

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

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

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

# The Churchman Advertiser.

JULY, 1934.

## **We Need Your Help Just Now**

It would be terrible to turn the Orphans adrift  
after being rescued from such tragic  
circumstances.

For the Sake of Him Who  
loves little children

Please help these Armenians

ALSO

The aged widows.

The Only Home for Armenian Aged,  
many blind, paralytic,  
all helpless except one.

The oldest widow is 102 years old.

Please help to make life's eventide  
peaceful.

The suffering Armenians need your  
prayerful sympathy.

## **Armenian Massacre Relief**

at the office of

**Bible Lands Missions' Aid Society**  
**9<sup>T</sup> Tufton Street, Westminster, S.W.1.**

HARRY FEAR, Esq., J.P., Hon. Treasurer.

Rev. S. W. GENTLE-CACKETT, Hon. Secretary.

## PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS, FORMS, ETC.

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS (POWERS) MEASURE,** with complete Text, Introduction and Notes. By ALBERT MITCHELL. Fourth Edition. 1s.

**THE ENABLING ACT** with complete Text and the Constitution of the National Assembly of the Church of England and the Representation of the Laity Measure, 1929, with Notes, Introduction, and other Addenda including Diocesan Conferences Regulation. By ALBERT MITCHELL. New Edition. 1s.

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS.** By ALBERT MITCHELL. A leaflet for distribution amongst P.C.C. members. 3s. per 100.

**PAROCHIAL ELECTORS' ROLL BOOK,** containing 100 sheets and with alphabetical index cut through. 3s. 6d.

- N.C.L. No. 1A. **APPLICATION FOR ENROLMENT ON ELECTORAL ROLL.** 1s. per 100.
- „ 1B. **DITTO.** Printed on card for Card Index System. 1s. 6d. per 100.
- „ 2. **NOTICE OF ENROLMENT OF A NON-RESIDENT.** 10d. per 100.
- „ 3. **NOTICE TO CANCEL ENTRY IN ANOTHER PARISH.** 10d. per 100.
- „ 4. **NOTICE OF REMOVAL.** 10d. per 100.
- „ 5. **NOTICE OF REVISION OF ELECTORAL ROLL.** 1d. each; 9d. per dozen.
- „ 6. **NOTICE OF ANNUAL P.C. MEETING.** 1d. each; 9d. per dozen.
- „ 7. **NOTICE OF JOINT MEETING FOR ELECTING CHURCHWARDENS.** 1d. each; 9d. per dozen.
- „ 8. **NOTICE OF P.C.C. MEETING (for Church Door).** 3d. per dozen.
- „ 9. **NOTICE OF P.C.C. MEETING WITH AGENDA.** 1s. 6d. per 100.
- „ 10B. **FORM OF PAROCHIAL VOTING PAPER,** with space for forty names. 2s. 6d. per 100.
- „ 11. **ELECTORAL ROLL SHEETS.** 2s. per 100.
- „ 12. **NOMINATION FORMS TO DIOCESAN CONFERENCE.** 6d. per dozen.
- „ 13. **NOMINATION FORMS TO HOUSE OF LAITY.** 6d. per dozen.
- „ 14. **NOMINATION FORMS TO P.C.C.** 1s. per 100.

Sample packet of above leaflets and forms, 3d. post free.

**THE CHURCH BOOK ROOM,**  
7 Wine Office Court, London, E.C.4.

# THE CHURCH HYMNAL FOR THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

APPROVED BY A REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE OF CLERGY.

*MUSICAL EDITORS :*

HUGH BLAIR, M.A., MUS. DOC. CANTAB.

LISTER R. PEACE, M.A., A.R.C.O.

MUSIC EDITIONS.

Net Prices.

Enlarged, No. 1. Complete Indexes. Cloth .. .. .	7s. 6d.
Enlarged, No. 2. For Choir Use. Cloth .. .. .	6s. 0d.

WORDS EDITIONS.

Medium Type, with musical expression marks. For Choir Boys and General Use. Cloth .. .. .	2s. 6d.
Large Type. Cloth .. .. .	2s. 6d.
Small Type. Cloth .. .. .	1s. 6d.

CHILDREN'S SUPPLEMENT, SEPARATELY.

Music Edition, Cloth, 2s. 3d. Words only, Limp Cloth, 6d. Paper Covers, 3d.

*PUBLISHERS :*

NOVELLO & COMPANY, LTD.

MARSHALL, MORGAN & SCOTT, LTD.

Special grants are made to Churches for the purpose of introducing this book for general use. Application should be made to the Secretary, NATIONAL CHURCH LEAGUE, 7 Wine Office Court, London, E.C.4.

## “ WORDS OF COMFORT ”

By MATHETES

Oxford Blue Cloth, 2/6 in box,  
2/9 post free.

**An Ideal Gift Book.**

“ Invaluable to clergy and teachers . . . ought to be read by all who are weary and heavy laden.”—*Dean Inge.*

“ An admirable little book.”—*The Guardian.*

“ Full of gentle strengthening, and comforting wisdom.”—*Rochester Diocesan Chronicle.*

“ Can be read by every anxious, troubled, perplexed soul with great profit.”—*British Weekly.*

“ Full of mature wisdom and helpful suggestions.”—*Baptist Times.*

“ A straightforward deal on questions that are affecting the daily lives of tens of thousands of people.”—*Warrington Guardian.*

Of all Booksellers, or from  
The Publisher,

“ THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
NEWSPAPER,”

17 TAVISTOCK ST., LONDON, W.C.2

## THE LAYMAN'S HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

BY

G. R. BALLEINE,  
M.A.

*Third Impression. Illustrated.*

**2s. 6d. (post 5d.)**

“ It is difficult to speak too highly of this admirable little book . . . No better book can be given to a church worker, official, or person, whoever he or she may be.”—*Liverpool Diocesan Gazette.*

THE CHURCH BOOK ROOM,  
7 WINE OFFICE COURT, LONDON, E.C.4.

# The Church and the Empire

Twenty-five years ago, when the great tide of immigration was pouring into Western Canada, this Society was following up the immigrants, sending out a large number of students, helping in their training for the ministry, and in the setting up of small prairie churches.

It was then hoped that in a very short time those churches would become self-supporting. That hope has not been realized. Desolation and destruction have stricken the whole area. The sufferings of the people are as bad as in any part of the world.

The need now is as great, or even greater, than ever. That need must be met if the Church in England is to fulfil its great mission to our own people overseas.

Your contribution would be gratefully acknowledged by the Secretary.

**THE**  
**COLONIAL**  
**AND**  
**CONTINENTAL**  
**CHURCH SOCIETY**

9 SERJEANTS' INN, FLEET ST, LONDON, E.C.4

# The Church Gazette

*Published Monthly*

**Why not subscribe to this magazine?**

**It will keep you in touch  
with current Church events**

*Specimen copy sent on receipt of address*

Subscription: 2/6 per annum post free on receipt of P.O., payable to N.C.L. Please cross "& Co." and forward to THE SECRETARY N.C.L., 7 Wine Office Court, E.C.4.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
NOTES AND COMMENTS .. .. .	165
The Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen. Important Principles involved. The Findings. Christian Unity. Disarmament. The German Church.	
THE OXFORD CONFERENCE OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHMEN. Subject: THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION	
Opening Address: THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION AND THE PRESENT DISTRESS. By the Rev. C. M. Chavasse, M.A., M.C. .. .. .	169
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. By the Rev. Stephen C. Neill, M.A. .. .. .	175
THE CONFSSIONAL IN HISTORY. By the Rev. Clifford J. Offer, M.A., F.R.Hist.S. .. .. .	183
THE PRAYER BOOK AND CONFESSION. By Canon W. H. Mackean, D.D. .. .. .	197
THE MINISTRY AND RECONCILIATION. By Canon S. M. Warner, M.A. .. .. .	206
CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE. By the Rev. S. Nowell-Rostron, M.A., B.D. .. .. .	213
A "CITY" WITHOUT THE "FOUNDATIONS." By the Rev. W. E. Chadwick, D.D. .. .. .	224
REVIEWS OF BOOKS .. .. .	228
A Fresh Translation. Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible. The New Psychology and Religious Experience. Karl Barth and Christian Unity. The Life of Cardinal Mercier. Evolution or Creation? Towards Reunion: What the Churches stand for. Modes of Faith. How Firm a Foundation. The Word to Peter. God with us. Addresses and Prayers for Women Workers. The Invisible Beam. The Education of Character. Completeness in Christ. The Life of Christ.	
NOTES ON RECENT BOOKS .. .. .	240

*All articles appearing in THE CHURCHMAN are the copyright of the Proprietors and must not be reprinted without permission.*

## Among the Eskimos in the most northerly part of Labrador

Moravian Missionaries have been working for more than 160 years. Whenever they build a Church they build a school—for the purpose of giving the children a Christian Education. The problem of educating the children has become very difficult. The Eskimos no longer live in large villages where the children can attend day-school, but in small clusters wherever they find the best hunting. Two boarding schools have had to be established—one at Nain, the other at Makkovik. At each 30 or 40 little children are fed, taught and "mothered" during the long winter. In the short summer they are with their parents, learning how to become, eventually, good hunters and housewives.

**This necessary change from inexpensive day schools to boarding schools, has laid a heavy burden on the Mission's slender Funds.**

**Will you help to educate one of these children?  
£600 per annum is required for each school, i.e.,  
£20 a year for each child.**

**Considering the urgency of the need we trust you will be moved to respond to this call.**

*Gifts will be gratefully acknowledged by*  
CHARLES HOBDAV, Esq., Chairman and Hon. Sec.  
President: SIR GEORGE H. HUME, J.P., M.P., L.C.C.

*London Association*  
**MORAVIAN MISSIONS** *in aid of*

70a Basinghall Street,  
London, E.C.2

## —a fount of Christian comfort and inspiration—

ENGLISH PREACHING was never better than it is to-day. In touch with the realities of the hour, yet confident in its possession of a gospel for this age as for all ages, it offers a consoling and a prophetic message in a language which rings true to the modern intelligence.

*A convincing proof of this assertion will be found in the new volume of the Christian World Pulpit.*

Carefully selected, and representing all the British Protestant denominations, the sermons in this volume form a great Christian apologetic—a body of luminous Christian teaching on the problems of the day—a fount of Christian comfort and inspiration.

*This is a volume of real preaching—clear, candid, disinterested—for a time of real need. It may be confidently commended to all who are seeking, amidst our modern perplexities, a religious anchorage both for heart and mind.*

Weekly 2d.

FROM ALL NEWSAGENTS

Monthly 10d.

Half-yearly volume 7/6

or direct from

### THE CHRISTIAN WORLD, LTD.

110/111, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

(Postage ½d.—1½d.—9d. respectively)

## FRESH AIR

—one of the most common prescriptions — Nature's own cure for many ills—greatly needed by many poor souls in back streets and slums. Thousands of drab, monotonous lives have been revitalized through the Church Army's Fresh Air Homes. Mothers and little ones go together, to share the joys of a real health-building respite.



**THE WORK GOES ON ALL THE YEAR ROUND.**

**£5** gives three children and mother two weeks holiday.

**£1** sends mother and baby for a week.

**Working Boys and Girls**

For these we have a Holiday Home and Camps.

**Distressed Gentlewomen**

are being provided with holidays.

**Our two Clergy Rests**

are full of those who spend their lives working for others.

*Please help these efforts. Gifts for the General Holiday Fund welcomed by Preb. Carlile, C.H., D.D., 55, Bryanston St., London, W.1.*

# CHURCH ARMY

## FRESH AIR HOMES

# THE CHURCHMAN

July, 1934.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

### The Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen.

WE have the pleasure of offering our readers in this number of THE CHURCHMAN most of the papers read at the recent Conference of Evangelical Churchmen held at St. Peter's Hall, Oxford, on April 16, 17 and 18. The subject of the Conference was "The Ministry of Reconciliation." The programme was admirably arranged so as to give adequate consideration to the many important questions involved. It was felt that a fresh examination of the full meaning of "The Forgiveness of Sin" and all that is implied in it with regard to the work of the ministry should be undertaken by Evangelical Churchmen in view of many recent developments. The New Psychology has led to the practice of Psycho-analysis as a means of removing morbid mental conditions and restoring the sufferer's harmony and balance. As a large element in the treatment consists in a form of confession it was important to see if there was anything to be learnt from this new source, as it seems to have given a fresh impulse in some quarters to the use of private confession. In the Oxford Group Movement "Sharing" takes a prominent place and here again it was thought necessary to examine its usefulness. The history of the Confessional has been associated with many abuses and the endeavour to introduce the practice of systematic confession into the Church has been naturally viewed with suspicion and disfavour by all who recognise its dangers. It was therefore essential to examine the provision made in the Prayer Book for the relief of troubled consciences and to see in what way it could best be adapted to the needs of to-day.

### Important Principles Involved.

Our readers will find that the various aspects of the subject have been treated in an able and scholarly manner, and will value the useful information given both on the history of the Confessional and on the principles that are involved. The recent proposals before Convocation for the appointment of special clergymen to act as Confessors has aroused considerable distrust concerning the future development of the practice of private confession as an ordinary and recognised practice in the life of Churchpeople. It is the first time that anything in the nature of official recognition of the practice has been suggested in any of the assemblies of the Church, and it is quite contrary to the emphatic condemnation of

the whole system which the Bishops have expressed on many occasions in the past. Fears have been expressed that it may be a step towards the re-introduction into the Church of a system from which it used to be thought that the English mind had freed itself for ever—the system which represents God as not being in general immediately accessible to penitents, but as requiring in almost every case the intervention of one of His ordained ministers to convey pardon. This was the chief feature of the medieval penitential system in which the sinner depended on the priest for the absolution of his sins, and he was thus placed in a position of dependence upon the ministry for his hope of salvation. The condition of spiritual slavery which this produced was deplorable and one of the chief results of the Reformation was its removal. It will be disastrous to the future of Christianity in this country if this medieval conception gains any general acceptance.

#### The Findings of the Conference.

The following findings were agreed upon at the final session. They are to be taken, as in previous years, as expressing the general sense of the Conference, and not as representing in detail the views of individual members.

1. There exists to-day, side by side with much indifference, a widespread desire for spiritual help and guidance. Youth is less reticent than formerly, and moral and spiritual problems are freely discussed. In view of this the Conference calls attention to the need of making full use of the adequate provision of the ministries of the Church for meeting these problems.

2. The Conference urges the clergy to put in the forefront of their ministry the preaching of the forgiveness of sins through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and not to be content until their people are living lives of direct confession to God, direct reliance on Christ, and direct communion with the Holy Spirit.

3. The Conference, recognising that sin destroys the fellowship between God and man, realises that the purpose of the Ministry of Reconciliation is the restoration of this broken fellowship. Through the death of Christ divine forgiveness is available for all who seek it, and its assurance is the proof of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of the penitent believer.

4. The Conference would point out the ambiguity in the common use of the term "Confession" and desires to make clear the distinction between "Sacramental Confession" or the "Sacrament of Penance" and spiritual consultation for the relief of burdened souls.

5. At the Reformation the medieval conception of the relationship to God depending upon auricular Confession and Priestly Absolution was rejected. The acceptance of the central truth of Justification by Faith brought the soul into immediate contact with God, and gave immediate entrance into the full assurance of forgiveness.

6. History has demonstrated that the system of habitual auricular Confession is fraught with grave danger, alike to priest and

penitent, but the Conference holds that the special confession of sins, followed by absolution, suggested in the office of the Visitation of the Sick may be profitably used in such exceptional circumstances as are described in the rubric.

7. The Conference earnestly recommends the clergy to afford greater facilities for perplexed and troubled souls to open their grief and discuss their spiritual problems with them. It urges that this personal and pastoral ministry should be made more prominent.

8. The Conference welcomes the light which psychology is throwing on the knowledge of mental processes and recognises the assistance it may afford in the ministry of reconciliation. At the same time it is convinced that purely psychological treatment cannot adequately meet the deepest needs of the soul.

#### Christian Unity.

The reports of the Conferences between the representatives of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland on the subject of reunion have been in many respects satisfactory as far as they go. There was agreement as to the fundamentals of belief in the Creeds; and as to the mutual admission to pulpits as occasion serves of the ministers of either Communion. Communicants of either Communion when out of reach of their accustomed ordinances were to be welcomed in the other as members of the Catholic Church of Christ to the Table of the Lord. The negotiations are, however, to be terminated for the present, and it would seem that no progress is to be made until the whole subject has received further prolonged study and examination. This is disappointing in view of the measure of agreement already reached, and apparently reached in face of the declaration on the part of the Church of Scotland that "any agreement, with regard to the orders and sacraments of the conferring Churches can only be based on the recognition of the equal validity of the orders and sacraments of both Churches, and of the equal standing of the accepted communicants and ordained ministers in each." Dr. Archibald Fleming, speaking in connection with this, pointed out that the Anglo-Catholic Press would exert its utmost power to oppose this agreement, and he added: "Many clergy will try to work it, though it will need great courage on their part, for they may have to choose between farewell to promotion and farewell to individual freedom of thought and action." This is unfortunately true, but it is little to the credit of the Church that those who uphold its true position should be subjected to this boycott and be so often pilloried as "No Churchmen."

