put before the student the interpretations and comments of expert authorities upon the historical material selected," and that they have sought to "connect and expand this material and opinion by commentary" of their own. Unfortunately only the former objective appears to have been achieved. There is, in fact, little original and independent work. Over eighty per cent of the book consists of quotations from other writers. In an historical work careful and detailed quotations from authorities and sources are indispensable, but these quotations should be from "primary" rather than from "secondary" authorities. In this book many of the quotations (some of them over a page in length) are taken from contemporary writers, and as the works of these writers are easily accessible, there seems little need for another volume of this character.

S. BARTON BABBAGE.

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH THEOLOGY

By Walter M. Horton. (S.C.M. Press.) 8s. 6d.

This book is the work of a distinguished American theologian, who describes appreciatively and sympathetically the main streams of thought in the heterogeneous world of English theology. It is difficult for an Englishman to be completely impartial, and it is therefore probably easier for an outsider, who has read extensively, to assess accurately and dispassionately the various trends in our country. Besides a résumé of these factors, there are illuminating discussions of such ecclesiastics as Inge, Streeter, and Temple.

The writer has an ingrained antipathy towards Calvinism and Barthianism. This prejudice causes him to minimize or ignore

the reviving influence of reformed theology in this country. It is a shock to find Augustinianism described as "irrationalism and immoralism." This vehement hatred mars an otherwise creditable production.

S. BARTON BABBAGE.

FATHERS AND HERETICS.

By I. L. Prestige. (S.P.C.K.) 12s. 6d.

This book, the Bampton Lectures for 1940, is both a great and a delightful book. Its main body consists of six lectures on the faith of the formulative period of the Church's life, each deriving from a study of the life work of a great Christian thinker. Three, Callestus, Athanasius and Cyril, are fathers: three, Origen, Apollinaris and Nestorius, heretics. Not the least attractive feature of his work is that Dr. Prestige is at his best in presenting the thought of those condemned for heresy—in two instances wrongly. Nothing could be more felicitous than his judgment on Origen. "Origen is the greatest of that happily small company of saints, who having lived and died in grace, suffered sentence of expulsion from the Church on earth after they have already entered into the joy of their Lord." The whole book is lit up with such passages, together with a wealth of epigram, metaphor and illustration which makes this, a serious theological work indeed, a joy to read. It even passes the test of being read aloud which is not conspicuously true of most Bampton lectures.

The method followed is to tell the life story of each of the selected theologians against the background of contemporary thought and event, to give an account of the main theme which the father or heretic grappled with, and then to discuss it afresh as an integral part of the Church's faith. It is difficult to decide which section of each lecture is most effective. Dr. Prestige is an authority on patristic thought and moves with that ease and sureness which mark a great scholar. Consequently his brief biographies are astonishingly alive; to read them is to know the men. Especially is this true of the essay on Origen for whom the writer has almost unbounded admiration. The reader is thus carried naturally and with sympathetic understanding to the consideration of the theme discussed, and here the outstanding characteristic of the book is its fairness and balance. Nestorius is vindicated from the charge of Nestorianism: indeed the formula of Chalcedon is recognized to be, as Nestorius himself claimed, the vindication of his position, and the safeguard of that Antiochene emphasis on the reality of our Lord's manhood which we so value to-day. Yet in his next chapter on Cyril, Dr. Prestige carries one with him to an even deeper appreciation of the Alexandrine position. That he can do this in the context of a clear recognition of Cyril's unlovable character is an index of his sureness of theological touch. Attention may be drawn to two conclusions reached in the third sections of these essays. The formula of Chalcedon can seldom have

received such rough treatment from so catholically-minded a theologian. "At best, Jesus Christ disappears in the smoke-screen of the two-nature philosophy. Formalism triumphs, and the living figure of the evangelical Redeemer is desiccated to a logical mummy . . . The monophysites were horrified by the barren intellectual desert into which the gateway of Chalcedon opened, and fought raggedly but persistently to gain a more realistic outlet for Christology." That such a passage could be written is proof enough that Dr. Prestige is no hide-bound "traditionalist" in the sense of that word which he is at such pains to eradicate. Of wider importance is his application of the lessons of the early Christian centuries to the present day. He is convinced that only theological solutions of our present difficulties are worth having, and that these can only be reached in an atmosphere of sympathetic understanding of the other side and a real attempt to grasp the true emphasis underlying its often misunderstood phraseology. He might have added that in our own day a formula may be as dangerous a solution as was that of Chalcedon to the seemingly conflictory insights into the truth of Antioch and Alexandria.