#### Disarmament.

The failure of the Conferences on Disarmament has been a source of grave disappointment to Christian people. Most of us hoped that some definite steps would be taken to put an end to the competition in armaments that should have been the natural

outcome of the Kellogg Pact. The fear and suspicion which characterise the relationships of some of the nations are the obstacle to any hope of agreement. Many people are unfortunately becoming sceptical as to any advance being made to happier relationships among the peoples of the world, and the cynics are enjoying their opportunity of expressing their views on the weaknesses of human nature. It must be recognised that no power can bring about better relationships among the nations except the spirit of Christ, and this is the one means that has so far received no adequate consideration, although many in all lands recognise the truth. In the days succeeding the War many entertained high hopes that the united forces of the Christian Churches would have been able to bring about some satisfactory result, but those hopes have proved vain. The Churches have themselves not been able to reach any substantial measure of agreement and they have lost the opportunity of showing the world what a united Christendom could do. We cannot expect the nations of the world to come together for the maintenance of peace when the Christian Churches maintain an attitude of aloofness from one another on matters that appear to large numbers of Christians to be of secondary importance and to concern questions of organisation and not the essentials of the Faith. The Christian Churches must lead the way if they desire to see the nations united in the cause of peace.

#### **The German Church.**

Religious affairs in Germany are being watched with great interest and with some anxiety by Christian people in other lands. The resolution recently adopted in the Canterbury Convocation expresses the feelings of English Churchpeople. There is no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of the German Church, but the struggle that is going on between the official element in pursuit of the ideals of Hitler for a united Germany—those who are known as the “German Christians”—and those who have refused to accept the dictation of the Nazi régime as to their religious beliefs is a matter that concerns the whole of Christendom. As the resolution proposed by the Bishop of Chichester stated: “The present struggle in the German Evangelical Church is a struggle which in essence is concerned not merely with organisation but with the actual substance of the Christian Faith, in which all Christians have an interest.” The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church which represents the old faith of Germany, at its meeting at Barmen, gave warnings “against certain tendencies regarding revelation, race and the State by which the Christian Faith is imperilled.” This is the danger that has to be faced. The Archbishop of Canterbury summed up the situation in his speech in Convocation when he said that there were currents of thought in German life which were in their essence contradictory to all that they meant by Christianity, and if these opinions prevailed and captured the whole Christian Church in Germany it would mean a surrender to something hardly distinguishable from Paganism.

## THE OXFORD CONFERENCE OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHMEN, 1934.

### THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

AND

### THE PRESENT DISTRESS.

Address given by the REV. C. M. CHAVASSE, M.A., M.C.  
(Master of St. Peter's Hall) and Chairman of the Conference.

IT is hard to consider the Ministry of Reconciliation with an open mind. It is inevitable that strong prejudice should surround a subject which possesses so unsavoury a history, and has occasioned such acute controversy. But fear, watching briefs, party loyalties, and the like, fetter free and helpful discussion; and we must pray that we may lose ourselves in the vital importance of our purpose—namely, how best we may assist burdened consciences to an assured peace and communion with their heavenly Father. If so, then the experience of history will help to safeguard us from taking wrong paths in our eagerness to tend the flock of Christ committed to our charge. And with this object in view I would open this Conference on the Ministry of Reconciliation by (1) glancing at its past history; (2) outlining the present distress which gives such urgency to our subject; and (3) suggesting the broad lines along which practical action is indicated.

#### THE HISTORY OF CONFESSION.

First, as regards the history of the Ministry of Reconciliation; it is, in effect, that of Confession and Absolution. It is widely agreed that the charge of our Risen Lord in John xx. 23, which forms so prominent a feature in the ordination of priests: "Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained"—is a commission addressed to the Church as a whole, and not specifically to the clergy. It is likewise accepted that the words contain a summary of the general mission of the Church with regard to the remission of sins; and one which, from the first, was fulfilled by preaching, baptism, admission to Holy Communion, as also by that "godly discipline" of public penance alluded to in the Communion Service. In the New Testament and in the writings of the Primitive Church during the first two centuries, there is complete silence regarding private Confession and Absolution. Indeed, it may be said that for five centuries the Church was cognisant of public confession only: a discipline which does not fall into our immediate purview, seeing that we are concerned with the private adjustment of personal relationships with God rather than the reconciliation of open offenders to the injured Body of the Church. There is no doubt,

however, that the system of Auricular Confession evolved out of this Public Confession. Like the doctrine of Transubstantiation it is a legacy of the barbarian irruption into the Roman Empire, and both were finally ratified at the Lateran Council of 1215.

At the same time it is obvious that the pastoral duty of ministering privately to burdened consciences is included in the general charge of the Risen Christ to the Church as a whole; and "there existed undoubtedly from a very early period private confession followed by no penitence, but also by no absolution."<sup>1</sup> The minister was regarded as a physician of the soul. His ministry consisted in what is now termed "direction." And it was this ministry of "healing" or "direction," exercised by the Primitive Church, which the Reformers sought to revive in place of the Confessional, as evidenced by the invitation in the Communion Service to any with an unquiet conscience to "open his grief" to some "discreet and learned minister of God's Word." Hooker has expressed the Reformation ideal in the words: "We labour to instruct men in such sort, that every soul which is wounded with sin may learn the way how to cure itself."<sup>2</sup> But there will always remain special cases which require special treatment; though owing to the horror of the Confessional in the sixteenth century, and again at its revival by the Oxford Movement, the Church of England has never developed this primitive and private Ministry of Reconciliation which I might describe as Spiritual Surgery or Healing. It is towards the need and possibility of so doing to-day that I would direct your particular attention; and to this end we must examine more carefully what is involved in the terms "Confession, Absolution, and Direction."

#### THE CARDINAL POINT IN CONFESSION.

(a) *Confession* to a priest is sometimes called a Sacrament, on the ground that the confessor represents God to whom confession is thereby made. But, whatever the procedure, it is a misnomer to term Confession a Sacrament. Sacraments are movements of God to men; they cannot exist where the movement is from men to God. As if God, Who is Spirit, requires outward signs to enable Him to apprehend inward reality! Rather, when any such material representation of God intrudes between the approach of His children and their heavenly Father, the true name for it is Idolatry. This means that even when confession is made to God in the presence of a priest, it need not be spoken aloud either in whole or even in part. A physician of the soul does not require a recital of all remembered sins to enable him to heal the wound of one who has opened to him a particular grief. Neither does the pronouncement of Absolution demand the hearing of the sins committed by a penitent, but simply the assurance of his contrition. Only God knows whether the most elaborate confession is genuine and complete; and the Absolution pronounced by God's minister is only effective in proportion as there is true repentance. Even the

<sup>1</sup> Art. on *Exomologesis* in Cheetham's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*.

<sup>2</sup> *Eccles. Pol.*, VI, c. 6.

“special confession” contemplated in the “Visitation of the Sick” need not be uttered aloud, as a comment by Bishop Cosin shows.<sup>1</sup> For, in the words of the Lutheran Prayer Book, “the important point is not that the confessor should hear each particular sin, but that a heart and conscience distressed and burdened by sin should be comforted and brought to peace by assurance of Divine forgiveness. For the cardinal point in confession is not our own work, namely our confession, but the work of God, which is the forgiveness of sins.”

#### A PHYSICIAN OF SOULS.

(b) *Absolution* is sacramental in character, in the same way that the Anointing of the Sick is sacramental of the healing of God's blessing. And both may be necessary in certain urgent cases. For example, I have found the pronouncement of Absolution of real benefit in cases where the physical foulness of disease contracted through sin seemed to necessitate such an outward sign before the penitent could feel clean in the sight of God. But both Absolution and Anointing become harmful if employed save in very exceptional circumstances, for such a practice (again in the words of Hooker) “would make all sores seem incurable unless the priest have a hand in them.” Absolution should be looked upon in the light of a surgical operation, and as such the supposition must be “never again.”

(c) It is *Direction*, or, as it is termed in the Prayer Book—“ghostly counsel and advice”—that is the essential element in the Ministry of Reconciliation; and in it Confession and Absolution play their part as may be necessary. As in the Primitive Church, the Pastor should regard himself as a Physician of Souls, and as such—like Chinese doctors who are said to be remunerated as long as their services are not required—his chief aim will be to build up self-reliant and healthy Christians who themselves know how to crave and obtain the forgiveness of God without his aid. Cases of unquiet consciences he will deal with as a doctor in his consulting-room. Certain of his spiritual patients will need to return to him again; some of them, indeed, with some frequency and over a long period. And occasionally the surgical operation of Absolution may be necessary.

#### THE UNBOSOMING OF CONFIDENCES.

Now such a conception of the Ministry of Reconciliation as a ministry of Soul Healing declares the guiding principle as to the unbosoming of confidences in Confession, and explains the injury and scandal that has resulted from the Confessional. The question as to confidences is simply this—how far, in each case, are they *necessary* or *unnecessary* in order to bring a soul into the assurance of God's pardon and peace? Where a confidence is *necessary*, then the relief of unburdening the mind is so unutterable that many confuse it with a sense of forgiveness, and it banishes that restraint

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Lib. Cosin's Works, vol. IV, p. 262.

which, otherwise, is experienced in subsequent and ordinary meetings between penitent and confessor. Also where a confidence is *necessary*, then, whatever its nature, the confessor need never be afraid that its hearing will contaminate his imagination. In such cases his whole personality is so going forth in the effort of helping another, that his inner consciousness is unreceptive. He is giving out not taking in, with the result that the confidence, whatever its character, makes so little impression upon his mind that he is as likely as not to forget what his ear has heard.

But if, on the other hand, a confidence is *unnecessary*—then, whether it is a smoking-room story, or a secret of the Confessional it matters not, an injury is thereby inflicted both on the teller and hearer from which God Himself cannot deliver. In Confession what is unnecessary coarsens the modesty of penitents and weakens their character. It also damages the purity of the Confessor and inclines him to arrogance. Moreover, unnecessary Confession opens the door to sadist perversion ; a possibility it is folly to ignore. The Confessor is liable to like having persons abased before him ; and penitents to like abasing themselves. The Minister to Reconciliation not only requires very earnestly to study the individual personality of those who entrust themselves to his care ; but also to search his own motives and actions before Him Who purchased the flock of God with His own precious blood.

#### PRESENT DAY NEEDS.

(2) *We are now in a position to study the present Distress* which renders our Conference on this subject so imperative. There are four factors which to-day affect the Ministry of Reconciliation—two of them calling upon the clergy to exercise, as never before, a personal ministry among individuals, and the other two making it difficult for them to do so.

(a) On the one hand, the War and its aftermath has strewn the country with spiritual wrecks ; and there are, in consequence, far more who need adjustment (and that of a difficult and drastic character) than was the case twenty years ago. Obviously their cases demand more than the normal and general ministrations which the Church can offer them ; it is specialized and individual treatment that is required.

(b) Then also there is much less reticence among younger people than was customary with our pre-War generation. It is all part of a craving for self-expression into which I need not enter. But the result is that numbers to-day are ready to talk about themselves, and to discuss their most intimate problems—sometimes even in public, but certainly with a sympathetic friend. There are, therefore, patients in plenty for the physician of souls ; and what is more they knock upon his door.

(c) But, on the other hand, parish priests are handicapped both by circumstance and training from rising to meet a great need and a still greater opportunity. What with the rapid growth of population and the decrease in the number of clergy, the pastor is not

known by his people. Before the War, when the minister could and *did* visit his reasonably-sized parish, he knew the individual members of his flock, and was able to speak the word in season as occasion arose; while they, on their part, were ready to consult one whom they regarded as a friend. But to-day, apart from Church congregations, clergy and laity are strangers to each other; and half the problem before us with regard to the Ministry of Reconciliation is how to bring them together into close and personal touch.

(d) Furthermore, there has been the rapid development (again by reason of the War) of the Science of Psychology. Psychology has revealed the importance and urgency of spiritual direction; and, moreover, the futility of any cut-and-dried system of Confession and Absolution in healing the deep wounds of the soul. But it has also shown that in such personal dealings the clergy require a training and instruction which at present they do not possess; and that clumsy ministrations, however well-meaning, may do cruel and grievous mischief to the sensitive and intricate mechanism of human personality.

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

(3) With such facts in mind we turn, in the last place, to ascertain the *broad lines along which we should try and meet this Present Distress*. First and foremost, let us beware of any hasty, impulsive, or ill-considered action. A false step at the present juncture, however well-intentioned, might prejudice the future and produce dangerous and even fatal consequences of a far-reaching order. Christendom is still suffering from the results which followed the barbarian irruption into the Roman Empire, and the history of the Dark Ages is a standing warning not to allow the pressure of outside circumstances to override truth, or dictate Church doctrine and practice. It is as great folly to legislate for the normal in times which are abnormal, as for a patient when suffering from jaundice to plan his diet for the rest of his life. We have, therefore, in all we propose concerning the Ministry of Reconciliation, jealously to keep before our eyes the unchanging ideal of so building up the faith and experience of the children of God, that they may possess direct relationship with their heavenly Father and know of themselves how to approach Him Who alone can read the heart or forgive sins. To this end the chief requisite is to strengthen all the normal ministrations of the Church, such as preaching, Confirmation instruction, and, above all, that pastoral visitation which renders the parish priest the friend and confidant of all his people. Then (and not till then) the next step must be to make it easier for troubled consciences to have access to us, or "to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word." We need to open out what is at present an unknown track, requiring fresh negotiation by any who use it, into a well-defined right of way which all can easily follow. If we will place ourselves in the position of those who would gain from us the help and assurance to which they are entitled, we shall recognise that from their standpoint it may be a daunting experience

to seek us out in our own homes. I am certain that the unwritten law of professional secrecy is scrupulously maintained by the clergy of the Church of England. At the same time, hesitating penitents often dread running the gauntlet (as they imagine) of the curious eyes of the Vicar's wife, or of some neighbour, as they pull the vicarage bell. Sometimes, also, the grief to be opened is of such a character that shrinking souls feel they cannot mention it in the everyday surroundings of a study; though, possibly, they could just screw themselves up to tell it out in the House of God. And, similarly (though I do not myself experience this difficulty) there are clergy who feel more professional and at ease, in dealing with spiritual wounds and sickness, when robed in a cassock and seated in Church.

#### NEED OF INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT.

Although, therefore, the generality of cases can be dealt with by a physician of souls in his own study, as if it were a doctor's consulting-room; yet I would urge that more provision should be made than at present for interviews in church. As the whole purpose of the Ministry of Reconciliation is to adjust, once and for all, lives which have gone wrong; and to bring *permanent* peace and assurance to burdened consciences; I do not suggest that the clergy should be found in church at certain times every week *all through the year*. It would be sufficient if the parish priest showed himself to be specially available, and indeed invited approach, during the season of Lent, and possibly also of Advent. Then, if further interviews were desirable, these could easily be arranged, once the ice was broken. Meanwhile, cathedrals and certain churches might be used as centres where picked clergy could take it in turns to be on duty throughout the year. To such experts difficult cases could be sent; and any might have access to their counsel who wished to remain unknown, or desired some other minister of God's Word than their own clergyman. But the great matter is from first to last for the Minister of Reconciliation to consider himself a physician of souls, and to view with sympathetic imagination the fears and hesitations of those who long to be healed. Everyone that needs our ministrations requires individual treatment; and there is *no official procedure* whether we try to help our people as we sit with them in our own studies, or side by side with them in a pew in the church. If we are clear about principles and the general lines of our practice, God will show us how best to help each one of our cases as we pray over them and number them all before Him one by one.

---

The second and revised edition of *The Empty Tomb and The Risen Lord*, by C. C. Dobson, M.A., is issued by Martin & Parnham, E.C.4., 1s. 6d. net.

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

BY THE REV. STEPHEN C. NEILL, M.A. (C.M.S.), Warden of  
the Bishop's Theological Seminary, Tinnevely.

WHEN lecturing on the comparative study of religions, I advise my students to test each religious system by its doctrine of forgiveness. This doctrine is not primary, but in it as in a focus meet the doctrines of God, of man, of the nature of the world and of immortality, and it is therefore invaluable as a criterion of the value of each system and of its practical efficacy. In Islam, the doctrine seems to me trivial; in Hinduism, it does not exist, its place being taken by a rigid law of expiation. No argument for the truth of Christianity is stronger than that it alone takes a sufficiently serious view of the gigantic evils of the world, and provides a remedy which is adequate to the greatness of God, the dignity of man and the integrity of the universe in which we live. The distinguishing characteristic of the Christian Church is the proclamation of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins.

In the Old Testament, forgiveness is proclaimed only uncertainly, and as it were by way of anticipation. We are conscious of a certain disparity between the law and the prophets. The purpose of the law was to deepen the sense of sin and of the holiness of God. Its whole ritual of offerings and atonements was directed to the covering over of sin and a ritual cleanness which would make it possible to draw near to God. But only certain classes of sins could be dealt with by these provisions; for sins done with a high hand, there was no propitiation, but only the severity of judgment. But surely most of the sins which we commit are done with a high hand. As men's sense of alienation from God grew stronger, and their yearning for fellowship with Him became more insistent, almost in spite of themselves, they won through to a deeper hope. There was the classic case of David, who sinned most deeply, yet was forgiven. In Psalms and prophets, there is a wistful confidence that in some way, God, through His own grace and goodness and without law opens a way to return to them that seek Him. "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee; thou delightest not in burnt offerings." "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." There is no theology of forgiveness in the Old Testament, only a profound conviction of its reality. The problem is left over to a dispensation which has richer materials for its solution.

In the New Testament, forgiveness is incarnate in Jesus Christ. He proclaims it as one of the blessings of the Kingdom on the basis of faith in God. The scribes and Pharisees were quite right in thinking that when He calmly told the paralytic "Thy sins are forgiven thee," He was going beyond the limits of the highest

prophetic claim. It is surely very striking that none of those to whom He spoke the word of pardon ever seems to have questioned His right to speak it. It was effective in bringing the sense of release, and fellowship with God. In Him the kingdom was visibly present, His word was the creative word of God, setting men free literally into a new world. It is also worthy of remark that Christ, true to His plan of never teaching ahead of what men could apprehend, scarcely ever associates forgiveness with His death; the reference to "the blood which is shed . . . for the remission of sins" is only in St. Matthew's Gospel, in which we find that many of our Lord's sayings are given in an expanded and explanatory form.

In the early chapters of the Acts, in which Christian theology is represented in its most rudimentary stage, with an insistence which I think cannot be set aside as a Lukan predisposition in favour of this theme, forgiveness is put forward as one of the chief blessings of the new covenant in Christ. It is the gift conveyed in baptism. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a prince and saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." In the first account of Paul's preaching: "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." The time of theological explication came later. The earliest church lived by the proclamation of a fact and an experience. The Apostles knew that they were in fellowship with God, the evidence of forgiveness was the gift of the Spirit shed forth by the glorified Christ, the Church was the fellowship of those who through forgiveness had been enabled to receive the gift of the Spirit and to enter into the new world of redemption and joyful hope. This is the kernel of all later preaching and Church life. Just in so far as the Church is really a fellowship of the Spirit, just in so far as it is really living in the world of redemption, is it able to make effective to men the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through the love of God in Jesus Christ.

## II.

The subject of this Conference is the Ministry of Reconciliation. It therefore need hardly be said that we are dealing mainly with the manward aspect of the mystery of our redemption. We are taking for granted the Godward aspect, God's provision of all that was needed for the salvation of men in the perfect self-oblation of His Son. We are dealing not so much with sin and its removal, as with the sinner and the problems that arise in connection with man's apprehension and acceptance of the gift that has been made available for Him in the death and resurrection of our Lord.

Let me lay down three propositions as a help to the definition of the sense in which we shall use the term forgiveness.

1. Forgiveness is concerned only with relationships between persons. It does not apply to the impersonal relationships of societies and corporations. Societies are held together by duty

and mutual obligation ; they are governed by law, and this law is impersonal and strictly just in its retributive action. A judge and jury are concerned with determining whether an offence has been committed, if so, by whom, and with affixing the penalty according to law. A judge has no power to remit the penalty even in favour of a genuinely repentant offender. Society from time to time does to its own general advantage remit penalties, but this is the furthest that it can go ; it cannot be said to forgive. It happens, however, that the issue is complicated, because societies do constantly acquire a quasi-personal character. We do speak of the king pardoning an offender. Two men die for their country ; one serves as a conscript, the other for love ; there is surely a great difference here. There is a growing demand now that the state in its relations with its subjects should not fall below the level of personalities ; we see this in the very marked change in the way in which the State deals with juvenile offenders. The Headmaster of a school is the embodiment of law, but he is also *in loco parentis* to his boys. This is only to say that life is more complicated than theory. But for the sake of clear thought, it is essential that these two things should be kept quite distinct, and that we should use the term forgiveness only in the realm of personality, where the highest rule is not that of law but that of love.

2. The purpose of forgiveness is the restoration of fellowship between persons, which has been marred by the wrongdoing of one or both. Once this is grasped, it is seen that the question of pains and penalties is due to the intrusion of legal considerations. These may be important and have their place, but they are irrelevant to the main issue. Forgiveness may involve the remission of pains and penalties or it may not. I think this is very important. The one penalty which is necessarily involved in wrongdoing is exclusion from fellowship. Am I wrong in thinking that the only penalty of our sin against God is exclusion from fellowship with Him, and that the course of theology would have been enormously simplified if this had been constantly borne in mind ? Can we give any intelligible sense to the word Hell other than that it is the complete exclusion of the sinner from the presence of God ? If this is granted, then what we are asking in all our questions about forgiveness is what is the present bar to fellowship, and how can it be removed ?

3. Forgiveness is always two-sided. Fellowship cannot be restored unless both parties consent. It cannot become actual by the desire or action of either without the other. The one who has been wronged must of his free grace be willing to bear and to forget the wrong. The one who has sinned must be willing to accept forgiveness as a gift to which he has no right, and for which he is wholly dependent on the good will of another. Clearly there is a double problem. How can one who is righteous forgive ? That is the problem of the Atonement. How can one who has sinned become forgivable ? That is the problem of reconciliation. Theology has perhaps suffered by excessive concentration on the first of these in isolation from the other.

Some time ago, a friend after listening to a paper on the doctrine of the Atonement said to me : " You have left out that point about forgiveness being a bad and dangerous thing." It is true that this is the point from which I generally start my consideration of the subject. We assume that forgiveness is a good thing. This seems to me defensible as the conclusion of a long and rather intricate argument, as an uncriticised assumption it seems to me highly dangerous. Forgiveness involves treating the sin as though it has never been committed and the sinner as though he had never sinned. It appears to make him a present of a purely fictitious righteousness. Will not the inevitable effect be to make him think lightly of sin and of the authority of goodness ? Will it not encourage him to think that, whenever he sins again, a similar forgiveness will be cheaply available for him ? Will it not do him the fatal injury of making it easier for him to do wrong ? Everyone will answer that it does not work like that. But if not, why not ? We know from experience that there is a strong tendency in all of us to dodge the consequences of our own acts. Unregenerate nature loves to take advantage of leniency. And history shows that the preaching of the doctrine of free forgiveness has from time to time led to outbreaks of antinomianism. St. Paul himself was aware of this danger. If, knowing this, we still feel that the doctrine of forgiveness must be preached, we may reasonably be asked to show why we think that contrary to probabilities forgiveness will have the paradoxical effect of making the sinner not worse but better.

We had better start by recognizing that our answer will not be convincing, unless we show that the forgiveness of which we speak is catastrophic in its effects. I should like to pass on to you a remark of my friend Dr. H. R. Mackintosh : " I always ask my students to start their consideration of the problem of miracles from their experience of the forgiveness of sins." The definition of a miracle is, I think, that it is a creative act ; it introduces something new, which is not merely the result of existing forces. Forgiveness is a creative act, it works within the world of life and not within that of law. It operates to the creation of a new man. If we are speaking of human relationships, I should say to the creation of two new men, since the one who forgives is changed no less than the one who is forgiven. It issues in a perfectly restored relation of fellowship, firmer, perhaps we may say, and stronger than if it had never been broken.

What are the conditions under which this creative act can take place ?

I. It is usually said that a man can be forgiven when he is sorry for his sin. This is true, but so often we make the mistake of thinking that it is easy to repent for sin. The effect of sin is blindness and hardness. When a man is sorry, the battle is won. The problem is how to make him sorry. As soon as I have said that, you know that it is almost impossible. We sometimes say " I'll make you sorry for that," but we don't mean it, all we mean is " I'll make you afraid." That is easy, but it doesn't lead to any-

thing; real repentance is not a child of fear. We are rightly suspicious of conversions which are gained by the preaching of hell-fire. Some of them are certainly genuine, but only as it seems to me by accident. Fear is self-regarding, it is concerned with the self, and its gains and losses. Conversion is essentially self-giving, it is centred in God. Repentance comes from a revelation of the real nature of sin and its consequences, not of course to the sinner, but to the one whom he has wronged. Repentance is the child not of fear but of love. This is true of human relationships, it is true also of our relationship with God. We do not feel the reality of sin, until it is seen in its true nature as an outrage against the love of God. It is true in the mission-field, and perhaps at home too, that the bitterest repentance comes often after conversion and not before it. This is not unnatural. The soul first experiences something of the love of God in the fellowship of Christ, the loving friend and Master. Then the Cross is suddenly revealed with shattering power as the cost of our sins to the love of God. From our knowledge of human love, we might have inferred the sorrow of God for our sins; apart from the Cross, we could never have known for sure. The Cross both reveals our sin, and makes possible for us true repentance.

2. Forgiveness is possible only for those who accept full responsibility for the wrong that they have done. We are not required to be more than just in our estimate of ourselves; we may make full allowance for defective education, for the weight of temptation, for the influence of heredity and all the rest of it. But when we have done the best we can for ourselves as counsel for the defence, we change our rôle, and become judges of ourselves, and it falls to us to pass the solemn sentence of condemnation on our own acts. This is part of the paradox of penitence, that we take sides with God against ourselves, that we view ourselves as He views us, and pass sentence of death upon ourselves for the wrong that we have done. There are two practical tests of the reality of this acceptance of responsibility. The first is confession. Confession to God, of course; without that no progress can be made. But for many transgressions, confession to man is a necessary part of our purgation; and the extreme reluctance with which we bring ourselves to it is good evidence of its importance. The early Church held that all sin is committed against the Body as well as against God, and demanded public confession from the offender. Our Church accepts this view, and holds that it is much to be wished that this discipline should be restored. This is not likely to occur at present; but I hope that during this conference careful consideration will be given to the argument put forward in favour of private confession, that since all sin is social and an offence against the body, the Church in the person of its ordained minister has a right to know of it, and to add to God's general pardon its particular ministry of reconciliation. The second test of sincerity is the willingness to bear the penalty of wrongdoing. But in our dealings with God, as we have seen, there is no penalty but that of separation

from Him. This is the dilemma of the penitent sinner ; he both desires to bear the penalty of his wrong-doing, and also to be in fellowship with God. He finds that these desires are incompatible, he comes to the end of his resources and is driven back upon the atoning mercy of God.

3. Forgiveness must be made available for the sinner in such a way as to assure him that sin has really been dealt with. On the one hand, he must not feel that it has been lightly passed over. It is humiliating and morally harmful, when we have screwed up our courage to make confession of a fault, to find that the one against whom we have done it regards it more lightly than we have ourselves and is ready to pass it off with a word. On the other hand, there must be no suspicion that the forgiveness is merely outward and conventional, that though the word has been spoken, the one who has suffered wrong is still keeping a grudge in his mind, or worse still is awaiting an opportunity to pay off the old score. Forgiveness must give the assurance that the sin is as though it had never been, it is so effectively buried in the depths of the sea that it has lost all its power to trouble and destroy. Is not this the point at which we experience a real and acute difficulty in our forgiveness of others ? I wonder whether you have felt it in your dealings with children or young people. Someone comes to us with a confession of a fault. What sign or token can we give that we have felt keenly and to the full the sting of the fault, and that yet we are willing to put it wholly from our minds, and to receive the offender just as he was before ? If you have felt this difficulty, I think you will see that in God's forgiveness of us, the real problem is not in the satisfaction of His abstract justice, but in making available for us the gift of forgiveness in such a way as to make sure that it will really do its healing work. Do we not see at this point that the Cross was indispensable in the scheme of redemption ? How else should we have known both that God regards sin more seriously than we could ever regard it, and also that as far as we ourselves are concerned, the sin has been taken away, abolished and buried out of sight, so that it can never return again to disturb our relation of fellowship with God ?

### III.

So far, I have been trying to deal in general with the doctrine of forgiveness and the conditions under which it is safe and practicable to preach it. We may now come nearer to the subject of this Conference, and ask what is the special responsibility of Evangelicals with regard to this doctrine. Let it be said at once that all preaching of forgiveness through the death of Christ is evangelical ; this is not a matter of one party or of one theory of the Atonement, it is a point at which happily different churches and schools of thought meet in one. But Evangelicals of the Church of England may feel that they have a special responsibility, that there are some aspects of this truth which are committed to them, and which

they must maintain if evangelicalism is to have any true life. I can suggest three such aspects :

1. That Christ died for all, and that through Him, reconciliation and acceptance with God are available at any time for those who need them. From this follows necessarily the missionary responsibility of the Church, that this grace of God in Christ is not merely a possession of the Church, but a treasure in which all the sons of men by their creation have a right to share. There follows also the possibility of instantaneous conversion, that the worst sinner who turns to God through faith in Christ does at that moment receive pardon for all his sins and new life. The working out of this redemption in changed character may be the task of a life-time, but from that moment he is in Christ and therefore a new creature.

2. That it is the will of God that every Christian should have such inner certainty of forgiveness that he is able at all times to approach God without fear, and should have in fellowship with God assurance of His present possession of eternal life. Thus every Christian becomes an independent witness to the reality of the working of God. His testimony is not to doctrine or to a message heard from others, but to a reality within him. In more formal language, every Christian should be equipped to share in the prophetic ministry of the Church, which is the testimony to the reality and power of God based on unmistakable personal experience.

3. This certainty is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, and depends not upon man's voice, but upon the quickening power of the Spirit. The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Conversion is always miraculous ; it is more than the sacramental regeneration of baptism, in that it is the conscious acceptance of the will of God, and therefore makes actual, though not necessarily consciously experienced, the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost. A great mistake in much of our evangelistic work is that we allow young converts to gain their assurance from our ministry or from some ordinance of the Church, instead of pointing them to the living Spirit, who alone can give the peace and assurance which come from fellowship with the death and the life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

If this is true, what place is there in this whole affair for the work of man ? The answer is plain ; God's redeeming work is all His own, but there is apparently no part of it which He carries out in the world except through man, or at least with man's co-operation. There are at least three ways in which the Church's ministry of reconciliation is to be exercised.

There is first the proclamation of the grace of God, in such a way that the sinner both comes to understand his need for God, and also realizes that the way is open for him to turn his back on the past, and through Christ to draw near to God.

There is the solemn pronouncement of the word of absolution to the worshipping company of believers. This is not so much for the initiation as for the renewal of the covenant of forgiveness. We do not pass through the world without contracting something

of its stain and its defilement ; but we are only as those who need to wash their feet, in order that they may be every whit clean. In preparation for partaking of the royal banquet of the king, we need to be cleansed from our travel stains.

There is the personal ministry of exhortation, instruction and comfort, which is a necessary part of the work of the Church. Every minister of Christ knows that, though conscience may be quickened by the preaching of the word, realisation of peace with God is rarely attained without personal dealings with an experienced Christian, who can draw out hidden needs, answer doubts, apply Scripture to the particular problems of the inquirer, and give encouragement from his own experience of fellowship with Christ and deliverance from sin. This most necessary and priestly ministry can be carried out by any Christian man or woman, who has received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In all these ministrations, in which the word of God is mediated through the lips of man, the aim of the preacher is to direct attention away from himself and to concentrate it on the God who pardons and heals the sinner. Is it ever right that the minister of Christ should go further, and not content with declaring God's purpose of forgiveness, should himself in God's name and in God's stead pronounce the words of pardon? The Prayer-book contains the words, "By his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Is it fitting that these words should be used in our ministry of reconciliation? If so, why and when? I take it that the purpose of this Conference is to give a clear answer to these questions.

THE TRACTARIAN MOVEMENT, 1833-1845. By the Right Rev. E. A. Knox, D.D. *Putnam*. 5s. net.

Bishop Knox's great book on the Tractarian Movement has reached a second edition and is now issued at the small cost of five shillings which will bring it within the reach of a still larger circle of readers. As the book has already taken its place as a standard work on the history of the Movement it is not necessary to point out its merits again, as we did so at the time of its first appearance. The only change in the present edition is the addition of an appendix answering some objections raised by critics of the first edition to the Bishop's statements in regard to the French influences that contributed to the Movement. Fresh evidence has come into the Bishop's hands, and he makes use of it to confirm his original contention.

## THE CONFESSIONAL IN HISTORY.

BY THE REV. CLIFFORD J. OFFER, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.,  
Vicar of Highmore, Oxon.