The six essays have an Introduction and an Epilogue. The latter on "Devotion to the Sacred Humanity" is admittedly a sketch. It is interesting and important but shows Dr. Prestige to be less at home among the Reformers than among the Fathers. The Prologue on Tradition is much more important. It is a careful, and in many ways fresh, exposition of the meaning of that much misunderstood term. And yet it is not entirely satisfactory. If it is the duty of the Church to teach, it is the privilege of the Bible to prove. This is amplified, for example, by a quotation from St. Basil. "This does not satisfy me, that it is the tradition of the fathers: they, too, followed the sense of scripture, taking their principles from those passages which I have just quoted to you from Scripture." And yet again, "Of the subjects of conviction and preaching maintained in the Church our possession of some is derived from written teaching, but our reception of others comes by private transmission from the apostles' tradition: both these kind have the same force for religion." Dr. Prestige is conspicuously fair. After enumerating from Basil a list of such unwritten traditions he adds, "That we should be less ready than he was to ascribe them all to the actual ordinance of the apostles," and yet insists that fundamentally Basil is right. A review is no place for a full discussion of the difficulties involved here, even were the reviewer competent to enter upon it. But the point may be made that such an exposition of the Catholic standpoint makes it all the more incumbent on Evangelicals to think out clearly their own position.

D. E. W. H.

UNDER FOUR TUDORS

Edith Weir Perry. (George Allen & Unwin Ltd.). 12s. 6d.

It is no disparagement of the greatness of Archbishop Parker to admit that in part at least his greatness was thrust upon him. His natural disposition was for the life of a scholar, and had he been

allowed to determine and run his course it might have ended in the Master's Lodge at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The fortunes of his times compelled him to relinquish the life that he loved, and, later compelled him again to undertake responsibilities from which even the man of action might well have shrunk. It was the supreme task of his life to give a more settled character and direction to a Church emerging from days of passion and persecution, and that called for sympathy and forbearance more than for the weird qualities of spectacular leadership. Sympathy and forbearance Parker had in plenty, with the horror of extremes that seems almost peculiarly at home in Lambeth. But they are not the qualities about which it is easy to be most eloquent or enthusiastic. In consequence, Parker has generally left the impression that he was, even in his greatest moments, a somewhat uneasy and embarrassed person and less than justice has been done to him. Further, the partisan compels attention; but the man of moderating influence, such as Parker essentially was, must be sought out.

Mrs. Perry set herself to discover the real Matthew Parker—partly because of his historic importance as "the vital link" in the continuity of the reformed English Church, and perhaps even more because she suspected that she might resurrect a gracious personality. She is to be credited with a real measure of success. It was more than a merely romantic intuition which led her to choose as the background of her study the personal relationship between Matthew and Margaret Parker. That relationship provided the one element of continuity in a life unhappily subject to change, change which at times took on the nature of violence. Here, in more than the obvious sense, Parker was "at home." And that naturalness has served Mrs. Perry's purpose very well indeed.

It is improbable that the competent historian will find much that is new in this study of Archbishop Parker. Further, it would not be unfair to question her seeming conclusions on certain points of Church history. A pardonable enthusiasm for Parker would appear at times to mislead her into regarding him as the final formative influence in the Reformation Settlement. Occasional statements, of doctrinal concern, suffer from a clumsy vagueness—"The very ancient doctrines of the Real Presence" is a good example. But our authoress might not unfairly plead that these, even if the objection be sustained, are but incidental to her purpose. She had no easy task, and some of the more fascinating problems which confronted her remain, from lack of evidence, unsolved. Of these the most tantalizing is that of Parker's retreat and obscurity during the evil days of Queen Mary's reign. But no one, unless he be a scholar, can read *Under Four Tudors* without the reward of an intimate appreciation of a great Archbishop and of the disturbed but thrilling times through which he lived.

T. W. I.