FEW ecclesiastical developments have exercised a greater influence on the evolution of Christianity than what is known as the Confessional; but any discussion of the part which it has played in history must of necessity commence with some examination, however cursory, of the New Testament ideas and Apostolic practice from which it took its beginning. Not that we shall find any reference to anything so obviously unprimitive as the more fully developed form of the Confessional, but we should expect to find at least the genesis of so vast a system within the limits of the Apostolic writings. Yet the moment we turn to them we find, as so often, a marked absence of specific instructions capable of indefinite expansion and adaptation, and in place of them only general principles which leave considerable scope for varied interpretation and application. When looking for apostolic precedent it is always immensely important to realise that the age of the Apostles was essentially a creative period in which the Christian society was in a state of mobility and freedom ready for the emergence of great ideas and unhampered by the rigidity and conservatism of later times. Surely Dr. Streeter is correct when he suggests "that the actual course of events was of a more haphazard, and at the same time a more dynamic, character than students of the subject have hitherto suspected."<sup>1</sup> Our Lord appears deliberately to have rejected any idea either of initiating legislation or formulating decrees that would be binding for all time upon the consciences of His followers. We shall look in vain therefore for any definite injunctions as to Confession on our Lord's part and very little on the part of the Apostles.

There are, however, one or two passages in the New Testament which may seem to supply an adequate basis for later practices. The most obvious one is that in St. John's Gospel, where our Lord states that "Whose-soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose-soever sins ye retain, they are retained." But this was a charge to the Church giving it a power which it can wield irrespective of confession. The words are included in the English Ordination Service for Priests, but it is important to realise that they do not appear in any Ordinal until the thirteenth century, and they are still absent from the Greek Ordinal. Of the words themselves it may be sufficient to quote the verdict of the latest Anglican scholar to deal with them. "There can, I think," writes Dr. Headlam, "be no doubt that the reference is here to the

<sup>1</sup> *The Primitive Church*, p. 72. His reference was, of course, primarily to the Christian Ministry; cf. Dr. Headlam's remarks in *The Doctrine of the Church and Reunion*, p. 137.

disciples as a body representative of the Christian Church, and that it is to the Christian Church that is given the authority of binding and loosing." And later on he states that he regards it as a legitimate deduction from our Lord's other statements to the disciples that "while to the Apostles our Lord gave a commission of ministry, to the community He gave authority." <sup>1</sup>

To examine the rest of the New Testament to see how the Apostolic Church attempted in practice to apply these words would take too long. The primitive Society as we see it at work in the Acts and Epistles was far too absorbed on the whole with the great and essential task of preaching the gospel of repentance to be concerned to any great extent with disciplinary questions. But there is one event which exhibits the Church as using the power in a proper constitutional fashion, and that is at the first Church Council in Jerusalem. Here we can see the Church making a decision by using the authority committed to her by her Lord. In the Acts the disciples seem far more anxious for a confession of faith than even for a confession of sin, and formal absolution seems little used. <sup>2</sup>

Whatever may be the precise significance of our Lord's words on binding and loosing, it is quite obvious that some kind of disciplinary action towards sinners was contemplated from his words, "if he will not hear you, tell it unto the Church, and if he will not hear the Church let him be unto you a heathen and a publican." <sup>3</sup> This seems to foreshadow some form of excommunication, similar to that which St. Paul appears to have contemplated in his well-known words to the Corinthians, <sup>4</sup> though a strict interpretation of his words indicate a form of social ostracism rather than any formal ecclesiastical action. But here again the Christian Society was only beginning to develop and everything was so inchoate and indeterminate that rules and regulations appear to be entirely absent. Yet the need of them was bound to arise as soon as the Church expanded, embracing all kinds and types of people within the fellowship of the Society. The expansion of the Church in every direction, the adherence of people who only very imperfectly reflected the Christian standard of conduct, the failure of many to apprehend the moral implications of the Catholic faith, all combined in the first centuries of Christian history to produce problems demanding effective disciplinary action. One of the earliest forms of such action was the very obvious one of exclusion from the Eucharist; but that did not long suffice, and very soon other forms of penitential discipline were evolved and applied. Circumstances hastened the process, for persecution, which intermittently accompanied the growth of the Church down to the days of the Emperor Julian (A.D. 363), forced the question of discipline, at least in one particular form, to the front. One of the immediate consequences of persecution was the commencement of a movement for the readmission of those who in times of danger had given way and

<sup>1</sup> *The Doctrine of the Church and Reunion*, pp. 36, 39.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Acts x. 47, 48; xvi. 33.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. xviii. 17, 18.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. v. 5, 11.

denied the Faith. When the danger was over there was an insistent demand for reinstatement, which gave rise to much controversy, especially in North Africa under Cyprian. The rigid terms for readmission which he laid down proved too hard, and he was compelled to modify them. But it brought the whole question of penitence to the front. A Council in 251 decided that the *sacrificati* must submit to a long process of penitence before being allowed to return to the Church. But since in exceptional cases Cyprian permitted the Reconciliation of the lapsed to be performed by a deacon it shows that no idea of any sacramental power of the keys could have been contemplated.<sup>1</sup> The act of reconciliation was a matter of discipline and not the prototype of the modern confessional. This controversy, however, gave a powerful impetus to the whole idea of penitential discipline. Normally in the early stages public penance was alone contemplated and consisted generally of prayer, fasting and suspension from Communion. This was usually referred to as *penitentia secundum morem ecclesiæ*. It followed almost inevitably that different ecclesiastical provinces would soon evolve their own regulations, which in turn would soon be crystallized into particular codes. In them the penalties would vary as well as the methods of enforcement. Stages of reconciliation appeared, latterly of a very elaborate character. Time and circumstances tended constantly to increase this elaboration with the result that all kinds of penitential penalties were devised, sometimes extending over a period of as much as seven years, and even in the last stage, that known as *fletus*, for life in the case of a denial of our Lord. The severity of these public penances is obvious, but some mitigation was permitted at the discretion of the bishop. Even so, the lot of the penitent was by no means enviable. The penitent could not engage in litigation, was forbidden to live with husband or wife, and was never to be allowed the use of arms. But other forces were coming into being which in time changed the whole character of penitence.

Hitherto, as we have seen, penitence was largely a public matter, but in course of time the excessive severity of the penitential discipline made men less and less willing to submit to the process. The inherent difficulty of such strictness had become apparent in quite early times;<sup>2</sup> and the tendency now arose for public penance to be limited to public crimes. Meanwhile, the teaching of the necessity of secrecy in the Confessional also strengthened the tendency, for the two were obviously very largely incompatible. Another factor which told against the practice was the increasing confusion between spiritual and secular penalties, many of which were plainly punishments inflicted as a deterrent to others rather

<sup>1</sup> Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 97. Dr. Lea, *Auricular Confession, &c.*, p. 10, notes this, but he did not apparently observe that it was only in "desperate cases." Those who wish to see an example of Rome's method of proving the supposed primitive origin of auricular confession should read Archbishop Benson's words on pp. 98-9.

<sup>2</sup> Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 158.

than as a process designed to save the sinner's soul. Consequently, in the earlier forms of Reconciliation, the stress was laid on the outward and formal reconciliation with the Church rather than of the soul with God. In the earliest stages prayer to God and real penitence for sin were regarded as sufficient. But in addition the efficacy of intercessory prayer was admitted from the commencement, and from this apparently innocent practice arose nearly all the claims of later sacerdotal practice. In time other things were allowed as possessing a certain efficacy, such as alms-giving, and later quite a number of different ways of obtaining pardon were permitted. But probably the part played by the Eucharist in the remission of sins is the most significant development in the light of subsequent events. There were two aspects from which the value of the Eucharist in this connection could be viewed. In the first place, communion itself was regarded as sufficient to remit sin. The other, and ultimately the more significant, was supposed to reside in the mere act of celebrating.

The transition from public penance to private confession was a gradual process and one which was not completed until after the twelfth century. It would not be impossible to allow that public penance may have had a salutary effect in the early centuries, often referred to as the Dark Ages, when some strong moral authority was always a crying need. Dr. Lea,<sup>1</sup> whose elaborate researches have done so much to elucidate this subject, quotes as a good example of public penance that of our king Edgar, who is stated by some early writers to have postponed his coronation for seven years until May 11, 973, as a mark of penitence for an indecent assault upon a nun; but the evidence is insufficient to convince modern historians, who refuse to accept the explanation as sufficient.<sup>2</sup> But few would dispute the nature of Henry II's penance for the murder of Becket, though it is a matter for consideration how far such an abject humiliation on the part of a king did not lessen his authority, and merely augment the prestige of the Papacy at the expense of the kingdom. Public penance must have played a great part at one time in the religious life of the Middle Ages and on occasions must have contributed an element of real interest to the community. We can imagine the interest aroused when the mandate of the bishop of Worcester against certain offenders was duly carried out in 1283 by which the culprits were ordered to go "in shirt and trousers," as we should say, and be publicly beaten by the Deans of Worcester, Gloucester, Bristol, Pershore, and Warwick through the markets of each of those places.<sup>3</sup> Such punishment, however, revealed the confusion then prevalent between crimes which to-day would be punished by the State and moral offences strictly so called. These men had beaten a clerk, hence the offence was technically an

<sup>1</sup> *Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, vol. II, pp. 82, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, i, 191, and Hodgkin, *Pol. Hist. of Eng.*, vol. I, p. 356, appear to know nothing of the tradition, though neither can wholly account for the delay. Oman, *Eng. before the Nor. Conq.*, rejects it.

<sup>3</sup> *Reg.*, Giffard, p. cxxxix (Worcs. Hist. Soc.).

ecclesiastical one, yet it quite obviously belonged to the *forum externum*, as it was called, rather than the *forum internum*, which was more concerned with conscience. The spread of public penance, however, led to a demand for some unification of the rules of procedure and the penalties that ought to be given, and this in turn led to the rise of a distinct form of codification known as Penitentials. Three of the more famous of these bear English names, i.e. Theodore, Bede and Egbert. Of these, the first was by far the most famous and was used and copied all over Europe. They attempted to standardise penances for a great variety of sins and offences, and they reveal a good deal of agreement as to the fitting penance for various sins, e.g. the Penitentials of Theodore and Bede ascribe an identical penance for perjurers.<sup>1</sup> But they are not very pleasant reading, and we have evidence that all through the Middle Ages the penances were often subsequently modified, hence Dr. Lea's caustic comment that the punishment for incontinent priests, if uniformly carried out, involving suspension from ministration for seven years, would have rendered half the parishes of Europe destitute of a priest.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult therefore not to believe that penances only too often must have been modified or altogether ignored. In any case, customs arose which to all intents and purposes had the same effect. One of these was the convenient practice of allowing a money payment to take the place of the prescribed act of penance, which led in time to the appearance of the pardoner and seller of indulgences. Another similar tendency can be seen in the development of the idea of vicarious penance or satisfaction which quickly led to the performance of penances by deputy, and since the most convenient deputies were naturally the clergy, it became usual to pass on the duty to them, though the laity were also admissible as substitutes as well. From the practice arose also the system of regular tariffs in place of certain forms of penance, such as pilgrimage to certain shrines.<sup>3</sup>

Such then was the penitential background, if it may be so described, of the medieval Confessional which had been developing alongside of and in conjunction with public penances and their proper performance. The public penance, though it lingered long into the Middle Ages, began quite early to fall into disrepute and, as we have already seen, to be modified by various influences. Leo I was the first to authorise officially the substitution of private Confession to a priest for public Confession on the grounds that possible scandal was thereby avoided.<sup>4</sup> In course of time, the

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils, &c.*, III, pp. 182, 423. Cf. the following passage *ad verbum*: *Si laicus alterum occiderit*, &c. on pp. 180, 330. The identity of language seems to show, if not a common origin for these Penitentials, at least a good deal of general agreement on many points already in existence. *Vide* the valuable Introductions.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, II, 176.

<sup>3</sup> For an example of Absolution from performing a vow of Pilgrimage, and for further information on Medieval Pilgrimages, see my *The Bishop's Register*, p. 163, and Additional Note G.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gore, *Leo the Great*, p. 145.

Sacrament of penance, involving of course Absolution, became surrounded by almost innumerable conditions and regulations. Amongst these the necessity of a proper attitude of mind on the part of the penitent, and an adequate knowledge of the mental and moral habit and tendencies of the penitent on the part of the Confessor, were of the first importance. Hence arose the three recognised conditions requisite for the reception of absolution—contrition, confession and satisfaction. But then great discussions, too long to summarise, arose out of the degrees of contrition or attrition necessary to obtain remission of sins. Between these two attitudes of mind contrition was generally regarded as more successfully eradicating all desire for evil whatsoever.

Meanwhile it is important to notice that a change was taking place in the development of the theory of sacramental efficacy as represented by the power of the keys and the idea of the merits of Christ which clothed the medieval priesthood with enormous powers of discretion. Such powers placed immense responsibility upon the shoulders of every priest, and the question naturally arises, How many in that rude age were really capable of estimating with any degree of adequacy or completeness the almost infinite degrees of guilt attaching to every particular sin confessed? Such a task requiring great wisdom, a sure knowledge of human nature, a wide grasp of the penitential system, judgement, sympathy and skill could obviously not be discharged at all adequately by the average parish priest of the Middle Ages. Hence it is not surprising that very often the penitent possessed, or thought he possessed, a far better idea of what penance should be imposed upon him and acted accordingly. Very often the priest had to be satisfied with a few Pater Nosters and Aves. Not that this prevented the spread of regular confession at least once a year at the beginning of Lent. We get quite early evidence of the practice even in the records of English legislation. In the Laws of King Edmund <sup>1</sup> promulgated c. 942 it is stated that no homicide shall approach the king until he has carried out the penance enjoined by his confessor. A little later, Ethelred, in a code which, according to Libermann, must be dated after 1008, states much more emphatically that "Every Christian man . . . shall frequently go to Confession, and freely confess his sins, and readily make amends as is prescribed for him." <sup>2</sup> This injunction was repeated verbatim in the following code. It has, however, been pointed out that these latter codes of Ethelred's reign "thoroughly ecclesiastical in tone . . . full of tiresome repetitions and injunctions . . . bear witness to the strong influence exercised by Archbishop Wulstan of York, to whose sermons whole passages afford close parallels." <sup>3</sup> In spite of this they provide good evidence of the official view of the importance of frequent Confession. How far every layman obeyed these injunctions is a much more difficult matter to determine. It was also a long time before there

<sup>1</sup> I Edmund 3, *The Laws of the Kings of England*, ed. A. J. Robertson, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> V Ethelred 22, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> VI Ethelred, cap. 27, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 99.

was complete uniformity of teaching and belief amongst the theologians of the Middle Ages. Even such a reputable teacher as Abelard could maintain that Confession was not necessary to salvation.

A complete change now comes over the situation in A.D. 1215, the year of the great Lateran Council. It was then that Innocent III laid down that every Christian must confess all his sins at least once a year to his parish priest and carry out faithfully any penance that may be enjoined, under penalty of being regarded as infected with heresy.<sup>1</sup> The confessor now comes to the front as a man clothed with vast power over the consciences of men, and the Church through the power of excommunication assumes an influence unparalleled in history. The full consequences of this decree have been very clearly stated by Dr. A. L. Smith,<sup>2</sup> who points out that "sins tended to be brought on a level. . . . Till they have made their submission to the priest the parricide and borrower of books from a library are alike relegated to outer darkness. The first half of Christian duty becomes obedience to the hierarchy, and men are apt to relax when half their duty is done." It also served to stress the importance of the outer act of penance at the expense of the inner contrition of soul. Further, it emphasised the supremacy of the ecclesiastical over the secular, of priest over layman, with all the tremendous implications of such a doctrine.

In the Middle Ages undoubtedly a great part was played by the Friars in fostering the growth of the Confessional. They made a special study of its methods, and were therefore in certain respects experts. They were greatly in demand as Confessors and many bishops employed them as special Penitentiaries in their dioceses. This privilege of hearing confessions was greatly coveted, and in the University of Oxford in the thirteenth century the privilege was largely reserved for the Franciscans assisted by the influence of Archbishop Pecham.<sup>3</sup> In general the Mendicant Orders were far more popular as Confessors than the parish priests. As Dr. Little says: "The Mendicants were far more in sympathy with the poor than were the endowed monks, and possessed far more than the parish priests the confidence of the people."<sup>4</sup> The reason for this popularity is not far to seek. Very often the Friar was only a "bird of passage," and it was better to confess to a friar whom one might never see again and who would not be always present to see if a prescribed penance were carried out than to the resident parish priest. The bishops encouraged them, as we can see, for example, from the Synodal Statutes<sup>5</sup> of John de Pontissara, bishop of Win-

<sup>1</sup> Modern historians are agreed as to the vital importance of the Council. See the account in Binn's *Innocent III*, p. 164 f. Cf. Powicke, *Stephen Langton*, pp. vii, 130 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Church and State in the Middle Ages*, p. 52 f.

<sup>3</sup> Little, *Grey Friars in Oxford*, pp. 74-5, and cf. his remark in *Medieval England*, p. 394.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> *Reg.*, I, p. 207 foll.: The rights of the parish priest were generally guarded. Cf. *proprii sacerdotis prius in forma quam supradiximus licencia requisita, et ecclesie parochiali oblacionibus consuetis et debitis persolutis.*

chester in the thirteenth century. This was probably due to their efficiency compared with many contemporary parish priests. Their influence, however, tended in time to be increasingly demoralising. They frequently heard confessions on easy terms, acting on the principle that it is better to give a light penance which is likely to be fulfilled than a heavy one which would probably be ignored. They were also the cause of friction with the priests in whose parishes they intruded by diverting fees normally payable to the resident rectors or vicars. But in extenuation of the practice of the Friars, it must be admitted that many of them, by virtue of their training, were more fitted to hear confessions than many of the regular clergy, some of whom were not unknown to use the Confessional for very unclerical assignations. On the other hand, there is not wanting evidence that many of the Friars abused their privileges sometimes by claiming to "possess special authority to give a general absolution beyond anything in the power of the ordinary 'curate,'" or at other times to "fail to warn the people . . . to confess to their own parish priest at least once in the year."<sup>1</sup> Little need be said here of the Pardoners who in the terse language of the Oxford Petition of 1414 "purchase their vile traffic in farm with Simon, sell Indulgences with Gehazi, and squander their gains in disgraceful fashion with the Prodigal Son."<sup>2</sup> Their demoralising influence was recognised by Pope Martin V, who denounced them as providers of vice, and many others pour upon them their righteous indignation. They served, however, to bring the whole system of penance and indulgences into disrepute. When the ignorant and unlearned could listen to them saying, as Chancellor Gascoigne heard one in 1453, that "if anyone of you shall give me a penny . . . he is freed from all penance enjoined on him by his 'curate' or by any other priest," it is easy to see how such claims, however false, would tend to undermine respect for the whole system of Penances.<sup>3</sup>

As the Middle Ages advanced the entire system of Confession tended in many places to fall into disrepute and to produce just those very evils which it was supposed to guard the faithful against. Naturally evidence of the working of an institution of this kind, surrounded as it was with much secrecy, is not easy to discover. But some illuminating side-lights have come down to us. The friar Salimbene, in his account of the Council of Ravenna held in 1261, quotes an Archbishop as defending the friars at the expense of the parish priest by a lurid description of the use which many of them make of the Confessional in seducing women. One need not do more in this connection than to quote Dr. Coulton, who writes: "All thirteenth-century writers who take their readers into their confidence speak practically with the same voice about the abuse of

<sup>1</sup> Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Dr. Owst, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Audivi nuper, anno Xti 1453, quod unus prædicator verbi . . . dixit 'Sciatis omnes hic præsentés, quod si aliquis vestrum det michi vel aliqui de domo mea unum denarium solutus est ab omni pœnitencia injuncta in a suo curato vel ab alio sacerdote.'* *Loci e libro Veritatum*. Ed. Thorold Rogers, p. 125.

the Sacrament of Penitence. They show us the Confessional treated as a farce on the one hand, or used for blackmail and seduction on the other. . . ." <sup>1</sup> And it must be remembered that whatever may be the modern practice, the secrecy of the Confessional was not by any means always kept in the Middle Ages. <sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there was no private Confessional in the modern sense of the term. Confession was made by a penitent kneeling before a priest in the open church out of hearing but not out of sight of any who may at the time be present in church.

The bishops, it must be admitted, made real efforts to guide and control the Confessional, at least in England. As an example we may note the regulations of Bishop Poore of Salisbury, who issued his well-known Constitutions *c.* 1223. In them he ordered that, following the decrees of the ancient canons, a priest in assigning penance should diligently take note of the status (*qualitatum*) of the penitent, the extent of his crime and the time, place, &c., and the devotion of the mind of the penitent and the signs of contrition." The confessions of women are to be heard in the open. The laity are warned to confess at the beginning of Lent and as quickly as possible after any lapse, lest one sin by its very weight should draw the penitent into another. Parishioners are to confess three times a year. <sup>3</sup> In addition to such official instructions for the hearing of confessions, there were also handbooks for the clergy, of which the most famous, that by John Myrc, <sup>4</sup> deals at great length in the vernacular with all the requirements of priest and penitent for the due performance of the sacrament of penance.

The priest was normally empowered to deal with most cases, but there were certain more serious ones reserved for the bishop, and in exceptional cases, for the Pope. Bishop Quivil, of Exeter, in 1287 enumerates twenty offences requiring Papal absolution, such as assault on clerks, simony and arson. These strictly involved a journey to Rome, but in practice the cases were often remitted to the bishop to be dealt with. Bishop Poore enumerates only three as requiring papal absolution. These differences seem to indicate a good deal of confusion on the subject. Most serious cases were as a rule reserved for the bishop. Myrc gives a list of about fourteen classes of penitents requiring episcopal absolution, including murderers, heretics, usurers, perjurers, those guilty of incest and those under the greater excommunication. <sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the York Provinciale <sup>6</sup> specifies thirty-seven cases reserved to the bishop or his penitentiary. These, however, were extracted from the regulations of Archbishop Neville of York, who wrote much later than Quivil and may indicate increasing distrust on the part of the

<sup>1</sup> From *St. Francis to Dante*, pp. 294-5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the evidence of Caesarius of Heisterbach, quoted by Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, II, 328, and see Owst, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Salisbury Charters and Documents*, Rolls Series, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Instructions for Parish Priests*. Early English Text Soc.

<sup>5</sup> Myrc, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> *The York Provinciale*, ed. R. M. Woolley, Book V, Titulus iv, 5. Neville was Archbishop of York, 1464-76.

bishops of the competence of the ordinary parochial clergy. It must however be admitted that such regulations were badly needed from time to time. For there were frequently reports made to the bishops of unauthorised persons granting absolution on easy terms even when not in priest's orders. Bishop Charlton, of Hereford, in 1368 found it necessary to appoint certain priests as his penitentiaries to assist incumbents in this important work on account of the unwarrantable actions of irresponsible confessors who appeared to be wandering about his diocese.<sup>1</sup> Bishop de Cobham of Worcester found it necessary to do the same thing in 1319 for his diocese, appointing in this case the prior, sub-prior and one of the monks of Worcester.<sup>2</sup> In special cases the bishops permitted people to choose their own confessor.<sup>3</sup>

The system of Confession had thus become universal, but in course of time it had become surrounded with a veritable maze of regulations, exceptions, extenuating circumstances and graduated penances. But another and more sinister power had come to play a large and almost decisive part in this important matter. Much of the healthful discipline of confession lay in the proper execution of the penalties attached to a particular offence. This discipline was soon very largely nullified by the increasing use of money as an alternative means of satisfaction. A penitent would obviously confess to a particular priest with greater alacrity if he knew that in return for absolution he could commute his penance by a money payment. Even when bishops ordered, as a result of the confession of heinous crimes, that certain severe penalties must be carried out as a penance, they often found that, as Professor Hamilton Thompson points out,<sup>4</sup> they were not in command of an all-sufficient machinery with which to execute their purposes. There can be no question that in the decadence of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries immorality was often condoned for money and that it was often simply a matter of what sins a man could afford to commit. The system was undoubtedly profitable to the Church, though the best of the bishops protested against it. As a modern writer has said: "The Late Medieval Church desired not the death of a sinner but rather that he should pay and live. The result was fatal to its spiritual and moral force." Men could not regard with fear or reverence an institution which in practice (though perhaps not in theory) asserted that sin could easily be atoned for by a money payment.<sup>5</sup> It is hardly surprising that Wyclif had some very trenchant things to say about a system which was capable of such perversion. Naturally, he appealed to Scripture and primitive

<sup>1</sup> *Reg. Charlton*, p. 50 f. For a translation of the Licence see my *The Bishop's Register*, p. 134 f.

<sup>2</sup> Pearce, *Thomas de Cobham*, p. 165. Cf. pp. 154-5. *Reg.*, p. 21. In this diocese two for each Archdeaconry appears to have been normal. Cf. *Reg. Giffard*, p. cxxiii, and *Reg. Reynolds*, p. xiii, "two in each archdeaconry and well spread for convenience."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my *The Bishop's Register*, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> *Lincoln Visitations*, vol. II, p. lx.

<sup>5</sup> Arrowsmith, *The Prelude to the Reformation*, pp. 105-6.

practice against the degenerate institution which he observed. Private confessors were merely a subterfuge by which rich men obtained easy absolution. Reserved cases was a "new trick of the Roman curia." It was not the absolution of the priest that counted but God's forgiveness and the really contrite heart of the penitent.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the condition of affairs down to the Reformation, which saw such great changes in religion in all directions. Compared with some of the greater doctrines and matters in dispute, Confession tended to fall into the background as a major issue and was regarded more often as one of the lesser evils incidental to a false view of the ministry and of a system fundamentally corrupt. Auricular confession was bound to disappear, and apart from its inclusion in the famous "Six Articles" of Henry VIII, it only survived in the English Church in a completely reformed and modified fashion. Yet the reformers could hardly have done otherwise in the light of the moral consequences of the system. For in spite of the ubiquity of the Confessional throughout the Middle Ages, there seemed no very great improvement in the moral standard of the times. Guibert, the chatty abbot of Nogent, in his *Autobiography*, deplors the increasing flippancy of women and the spread of licentiousness amongst both sexes. Writing about 1100, he says: "There was of old time, I call God to witness, greater modesty in married men, who would have blushed to be seen in the company of such women, than there is now in married women." "To what end all this, Lord God, but that no one blushes for his own levity and licentiousness, because he knows that all are tarred with the same brush."<sup>2</sup> And Dr. Owst from the most intimate literature of the Middle Ages<sup>3</sup> that has come down to us, refers to "that unending cry of the medieval preacher—'The days are evil!'"<sup>4</sup> At long last a mass of contemporary evidence has been made available, which proves that medieval society was permeated by ideas and practices that indicate a low moral tone and that the priest to whom confessions were habitually made were far from being the moral guides that they should have been. Not, of course, that all the clergy were bad, far from it, as Chaucer's "poor parson" clearly shows, but the denunciations of medieval preachers of clerical sins and vices indicate that they were hardly fit repositories for such great directive powers. It is therefore quite comprehensible that the system often made not for the purifying and uplifting of society, but rather the reverse.

Something, however brief, must be said about some of the theories which governed the use of the Confessional both before and after the Reformation. Two developments at least must be mentioned—Probabilism and Tutorism. In the intricate and difficult task confronting every Confessor in making his decisions, dubious cases

<sup>1</sup> Workman, *John Wyclif*, vol. II, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *The Autobiography of Guibert*, trans. Bland, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. his *Preaching in Medieval Eng.*, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 65. Cf. the quotations from fourteenth-century MSS. on pp. 274-5 in his *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*.

were bound to arise which could not be solved even with the help of the many existing guides. This led to the enunciation of the principle that in doubtful cases the safer course must be pursued. This was known as Tutorism—*in dubiis via est eligenda tutior*,—and received papal authorisation and passed ultimately into canon law. But even so, such a principle was by no means easy to apply, hence in the maze of dialectical discussion which ensued, it became customary to choose the more probable of two opposing opinions, with the further refinements indicated by the more probable and the less probable. But even this in practice did not prove wholly satisfactory, and in consequence Liguori developed the idea of equi-probabilism, by which the less severe opinion may be applied, provided that the authorities are as good as or nearly as good as those supporting the opposite opinion. Such theories indicate to some extent the vast number of refinements of distinctions with which the ingenious speculations of the Schoolmen have involved the whole subject of the Confessional. But it is easy to see that once a Confessor was embarked on the task of adjusting to a nicety the various grades of moral offences which were bound to come before him in his capacity as a moral guide, such help became almost a necessity even if increasing complexity was the price that had to be paid for such guidance. For a perpetual dilemma must always face the Confessor. If he exercises too great severity in ascribing penance, he will only end in discouraging and disheartening the penitent. If, on the other hand, he prescribes too mild a penance it may convey the impression that the offence is of little account, and may be repeated with impunity. One of the dangers of Probabilism and kindred theories was that it tended to make sin a breach of rules and regulations drawn up by the Confessor rather than a breach of divine law. A penitent who endeavoured to find for himself the degree of his sin against God was denounced as being guilty of scrupulosity and regarded as the terror of the Confessional. The tendency all along was towards mildness of punishment with the inevitable results. Even so recently as 1859 a Council could warn Confessors against ease of absolution, which produced facility for sinning, and again in 1863 another Council denounces accommodating confessors as producers of untold harm.<sup>1</sup> Thus the difficulties and dangers of the Confessional have never been eliminated, though valiant efforts have been made from time to time to make it a satisfactory means of moral guidance. This was notably the case after the Council of Trent, when the Confessional attained a new significance with the rise of the Jesuits, who aspired to be the religious dictators of Europe. This was especially so in France under Louis XIV when the Jesuit opposed the Huguenots, with their right of private judgment, with the claim to control and direct the whole of a man's life. But that meant in the Society of that time, ill-disposed to reform itself or even to make any attempt to do so, that such concessions had to be made which nullified very largely the supposed beneficent effect of the Confessional. It was principally

<sup>1</sup> Lea, *Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, Vol. II, ch. xxi.

the moral laxity of this Jesuit system that provoked the protest of Cornelius Jansen, bishop of Ypres, the founder of the Jansenist movement which, on account of its outspoken attacks on certain aspects of Roman Catholicism was formally condemned by the Pope and the Sorbonne. It was at this time that Pascal appeared upon the scene, and in his *Provincial Letters* poured scorn on the practice of the Jesuits and denounced their hypocritical and immoral methods. He examined their doctrine of probabilism and mental reserve, and showed that almost every crime in some fashion or other could be justified by Jesuitical casuistry. His letters did much to open the eyes of men to the moral obliquity of the Jesuits, which combined with their nefarious political activities caused nearly every country in Europe to expel them. They were formally suppressed by the Pope in 1773. Later, as we have already noted, their doctrine of probabilism was revised by Alfonso Liguori in the eighteenth century, but as a modern writer well says, "even this solution, aimed as it was at gaining worldly society for the Church, was an unsatisfactory moral compromise and would have been far from satisfying the upright and fearless conscience of Pascal."<sup>1</sup> This "equi-probabilism" of Liguori is still the prevailing system to-day, and the two categories remain of mortal and venial sins. The former must always be confessed by the faithful, but concerning the latter some discretion is permitted in practice.

To estimate the precise effect of an institution so widespread as the Confessional may not be easy, but it is not difficult to see that one of the most serious consequences of the Confessional in modern society is the power that it places in the hands of the priest, by which he can call his penitent to account, and, on the specious grounds that what helps the Church cannot be evil, can dictate courses of action not justifiable on ordinary moral grounds. A judge who, according to accepted moral standards, is supposed to administer faithfully the law of the land as he understands it, can be brought to account by his Confessor and made to act not according to the highest legal principles, but according to the higher law of the welfare of the Church. The consequences of this are too obvious to need statement. By making eternal salvation depend upon forgiveness and forgiveness depend upon priestly absolution, every penitent's salvation lies in the hands of his Confessor. And since if, acting on the doctrine of intention, he does not in saying the words of absolution intend to absolve entirely, the penitent remains for ever in danger of eternal damnation.

One consequence of this priestly control through the Confessional in a democratic state is patent. Politics become entirely subordinated to ecclesiastical policy, which is notoriously directed from Rome. Wherever the modern Roman system of the Confessional attains to considerable dimensions, then every state has to run the constant risk of its policy being directed not by independent and high-minded politicians, but by men who are the creatures of a system controlled by foreigners who in turn are swayed by influences

<sup>1</sup> Freer, *The Early Franciscans and Jesuits*, p. 135.

often quite alien to national interest. Malta, with its profoundly unsatisfactory history, remains a standing witness to the truth of this.

History seems clearly to demonstrate that on the one hand certain individuals may find spontaneous and occasional confession to a priest a help to the Christian life and a source of real moral guidance; on the other hand, habitual and enforced confession conducted on stereotyped lines as part of a vast piece of machinery for regulating the spiritual life, is not necessarily an assistance to virtue, deprives the penitent of the healthful discipline of independent action and tends to concentrate undue power in the hands of a class of men by no means always fitted to wield it.

---

The C.M.S. Story of the year has been issued under the title *Fresh Springs* (1s. net). It is, as usual, well produced, and it is written in an attractive style, giving a clear view of the various activities of the Society in its many spheres. The accompanying maps help to give a clearer conception of the areas covered. The account is not only a record of work done, but it gives an insight into the present conditions of missionary work, the methods employed and the future plans and prospects. The story ought to be a means of increasing interest in the work and should be an inspiration to further efforts.

---

*The Outlines of Teaching Sermons for a Third Year* (Geo. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1s. net) is a continuation of two previous volumes of *Outlines* edited by the Rev. C. E. Hudson, Canon of St. Albans. The subjects in this third year are: The Nature of Man, The Redeemer, The Church, and The Life of Prayer. Preachers will find many useful suggestions even though they may not accept some of the teaching given. As, for example, the inclusion of Penance, Unction, Matrimony, and Holy Orders, as Sacraments of the Church. The list of books recommended are compiled mainly from the works of advanced Churchmen.

---

*God's Eternal Purpose. Psalm 118 and other Studies*, by V. F. Thomas (Thynne & Co., 2s. net). In addition to the title study there are several carefully thought-out expositions of Biblical themes including the Gospel according to Paul, God's Fourfold Revelation for the Age, and Spiritual Sonship, and Priesthood.

---

## THE PRAYER-BOOK AND CONFESSION.

BY THE REV. W. H. MACKEAN, D.D., Canon Residentiary  
of Rochester.

OVER each man ordained a priest in the Church of England are said the words: "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." What do they mean? They are of course taken from St. John xx. 23: "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them: whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained"—addressed to "the disciples" on the evening of the first Easter Day, when, according to St. Luke xxiv. 33, others were present than ten of the Apostles. I need not, however, labour the point, for at the Fulham Conference of 1901 on "Confession and Absolution" the members were agreed that the words "are not to be regarded as addressed only to the Apostles or the Clergy, but as a commission to the whole Church." The Conference included such men as the Rev. R. M. Benson, of the Society of St. John Cowley, Canon Body, the Rev. V. S. S. Coles, Principal of Pusey House, Lord Halifax, and Canon A. J. Mason.

Further, as was the case with various sayings of our Lord, the commission was expressed in a broad and unqualified form; but the conditions are no doubt implied in the preceding sentences—"As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The forgiveness and retention of sins must be guided by the spirit of Christ and the principles of His mission; for all are agreed on the necessity of faith and repentance as the conditions of forgiveness; and even those whose language seems to encroach upon the divine prerogative do not deny in theory that it is God alone who can grant the divine forgiveness of sins. These words from the fourth Gospel correspond to the parting commission as recorded by St. Luke that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations." The Church was empowered to bring home to people the great message of the forgiveness of sins in such an authoritative way that they might be fully assured of it and receive peace and strength. When, therefore, the Church in the name of Christ declares that the sins of the faithful penitent are forgiven, that is true, they are forgiven, though no absolution really alters the state of anyone before God; and when it condemns the sins of the wilfully impenitent and declares that their sins remain and continue to separate them from God, that also is true, they are retained. It is a general commission to exercise the ministry of reconciliation; and a unanimous agreement was reached at the Fulham Conference that Our Lord's words conveyed "a summary of the message" with which the Church is charged. Further, the New Testament and early Christian history record how the commission was carried out; for we see the Church, mainly through its officers as mouthpieces and representatives, proclaiming the fact

and terms of divine forgiveness, condemning the sins of the impenitent, administering the Sacraments, and exercising discipline. The Apostles never claimed to forgive or retain sins against God : they declared God's forgiveness of the penitent : Sermons, Baptism and the Holy Communion were general Absolutions. But in regard to the Christian society, the Church forgave and retained sins in a literal and absolute sense : it exercised discipline over its members ; it excommunicated and then restored offenders after any great transgression, first retaining and then forgiving.

We come now to the formula in the Ordering of Priests :

“ Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and of His holy Sacraments.”

The insertion of our Lord's words is a solemn declaration of the Church that those ordained are thereby entrusted with the office and ministry of reconciliation ; and though they cannot mean more here than they did from our Lord's lips on the first Easter night, by the change from the plural number to the singular (“ thou ” instead of “ ye ”) the responsibility of each man is emphasised as well as the greatness of his ministry. But the interesting point is that these words are not found in any form for the Ordination of priests in the first thousand years : they are not part of the Ordinal of the Orthodox Church : in the Sarum Pontifical they were pronounced, as they are in the Roman, later in the service after the Ordination ; and so they cannot be regarded as an essential part of Ordination. Yet they were not only retained in our Ordinal, but made part of the actual Ordination formula. Whether the Reformers were aware or not that they were preserving a novelty of the Middle Ages, they undoubtedly inserted the words because they are Scriptural ; and it is clear, as Dr. Drury has shown in his book, *Confession and Absolution*, that they understood them in their primitive sense. Moreover, Anglican divines have carefully distinguished between the ministerial absolution which the Church can give and the forgiveness which God alone bestows. The great Elizabethan, Hooker, asked concerning absolution : “ Doth it really take away sin, or but ascertain us of God's most gracious and merciful pardon ? ” He has no hesitation as to the answer : “ The latter of which two is our assertion, the former theirs ” (i.e. the Romans) ;<sup>1</sup> and Jeremy Taylor, the casuist and Laudian, summed up as follows : “ Either the sinner hath repented worthily or he hath not. If he hath, then God hath pardoned him already. . . . If he hath not repented worthily, the priest . . . can by this absolution effect no new thing. The work is done before the priestly absolution, and therefore cannot depend upon it.”<sup>2</sup> The fact, however, remains that the Ordination formula is difficult for people to understand and is very liable to misinterpretation ; and the American Church provides an alternative form.

<sup>1</sup> *Eccl. Pol.*, VI, ch. vi, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vii, 459 (Eden).

In the Book of Common Prayer the assurance of the divine forgiveness is given to the penitent particularly through the Absolutions pronounced at Morning and Evening Prayer and at the Holy Communion. The former clearly states that it is God who pardons and absolves, and emphasis is laid on the power of His ministers to declare to penitent believers the absolution and remission of their sins. At the Holy Communion the Absolution is after the primitive manner in the form of a prayer for forgiveness; an added dignity is attached to it by the requirement that it is to be pronounced by the Bishop (of the diocese) if present; and it is followed immediately by the Comfortable Words, an arrangement which agrees with the statement in the first Exhortation that "by the ministry of God's holy Word, he may receive the benefit of absolution" and also with the Homily on Repentance where "the benefit of absolution" is described as "the comfortable salve of God's Word." The same Absolution appears again in "Forms of Prayer to be used at sea," when there is imminent danger.

But provision is also made for two exceptional cases requiring special treatment. In the first Exhortation of the Communion Service reference is made to those who cannot come to the Holy Communion with a quiet conscience. It carefully explains the normal way of coming worthily, namely by self-examination, bewailing of sinfulness, confession to Almighty God, full purpose of amendment, reconciliation with and restitution, if necessary, to and a readiness to forgive others. But where the foregoing is insufficient, a special method is indicated; and in 1662 additional emphasis was laid on the exceptional character of the provision, because there was added the paragraph which begins: "If any of you be a blasphemers of God, an hinderer or slanderer of His Word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in any other grievous crime," etc. Then follows the invitation to any who "cannot quiet his own conscience," but "requireth further comfort or counsel" to come to a "discreet and learned minister of God's Word and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness." There are two things to be noted here. The Prayer-Book provides no form of Absolution for use in such cases. In the first Prayer-Book of Edward VI the Absolution in the Visitation of the Sick was ordered to be used in all private confessions, but in and since 1552 that order was withdrawn. There is no fixed method or form; and so, for example, Bishop Chavasse said of the very many confessions he heard: "I never wore a surplice and never used a form of Absolution. My object was to bring home to the penitent or perplexed heart the sense of forgiveness by God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and I strove to do it by the ministry of God's holy Word."<sup>1</sup> The other point to be noticed is the expression "discreet and learned minister." In the 1549 Book it was "discreet and learned priest." The alteration since 1552 to the word "minister" does not, how-

<sup>1</sup> F. J. Jayne, *Anglican Pronouncements*, p. xx.

ever, mean that a man in priest's orders is not the normal person to deal with such cases : obviously he is by reason of the Ordination formula which entrusts to him the general ministry of reconciliation. But, as Dr. Drury says, " it amounts to a refusal to recognise in such private ministry any essentially sacerdotal character " ; for the description " discreet and learned minister of God's Word " emphasises the character and experience of the minister rather than the nature of his office : indeed, the Homily on Repentance does not even restrict it to a minister, but adds, " or to some other godly learned man."

The second exceptional case is that of the sick person, and " the Order for the Visitation of the Sick " has an extremely interesting Absolution :

" Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences : and by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

There is a good deal of elasticity and freedom as to the use of this Absolution. For one thing, the priest is to absolve the sick person only " if he humbly and heartily desire it." Also, according to Canon LXVII of 1603, the whole of this service is optional, except for those who are not preachers. Moreover, if the priest does use the service, he is not bound to adopt this precise form of Absolution, but is to absolve " after this sort," whereas in the first Prayer-Book the phrase was " after this form." Further, it is clear that the Absolution does not effect the divine forgiveness, for immediately afterwards there is, what Procter and Frere call, " a prayer of Absolution," that God will grant the sick person forgiveness, which would be meaningless if he had already been forgiven by God through the priest's Absolution. This Absolution, however, cannot, I think, refer to the remission of Church censures, for the sick person is only to be moved to confess if his conscience is troubled with any weighty matter, which presupposes the sins to be known previously to himself and God only : the Absolution contains no reference to the restoration to Church fellowship and is only granted at the desire of the sick person ; and release from excommunication is reserved by Article XXXIII to " a judge that hath authority thereunto." Presuming then that the Absolution refers to sins, it is certainly stronger than those of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Holy Communion, and may seem too strong ; yet there are several considerations to be borne in mind. It is careful to state that Christ " hath left power to His *Church* to absolve " ; and though the form " I absolve " (referring to sins in general) is a medieval and not a primitive use, a significant alteration has been made : in the Sarum form " absolve " was used of Christ and the priest, whereas in the Book of Common Prayer a distinction is made—" Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . forgive thee " : " I absolve thee." Next, it is no stronger than an Absolution after public repentance in the Liturgy of John Knox, which runs : " If thou unfeignedly repent thy former

iniquity and believe in the Lord Jesus, then I in His name pronounce and affirm that thy sins are forgiven, not only on earth but also in heaven, according to the promises annexed with the preaching of His Word and to the power put in the ministry of His Church.”<sup>1</sup> It is also to be remembered that a dying man with an uneasy conscience needs peace of mind, and he is given the assurance of forgiveness in the most authoritative form ; and Dr. Charles Harris says : “ Although precatory Absolution is equivalent *theologically* to the form ‘ I absolve thee,’ it is far from equivalent *psychologically*. Our Reformers were guided by a sound psychological instinct when they refused to weaken the authoritative and emphatic form of Absolution provided in the Sarum Manual.”<sup>2</sup> Yet it is very liable to misunderstanding, and is omitted in the American Prayer-Book, while in the Irish Book the form used is that of the Communion Service. The power and efficacy, however, of the three Absolutions in the Book of Common Prayer are exactly the same doctrinally ; but a private Absolution assures the penitent that God’s forgiving mercy is applicable to his particular case, and may accomplish what the general Absolutions have failed to do. But whether it be general and public, or particular and private, the priest either prays for God’s forgiveness or declares officially that if there is true repentance and faith the divine forgiveness is a blessed certainty.

I turn now to the other side of the subject. Few changes, if any, which the Reformation brought in this country, were more important and influential than that concerning private confession to a priest. For more than three hundred years it had been regarded as a universal, obligatory and indispensable duty. The Reformers not only absolutely rejected this notion, and made such confession voluntary, but they affirmed as an essential principle the freest filial access of the soul to God without human intervention of any kind. Its introduction must have been a very startling change to the people of England. In the second Exhortation of the new Communion Service, they were instructed to confess their sins directly to God, yet if anyone’s conscience was troubled, to go to a discreet and learned priest and confess secretly : but those who used and those who did not use “ auricular and secret confession ” were to exercise mutual toleration. At the same time a general Confession, followed by the Absolution and Comfortable Words, was added to the service. Further, although “ the Sacrament of Penance ” had been specially associated with Lent and confessions were largely held then, yet in the new service for Ash Wednesday no mention was made of confession to a priest ; but the people were earnestly directed to confess their sins to Almighty God. Even a sick person was only to make a special confession, if he felt his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. Several years later came the Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI wherein further changes were introduced, which were the more remarkable because meanwhile in 1551 the Council of Trent had reaffirmed the compulsory duty of

<sup>1</sup> *Liturgy of Church of Scotland*, by J. Cumming, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Liturgy and Worship*, p. 529.

confession to a priest once a year. In this Prayer-Book of 1552 all mention of "auricular and secret confession" was omitted in the Exhortation, as it has been ever since, as well as the requirement of mutual toleration between those who used or did not use it; the *first* way of coming worthily to the holy Table was self-examination by the light of God's Commandments, and accordingly the Decalogue and Kyries were added to the service. At the same time, as we have already seen, the order to use the Absolution of "The Visitation of the Sick" for all private confessions was withdrawn; and a general Confession, followed by the Absolution, was added to Morning and Evening Prayer, which previously had begun with the Lord's Prayer.

These momentous changes meant that the right of direct access to God without the mediation of a priest was fully affirmed, that the Confessional had gone, that the public and general forms of Confession and Absolution became the ordinary means of receiving the assurance of forgiveness, and that greater self-reliance and a more robust faith were encouraged. But as a last resource for helping those with tender consciences to come worthily to the Holy Communion, a confidential interview with a "discreet and learned minister" is recommended: its purpose is described in general terms—"to open his grief"—a word of wider significance than "sins": it may or may not involve a formal confession: the grief that is specially weighing on the conscience is intended. But a complete enumeration of all sins that can be remembered is certainly not implied: the Homily on Repentance states—"it is against the true Christian liberty that any man should be bound to the numbering of his sins, as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindness and ignorance": and so the Lambeth Conference of 1878 affirmed—"no minister of the Church is authorised to require from those who may resort to him to open their grief a particular or detailed enumeration of all their sins."

Attention was drawn by many Anglican divines, particularly in the seventeenth century, to these provisions of the Prayer-Book for troubled consciences before Communion and for the sick. But although a number of well-known people are mentioned as having made their confessions on their death-beds, and some other cases are recorded when confession was practised more often, yet from time to time reference was made to the prevailing neglect of private confession or regrets were expressed that it was not more practised<sup>1</sup>; and H. D. Beste, Fellow of Magdalen, who advocated it in an Oxford University sermon of 1793, was no doubt correct, when in a comment thereon he referred to the "more than two centuries' sturdy resistance to confession" by "the good people of England."<sup>2</sup> However, in the nineteenth century strenuous efforts were made on its behalf by Dr. Pusey and others, and the practice was regularly adopted by many of his followers, as it is by their successors.

The question is not whether special or private confession is allow-

<sup>1</sup> *Hierurgia Anglicana*, pt. iii: pp. 44, 51, 57, 59 f., 71, 74 f., 76, 80.

<sup>2</sup> P. 166. Cf. pp. 98 f., 109 (ed. 1874).

able—of course it is under exceptional circumstances—but whether the formularies of the Church of England authorise, encourage or reject the tenets that it is either necessary for all faithful Church people, or advisable for most, to resort to what is called the Sacrament of Penance.

Firstly then, are the terms “ Sacrament of Penance,” and “ Sacramental Confession ” recognised by our formularies? The word penance is used in the Prayer-Book in two senses. As the usual term for the public discipline of the early Church, it is mentioned in our Communion Service and in Article XXXIII; and the restoration of that “ godly discipline ” for notorious sinners was desired by various Anglican divines of the Reformation and post-Reformation periods. The other use of the word occurs in Article XXV, where it is stated that Penance is not to be regarded as a sacrament of the Gospel. This so-called sacrament, so far from having a visible sign ordained by Christ, was not even appointed by Him; for St. John xx. 23, makes no reference to confession or to any particular means of seeking forgiveness, and is to be understood, as we have seen, in the large sense of the general ministry of reconciliation. The Homily on Common Prayer and Sacraments does, it is true, allow that Absolution may be called a sacrament in the general sense whereby any holy thing can be so termed, but that is not what is meant by those who call it a sacrament. In point of fact, the Sacrament of Penance was a creation of the later Middle Ages; and Hooker severely criticised the Roman Church for making a sacrament “ of their own devising and shaping ” for remitting mortal sins committed after baptism. He also referred to the term “ Sacramental Confession ” as Roman<sup>1</sup>; and the formularies of the Church of England know no such term.

Secondly, an unwise and intemperate advocacy would apply private confession to everybody. Statements are current that “ the Church of England puts a man on his honour ” to go to private confession to a priest, that you cannot be “ a good Catholic ” without it, and that it is obligatory for mortal sins. Many, including the young, are made to feel that there can be no true assurance of forgiveness without it; it is urged as almost necessary for the highest spiritual life. There are clergy who refuse to present candidates for Confirmation unless they have been to Confession. It is pressed continually in preaching and teaching: it is urged insistently on men and women, boys and girls. The belief, which often underlies it, is that private Absolution is the only remedy for post-baptismal mortal sin. But there is neither Scriptural nor Primitive authority for such a doctrine, and it is not to be found in our formularies. There is no doubt whatever that according to the Prayer-Book resort to special Confession must be really and altogether voluntary: no compulsion direct or indirect is authorised: and nothing can justify such a grave departure from a basic principle of the Church of England, such a forgetfulness of the free forgiveness of God, and such an encroachment on Christian liberty. In 1898, when the

<sup>1</sup> *Eccl. Pol.*, VI, ch. vi, 2; ch. iv, 3, 6.

subject was in the public mind, Charles Gore wrote to *The Times* : " The Bishops can be, and I trust will be, rigorous in suppressing any tendency to make confession obligatory, or to press it strongly on those whose consciences do not feel the need of it, or to treat those who go to confession as in a higher class spiritually than those who do not." <sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the Prayer-Book does not authorise such confession for the young, who have not been confirmed. Advice and warning can be given to them in other ways. Advantage should not be taken of their inexperience and impressionability ; and to ensure this, Bishop Creighton once made three practical requests which are worthy of remembrance, that no literature concerning confession should be given to candidates for Confirmation, that it should not be urged upon them as a preliminary for Confirmation, and that no teaching should be given them on the subject beyond what is contained in the Book of Common Prayer. <sup>2</sup>

Further, is habitual confession, that is to say the habit of going to a priest for confession at regular intervals, as a normal custom and means of grace in the Christian life, sanctioned or encouraged by the Prayer-Book ? The latter undoubtedly postulates the sense of need as a condition of private confession ; it is for the unquiet conscience ; it is a special treatment, a medicine rather than the food of the soul. Habitual confession seems to defeat its own purpose, and without a sense of need is likely to degenerate into formalism or become a mere sop to conscience. Next, the Prayer-Book, like the New Testament, emphasises personal responsibility to God, and the Exhortation in the Communion Service tells us, if we possibly can, to cure ourselves. Habitual confession undermines the direct access of the soul to God, for it means the habitual interposition of the priest. As Hooker put it, contrasting the English Church with Roman Catholics, " We labour to instruct men in such sort that every soul which is wounded with sin may learn the way how to cure itself : they, clean contrary, would make all sores seem incurable, unless the priest have a hand in them." <sup>3</sup> Moreover, while I gladly and fully acknowledge the highmindedness of many who have most strongly advocated habitual confession, it remains true, as Bishop Moberly, himself a High Churchman, said of habitual confession and constant spiritual direction : " the life and conscience of men and women are subjected to the absolute sway, secretly exercised, of men of whose wisdom and capacity the Church has no assurance, and who have received no jurisdiction to exercise such powers in such a way." <sup>4</sup> It is not surprising then to find the Lambeth Conference of 1878, affirming that " no minister of the Church is authorised . . . to enjoin or even encourage the practice of habitual confession."

In conclusion, the opening of the mind and its sorrows to a minister, as the Prayer-Book directs, may well be salutary to those who cannot otherwise quiet their consciences. Ordinarily, however,

<sup>1</sup> August 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecl. Pol.*, VI, ch. vi, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Letters*, II, 365.

<sup>4</sup> Charge, 1873, p. 33.

a better use can be made of the general Confessions in public worship and a higher value attached to the gracious words of Absolution, which fall as gentle dew from heaven and refresh the hearts of the penitent. It should be remembered also that Absolution is entrusted to the Church as a whole, that all believers share with one another the priesthood, and that each can exercise his or her ministry by bringing help and healing to the troubled in spirit.

---

RIGHT : A STUDY IN PHYSICAL AND MORAL ORDER. By Wyatt Tilby. *Williams & Norgate. 7s. 6d.*

This philosophical inquiry into the nature of things raises such questions as, What is truth? What are the limits to telling the truth? What is the Will of God? Is God Love? Is God free?

The book "began unexpectedly with the left foot of a tortoise and ended even more unexpectedly with the Right Hand of God."

It is interesting reading, but the argument is somewhat elusive, and does not seem to carry us very far. No doubt it will appeal to certain types of mind.

---

THE CIRCLE OF TIME. By John Macberth, M.A. *R.T.S. 3s. 6d. net.*

Miss Hannah C. P. Macgoun painted a series of pictures inspired by an old tale in which Christ is represented as a Shepherd, and the months of the year as sheep that have strayed. He calls them by name, gathers them and brings them home one by one. Mr. Macberth has written a charming little essay about each one. Here are the titles of a few : The Zest of January, The Romance of May, The Rapture of July, The Gladness of December. The whole circle of the year is covered and each month has its coloured illustration—a reproduction of one of Miss Macgoun's pictures. A pretty little gift book.

---

THE BEAUTIFUL PRESENCE IN THE GARDEN OF THE SOUL. By Fay Inchfawn. *Religious Tract Society. 2s. 6d.*

From the natural features of an ordinary garden the authoress draws her illustrations of the life of the soul, and its enrichment by the "Beautiful Presence" of our Lord in this "garden." We always welcome the helpful sympathetic writings of Fay Inchfawn, and this little volume of devotional essays is written with all her usual charm and simplicity. It is a most acceptable gift book.

## THE MINISTRY AND RECONCILIATION.

BY CANON S. M. WARNER, M.A.

IN the earliest days of the Church the Doctrine of the Cross was hardly a matter of controversy like the Doctrine of the Incarnation, or the Blessed Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. Our three Creeds just state in general terms that Christ suffered for us and rose again. The Cross was recognised as so central and fundamental that it could not be questioned. In these latter days the Spirit speaketh expressly that some shall depart from the faith, and that a mark of the perilous times will be that some shall be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." And so, to-day, the Doctrine of the Cross which is the foundation truth is the centre round which controversy rages, sometimes in the Sacrament of His Crucified Body and Precious Blood, sometimes in the manner in which the efficacy of the Cross is to be received, whether by preaching or by the Confessor's absolution or by Group methods, and sometimes in the philosophical reasonings of the intellectually unsettled who strangely seem to neglect the pure theology of the first exponents of the Doctrine of the Atonement, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John.

But all controversy dies when by the Holy Spirit's power we get nearer and nearer to the Cross for ourselves. We shall never get beyond the MYSTERY of the Cross. How the Atonement of Christ on Calvary affected the mind of God will always remain a profound mystery. But we recall that in the ritual of the great Day of Atonement, Jehovah took the initiative, and Himself devised the means whereby the barrier might be removed which prevented the exercise of Divine mercy. The multiplication of the details in that ritual reminded the seeker that the covering of sin by Shed Blood only was a mystery that lay hidden in the heart of God. But the profundity of the mystery does not alter the fact. Aristotle taught that in regard to the moral training of the child we must teach him what is right and what is wrong, but we need not at once teach him why. He will grow up to discover that for himself. We are all growing up, and none of us know all the WHY of the Atonement. One day we may. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I fully know as I am fully known." (1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

And as we can never get beyond the Mystery, let us see to it that we never lose the Melody of the Cross!

"How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear."

"Tell me the story of Jesus,  
Write on my heart every word;  
Tell me the story most precious,  
Sweetest that ever was heard."

“ Sweetest note on seraph song,  
Sweetest name on mortal tongue ;  
Sweetest carol ever sung,  
Jesus, Blessed Jesus.”

And when the Gospel bells are ringing clear and true, the music of the Gospel leads the wanderer Home.

But in addition to this there will always be the Mastery of the Cross.

Do some still say, “ Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with ? ” Ah ! “ I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.” We, the ministers of Reconciliation, have the unspeakable privilege of lifting up the Uplifted One, of portraying or *painting-up* in living words Jesus Christ Who-is-the-Crucified. (Gal. iii. 1.)

To do this, we ourselves must be drawn, and then ever more be drawn nearer and nearer. It is the enraptured man who enraptures others with the Uplifted Christ.

“ All glory to the Risen Lamb,  
I now believe in Jesus ;  
I love the Blessed Saviour’s Name,  
I love the Name of Jesus.”

Now if we are to be successful heralds of the Glad Tidings, we must be clear in our minds as to the meaning of the Ministry of Reconciliation.

#### GOD IS RECONCILED TO THE SINNER

In the A.V. the word “ Atonement ” only occurs in Rom. v. 11 : “ If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we shall be saved by His life, and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the Atonement.” So Atonement means Reconciliation, this is its meaning in the New Testament. But though the word occurs once only in our A.V. and that in the writing of St. Paul, the teaching of Reconciliation, like Justification, is not confined to him alone. For instance, what greater text on Justification is there than, “ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life ” ? (John iii. 16.) And so with Reconciliation. What clearer teaching can we have on the Atonement than St. John’s words, “ Perfect love casteth out fear,” and “ Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His Own Blood, to Him be glory for ever and ever ” ? (Rev. i. 5.)

Or what could be clearer than the Petrine teaching in 1 Peter ii. 24, 25 : “ His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the Tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by Whose stripes ye were healed,” and, “ Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls ” ?

Now the Old Testament word for Atonement is כִּפָּר ; the root is recognised as meaning to *cover*.

Where there has been ground for offence there a cover or barrier is set between the sinner and the Holy God. This is the Old Testament conception. In the New Testament Atonement removes the barrier, and God and the sinner are reconciled.

The Old Testament reveals the absolute necessity of a cover between the guilty sinner and the Holy God if the sinner is not to die. The word occurs most frequently in the Pentateuch, and the fact was taught over and over again that without some cover the sinner in his attempt to draw near to a Holy God would die in his sins. The prohibition to the people not to draw near to the Mount at Sinai lest they die, and the Table of the Law inclosed in the ark to shield Israel from the danger of its presence amongst them, and then the ark itself covered with gold and on the lid of the ark the Kapporeth, the mercy seat, which had to be sprinkled with Blood, and then placed in the farthest recess of the Tabernacle, all taught the same thing, that without a cover, Israel, in their approach to God, would die in their sins. But in the Prophets and Psalms there emerges a more spiritual apprehension of the work of Atonement. The sin of Isaiah is purged or covered when the live coal from off the altar touches his lips. And the Psalmist exclaims upon the great Blessedness of the man whose sin is covered.

All this made the way clear for the apprehension of the meaning of Christ's Atoning and completed work which was finished upon the Cross of Calvary. If we ask what was the meaning of the Death upon the Cross, we go to Christ's Own words, "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep"; "the Son of Man came to give His life a Ransom (λύτρον) for many." And at the last Supper He said, "This is My Blood which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." St. Paul affirms that He died for all (2 Cor. v. 14), that is, in their stead, as the whole context and argument prove, and that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and by "reconciling" is meant removing the impediment or barrier that existed. And this was done by making Him Who knew no sin . . . not a sinner, but a partaker of the very element of sin itself *in its penalty* (Litton, p. 221).

So St. Peter teaches that we are "redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ," and that "Christ bare our sins in His Own Body on the Tree." And St. John follows on by saying that "the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us" (καθαρίζει; a legal term for cleansing) "from all sin," and, "Jesus Christ the Righteous is Himself the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). Then *Some One* is propitiated! Who can this be but God? Sin had alienated the Holy Love of God, and true as it is that God loves the sinner, yet He hates sin. But the Propitiation has caused God's anger against sin to cease and there is therefore now a change on the part of God towards sinners on account of the "katallage."

Imperfect as our language is to express this truth, it is the truth nevertheless that God is reconciled to man. As Litton says:

"The whole tenour of Scripture is to the effect that through the vicarious

sacrifice of Christ a change was wrought in God of this nature, that whereas previously He could not, consistently with the perfection of His attributes, grant forgiveness on repentance, now He can."

Or as Dr. Griffith Thomas said :

" There is practical unanimity among Scholars that reconciliation in St. Paul means a change of relation on God's part towards man, something done by God to man which has modified what would otherwise have been His attitude to the sinner. Thus, reconciliation is much more than a change of feeling on man's part towards God, and must imply first of all a change of relation in God towards man."

#### THE SINNER CAN BE RECONCILED TO GOD

" God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) To believe that Christ died for us is apprehended by the heart rather than by the mind for love travels faster than the intellect, and when the heart is touched there is really no need to labour the point with the mind. Nevertheless there are some minds that are disturbed at the apparent injustice of the doctrine of Substitution. However reasonably it may be explained it will ever remain outside the range of perfect human understanding. Who understands the law of our creation? Who then can fully understand the mystery of our redemption, which is after all a fresh creation? Dr. Charles Henry Waller used to teach that the three words, Representation, Substitution, and Identification, help to remove the moral difficulty. Our Lord became our Substitute because He is our lawful Representative, lawful because God had appointed Him, and His Substitution becomes effectual in consequence of our subsequent Identification or living union with Him. He illustrated it thus :

" If a man forges my name to a cheque, and receives the money as my substitute he is a robber. But if I make him my representative by giving him a power of attorney, his signature on my behalf is no longer forgery, because he and I are practically one person. He applies the money which he receives as my representative, for my benefit, under my instructions. The substitution becomes lawful in the case of my representative because of our Union.

" Or, I am convicted of a capital crime and sentenced to death. My elder brother offers to be my substitute and die in my place. If I consent, he and I may agree that he shall act as my representative on the scaffold. But will justice permit the substitution? Certainly not. I am a murderer. My brother a respectable member of society. Mankind would not be safe if he were allowed to die for me. Society would suffer by the loss of a valuable member, and the continued presence of a dangerous criminal. Substitution cannot be permitted in this case, because Union is impossible, and therefore Representation is unlawful.

" But suppose it were possible, that by my brother's death, I, the murderer should die also. Suppose that the innocent man having died could return to life having slain the murderer in me. Then I am reformed, my brother is not lost, murder is punished. Society is protected and justice is satisfied.

" Either this or nothing is effected by the Atonement of Christ."

Or to put it in another way. The reason why without shedding of Blood is no remission lies in the fact that the old Adam whose

life is in his blood is irrevocably doomed to die. He is so spoiled by sin that there is no way to mend him except to kill him, and unmake him, and make him again. "The vessel that He made of the clay was marred in the hand of the Potter, so He made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the Potter to make it" (Jer. xviii. 4). It is not that He cleaned the old vessel or slightly altered its shape. He actually crushed it all out of shape into the original clay, and re-formed it as He thought best. But the death of the old vessel must precede the reformation that makes it new. When Christ died for us, He laid down the soul of the first Adam, which in us is the vehicle of sin, that He might take it again, not as a living soul in a natural body, but as a quickening Spirit in a Spiritual Body, and so He became the Founder of a new race of sons of God (John x. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 45; Rom. viii. 29). He is our Saviour God.

Or, as Bishop Handley Moule puts it thus :

"I, a believer, am 'in Christ' in covenant union. Between me and Him, my blessed 'Head once wounded,' there passes a real interchange of interests, and liabilities, and possessions, under an Eternal Covenant. He is liable for my debts; I am inducted into His possessions. On both sides is 'imputation,' reckoning, placing on an account. To His account is placed my fall, my transgression, my guilt; to my account is placed His standing, His obedience, His merit, His righteousness, His large and glorious satisfactoriness to His own and His Father's Law. But why? Is all this a cold 'legal fiction'? Is it the arbitrary treatment of *any* guilty person as innocent because *any* other person being innocent was treated as guilty? No. It is indeed a thing profoundly legal; but it is a thing in which holy Law moves within lines and orbits of real and eternal Life. The Sufferer is the HEAD; the Justified are the MEMBERS."

#### THE MINISTER AS AN AMBASSADOR

The chief office of a Jewish Priest in the Old Testament was not to offer sacrifice only, but to teach the Law, and also to burn incense when it was his turn. The Levites, not the Priests, did most of the work at the Altar of Sacrifice (1 Chron. xxiii. 13, 27, 28, 31). So to connect the words "Priest," "Altar," and "Sacrifice" is not altogether accurate Judaism, and is certainly not Christianity. If the ordained Christian Minister is in any sense a successor to the Jewish Priest, he has nothing to do with offering a sacrifice, but he has a great deal to do with teaching God's Holy Word and with offering the Incense of Prayer and Intercession.

And so there emerges the office of the Ambassador, the privilege which is the envy of Angels and Archangels. Now the Ambassador's work is not to plan terms of peace but to proclaim them, not to discuss them but to declare them. He has no plenipotentiary powers to arrange or adjust, he can only announce the terms already determined and urge their acceptance; he cannot grant peace, he can only give the message of the Gospel of Peace. If the ambassador adopts the rôle of the priest-confessor he is assuming the powers of the King Whom he represents. Rather is it his office to introduce the alienated soul to the King-Priest. His proclamation of the

Glad Tidings, has this in view. This is the object of all his work, and it is for this grand purpose that he uses his ambassadorial office. Let me at this point plead for a simpler and more historic interpretation of the words in John xx. 23: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained." We are so accustomed to think of the common view of these words that we can hardly read them without being conscious of the controversial aspect which they present. As Westcott reminds us, "whatever the words mean, the Commission must be regarded properly as the Commission of the Christian Society and not as that of the Christian ministry." Now our Lord must have had two men in mind that evening. There was Judas whose sin against the Christian Society and against his Lord had not been forgiven because he had never sought forgiveness. And so as regards Judas, our Lord said, "Whosoever sins ye retain they are retained." Here is a public declaration then that Judas was an unforgiven man. The other man in our Lord's mind was Simon Peter, who had also grievously sinned against the Christian Society and against Christ. He had sought and found forgiveness at the hand of Christ and had been forgiven by his fellow-disciples whose fellowship they had allowed him to join again. As regards this disciple then the Master said, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted." It was a public declaration of Peter's forgiveness, ratified before the assembled gathering of believers.

We believe that the words in this passage have nothing to do with the secret confession of sin to a priest-confessor. The work of the Ambassador is a supremely happier and holier one.

Bishop Handley Moule, one of the holiest of Anglican Bishops (whom I quote again), from the depths of a consecrated experience has said:

"In the Confession by one sinful being to another, of what we call moral evil, hardly in one case out of a thousand can such detail do other than harm to both minds; such, at least, is my conviction. One of the deepest objections to an organised and systematic confessional system, of which Scripture says absolutely nothing, and really primitive antiquity just as little, is that it tends by its very nature towards an unwholesome treatment of detail in such things. . . .

"Under the fallacious assumption that spiritual diseases regularly require a human physician because physical diseases usually do so, and under the consequent supposed necessity of a minute diagnosis by the supposed physician, it is terribly easy to aggravate by the intended remedy. Experience shows that in certain states of temptation an eager readiness for detailed confession may be an actually bad symptom. Now within certain limits this fact bears upon Confession in secret even to the Lord or professedly to Him. True, we cannot do Him harm, as we could only too easily do to a sinful human confidant, ordained or not. But we may greatly hurt ourselves. Let us confess to Him everything with simplicity, not everything with minuteness."

No, our work is to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5). An evangelist is a man with Glad Tidings, as the word means, and the work of evangelism is the preaching of the Glad News of Redemption through the Atoning and Finished work of Christ which

He completed on the Cross of Calvary. It is this Glad News which is our privilege to proclaim.

*It is supremely needed.*—That is, it is needed above any other kind of message, and first of all. It may not be *wanted*, for the natural man is afraid to look into his own heart for fear of what depths of sin he may find, and nothing finds us out like the Gospel of God's Love. But though it is not *wanted*, it is truly *needed*. In a new and quickly growing area outside one of our large towns, an Archdeacon was seen measuring out a space for a new church. He was observed by one of the new residents, and when it was ascertained that a new church was contemplated, the new resident said, "But we do not want a Church!" No, but he and the thousands of souls settling down in that new parish *needed* what he in his blindness did not realise. "I have need of nothing," said a self-complacent church, at whose door the Saviour with a pierced Hand was knocking because He was kept outside. A sense of need is deadened because men are immersed in cares, absorbed in pleasures, or asleep in sin. The Gospel is needed though men often deceive themselves by saying they do not want it.

*It is surely welcomed.*—In spite of all the indifference shown, the Music of the Gospel touches a deep chord in the human heart, and it is assuredly welcomed when a sense of need is created. The day of the evangelistic sermon is not over and never will be over, if the right note is struck—the message that has the Cross as its centre. "For years," said a Churchgoer in one of our country parishes, "we were lulled to sleep" until the trumpet call of the Gospel through a new voice with this message filled a hitherto empty church with eager listeners, some coming for miles Sunday after Sunday.

*It is spiritually discerned* (I Cor. ii. 14).—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned." There are thousands who hear and yet do not hear. Their hearts have never yet yielded to the Breath of the Spirit, they have never been "born from Above." Evangelism without the Holy Spirit is dead before it is attempted. Before we prophesy to the people, we must prophesy to the Wind of Heaven. We must give ourselves to *The* prayer of all prayers, the Prayer for the shedding forth of the Spirit of God upon men. Back to the Gathering for Prayer must be our determination at all costs. This is the Power House, the Stronghold, the Reservoir whence the Living Streams pour forth. When shall we learn that the birth of souls begins in the prayers of God's believing people?

So the call comes to all who are called to the Ministry, "Do the work of an evangelist." May we not be found standing aside from the Call, nor wanting in this Great Day of opportunity.

## CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE.

BY THE REV. S. NOWELL-ROSTRON, M.A., B.D.,  
Rector of Bradfield.

THERE is one question of the deepest importance that we may not escape. It transcends all our discussions. It concerns all our theories. It closely affects our practical life. In its broadest issue it shapes itself thus: Can the Christian be sure of the great affirmations of his creed? Can he be sure of God? of Jesus Christ? of the Holy Spirit? Is his conviction based on eternal realities or on doubtful grounds of human reasoning, credulity or imagination? In regard to the subject specially before us, the Reconciliation of God and Man, it asks: Can the Christian be sure of his salvation, of his entire and complete forgiveness? When all has been said and done, is he still left with a wide margin of uncertainty about this great matter of his standing before God?

The analogy of the experience of human forgiveness readily suggests hesitation. How can God fully forgive man his sin, when man finds it so hard fully to forgive his brother an injury, when he often finds it so difficult to forgive himself for his own follies and errors? In the quiet spaces of his self-communing does he not ponder the possibility that the past may not after all be completely forgiven or forgotten by God, and that it still may come up against him? How will it be when the "Books" are "opened" (Rev. xx. 12), and that other Book, "which is the Book of life?" When we give account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil, can we then escape the horror, the heartbreak of the damning record of the past? Will not its story, traced with invisible but indelible writing, both on the tablets of memory and on the tablets of God, then shine forth in all its accusing shamefulness? As Sir Percivale found in his questing for the Holy Grail:

"Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
And every evil thought I had thought of old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke,"

will they not "awake" for us also in the searchlight of the Day of God that is to dawn? Does God really forgive us now, take us back to Himself, treat the wrong we have done Him as though it had never existed? If it is hard to forgive, it is hard to realise we are forgiven. This is no casual question. It is a matter of life and death that we should know. It is not enough for us that it is possibly or even probably true. For upon our assurance of the fact of our forgiveness depends the peace that pardon brings as its most comforting gift to the soul; and the liberation that sets the heart "at leisure from itself," free for eager and concentrated service. If we are still left in the region of doubt, the Christian message is no good news of salvation. It is but another (though

the noblest and loftiest) of the many systems of human thought and striving that begin and end in the worship of an Unknown God.

#### PROBABILITY AND ASSURANCE.

We are met at once in the making of such a demand by the assertion, and the true assertion, that in many matters, to quote the great fundamental principle of Bishop Butler's argument, "probability is the guide of life." Why not then in this? In many regions of human thought and activity we cannot have and we should not expect certainty. Whilst there are facts of the physical universe such as the law of gravity, or of mathematical science such as "two and two make four," in regard to which there is no room for questioning, there is also a very large area of life in which choice has to be made between two opinions or courses both of which present elements of doubt, and in regard to which Butler's principle of probability must be our guide. It has its application in the sphere of religion and in the consideration of the so-called "proofs" of Christian doctrine. It is indeed a powerful and unanswerable plea that all human beings are bound by the principles they apply to the affairs of daily life to give to the claims of Christianity their urgent consideration. It turns upon the barren Deism of to-day, as it did upon that of the eighteenth century, the dry, dispassionate and gentle light of a philosophy broad-based on wide observation and honest thought. But it does not bring us, and does not profess to bring us, into the inner shrine of Christian experience. Butler and Wesley are not antagonistic but complementary. The Evangelist and the Philosopher have much to teach each other. When we approach the personal relation between the soul and God the desire for certainty no longer, to use Gladstone's words, "enervates and unmans the character."<sup>1</sup> If it be said that with our limited and fallible powers we cannot attain to certainty, I would reply, again in Gladstone's words, "The fallibility of our faculties may not prevent our having knowledge that in itself is absolute."<sup>2</sup> The Psalmist's cry, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Ps. xlii. 2), is not satisfied by speculative probabilities but by a draught of the living water. Butler himself was to feel that deeper need. When he lay dying his mind was sore troubled. He asked his chaplain to say somewhat to comfort him, and the chaplain repeated the verse, "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "But," said the Bishop, "how do I know that He came to save me?" "The Scripture also saith, my Lord, that 'whosoever cometh, He will in no wise cast out.'" And so the great Bishop found assurance. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me." "I am the way, the truth and the Life." Christ takes us beyond the region of probability into that of assurance if we trust His claim.

<sup>1</sup> *Studies subsidiary to Butler's works*, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 342.

## MAN'S NEED.

But let us be quite clear what manner of assurance we expect and desire. We do not seek and we do not find a world from which the possibility of error has been removed. In Browning's "Asolando" there is a study of such a world where there is no room for doubt, and it is therefore a world that is eternally stagnant. The earth with its conflicts and perplexities is for that very reason the sphere of progress and of hope and of the victory of faith. Christian assurance is often that of doubts conquered, not of doubts removed.

"With me, faith means perpetual unbelief  
Kept quiet, like the snake 'neath Michael's foot  
Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe."

Nor is it a kind of assurance which it is easy to come by, I mean the facile self-assurance which is the pose of the ignorance, deliberate or unconscious, that results from blinding the eyes to difficulties. We have no desire to share the confident dogmatism of the sectarian, which is narrow, not as the path of Christian discipleship, but as the hard lovelessness of the Pharisee. Nor again do we wish for the assurance of the self-reliant, rejoicing in the strength of body or brain, making himself his own god. The Gospel of individual sufficiency for life has in it a stirring appeal to youth and inexperience. "Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string," writes Emerson. It is a call to resolution and action and self-expression and self-development that our modern world is not slow to heed. But we know that in the wider processes of living this is a Gospel doomed to spiritual disillusionment, and, it may be, to bitter material disappointment and failure. The prayer that voices the universal tragedy of human experience is not hyperbole but simple fact: "Almighty God, Who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves."<sup>1</sup> The assurance we need is not in ourselves or of ourselves. It is not in the world or of the world. It is in God and of God, or it is nowhere. It is the assurance for which the soul yearns that has realised the horror of its sin, that has been humbled to the dust by the sense of its own unworthiness, that has lost all trust in its own achievements or its own Righteousness, and that, helpless, looks to God for grace. Will He indeed receive us, will He re-create His broken image within us, will He take foulness and make it clean, weakness and make it strong, put a new song upon our lips, and set us in the company of the Redeemed?

## THE PURPOSE OF GOD.

The answer of God is so wonderful that many cannot credit it. How often has been repeated the wistful remark of a brilliant fellow-undergraduate to me during J. R. Mott's Mission in Cam-

<sup>1</sup> Collect for 2nd Sunday in Lent.

bridge, "If only I could be sure of that." How many have asked as they have listened to the promises of God,

"Can it be true, the grace He is declaring?"

The question takes us swiftly and directly in our consideration from our human need to God's purpose. Nor should we shrink from trying to discover this. Though His ways are not our ways and are "past tracing out" (Rom. xi. 33) we are not shut out completely from His counsels. If St. Paul is led to cry, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" he can add without presumption and with radiant certainty, "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16). The Divine purpose was that man should be redeemed and know of and rejoice in his redemption.<sup>1</sup> The Old Testament writers, Psalmist and Prophet alike, leave no room for doubt as to the conviction behind their message. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. i. 18); "The work of Righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of Righteousness . . . confidence (assurance—A.V.) for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17); "As far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. ciii. 12); "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34); "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away" (Hos. xiv. 4).

The elaborate ritual of the Old Testament Ordinances had for one of its purposes the bringing of such assurance to the offender that life might not thereafter be burdened by sin repented of, but unexpiated. It symbolised a deeper need, that of spiritual cleansing, and so prepared for Christ, for it is in Christ we may see set forth fully before us the loving purpose of the Father. The "divers portions" and "divers manners" of God's Revelation of Himself belonged to the past. Now perfectly His will was revealed in Christ. The Divine purpose is seen in the self-humbling of Christ and in the Father's supreme gift of His Son. Because God is love He must save, and give to the uttermost that He might save. Because His love is holy, He must destroy the barrier of sin. Nor could Love, unless we fatally misunderstand it in its Divine source and nature, contemplate saving action in the world that would leave the rescued in doubt as to their Salvation. The Incarnation, the earthly life and ministry, the Death and Resurrection of Christ, have each their part in that loving purpose for us. But especially in the Cross and the work of atonement there done do we find the final, the outstanding, source of our assurance. It is not our love for God, our desires, affections or feelings, that save us. It is God's

<sup>1</sup> Though few would now accept all the Calvinistic "Lambeth Articles" of 1595 on Predestination, Art. VI may so far be subscribed: "A truly faithful man, that is one endowed with justifying faith, is certain by the full assurance of faith, of the remission of his sins." Whitaker's draught of these articles read "certainty of faith." The phrase was altered by the Lambeth Divines who seemingly saw in the alteration a subtle difference (see Browne on Art. XVI). Cf. St. Luke i. 77.

love for us, revealed in its certainty and fullness on Calvary. "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Christianity was proclaimed to the world first by men who were sure of their own forgiveness by God, and who preached a Gospel of assurance (Acts ii. 36) to a despairing and sin-stricken world. To the eager and pathetic cry, "What shall we do?" the answer was the same, for Jew and Gentile alike, "Repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." The New Testament rings with the trumpet note of certainty. So far, at least, there was understanding of the Will of God (Eph. v. 17). It had been a "mystery," but was now a "mystery" made known (Eph. i. 9). This was the "good pleasure" of God's will (Eph. i. 5). So St. Paul prays for the Colossians (i. 9) that they may be "filled with the knowledge of His will," and in striking phrase that they may be brought "unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they might know the mystery of God, even Christ, in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (ii. 2). It is impossible to begin to quote the indications everywhere of the glorious certainty of the Good News that ran like a fire of cleansing, light and warmth through that ancient world. "Who-soever believeth . . . should not perish"; "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; "By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." There is no tremor of doubt in these words. They describe not hypothesis, but fact; not probability but assurance.

#### OUR ASSURANCE IN CHRIST.

If this, then, be God's purpose, what can we say of the Assurance He offers us in Christ? It is the assurance of knowledge which the soul can reach, and of which it can be as sure as of life itself. It comes not from a mechanical arrangement, an external, forensic declaration. It arises from a reunion of sundered souls, a passing over<sup>1</sup> of sin, a relationship restored, a bringing together of hearts that love and are meant for each other. It may be noted, therefore, that the Divine assurance bears three marks. First, it is immediate. "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (St. Matt. ix. 2; St. Luke vii. 48). Secondly, it is complete. "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Not that some of sin's effects do not remain to scar the life though the wound is healed.

"Yes, Thou forgivest, but with all forgiving  
Can'st not renew mine innocence again."<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes sin's consequences have to be endured by oneself and, still more terribly, by others, long after they are forgiven. Yet the heart can go singing upon its way for God now is with us.

<sup>1</sup> The commonest word for "forgiveness" in the New Testament is ἀφεσις (aphesis) which implies "sending away," "letting go" or "releasing."

<sup>2</sup> F. W. H. Myers, *St. Paul*.

It knows "the glory of the lighted soul" that dawned upon John Masefield's converted ploughman :

"That I should plough, and as I ploughed  
My Saviour Christ would sing aloud,  
And as I drove the clods apart  
Christ would be ploughing in my heart,  
Through rest-harrow and bitter roots,  
Through all my bad life's rotten fruits." <sup>1</sup>

And thirdly that assurance is free and for all and of God's loving mercy and purpose.<sup>2</sup> No money and no effort of ours could win it. Its cost was the travail of Christ's soul. If He died not to give us this, His death is the deepest tragedy in the story of the race. "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). It is wine and milk without money and without price.

#### THE WAY OF ASSURANCE.

How is such assurance attained? The essential human preliminary condition is Repentance, with all that repentance implies. This was in the forefront of the preaching not only of the Baptist (St. Matt. iii. 2), but of our Lord (iv. 17) and of the Apostles (Acts ii. 38). The means by which assurance is mediated to us is Faith. Through faith we are saved (Eph. ii. 8), by faith we are justified (Rom. iii. 28), by faith we toil and fight, secure from the fiery darts of the evil one (Eph. vi. 16). Assurance through faith is gained by experience, confirmed by authority, and realised in character and action.

##### (a) Assurance gained by Experience.

Forgiveness is an experience. It brings the kind of assurance that experience provides. This is the primary ground of our certainty. The faculty which we use is faith. Faith involves the whole personality. It is not merely an intellectual exercise, nor a passing emotion, nor blind resolution of the will. Hartley Coleridge's words are worthy of our note,

"Think not the Faith by which the just shall live  
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,  
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,  
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given;  
It is an affirmation and an act  
That bids eternal truth be present fact."

We make a serious mistake when we identify faith with any of the powers of the soul that faith brings into its service. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). Faith alone can enter into the realm of the unseen and the eternal, and find assurance. But faith brings that assurance to the reason, and the reason tests and harmonises and expresses it in thought and word. Faith brings it to the will, and the will

<sup>1</sup> *The Everlasting Mercy.*

<sup>2</sup> Attention is called to the careful and guarded statements on Freewill and Predestination in Articles X and XVII.

makes its surrender to the will of God, and translates that surrender into a holy life. Faith brings it to the heart, and love and peace and joy fill the soul with steady light. Where faith is confused with reason, we believe only what we perceive. The dying robber was not invited to weigh the probabilities of the situation, but, against them, to make a mighty leap of faith. Where faith is regarded as only a matter of the will, the will to believe may be unreasoning credulity and prejudice that shapes the life and creed but leaves the heart untouched. Many believe what they wish to believe, but this is not faith nor is the resultant assurance Christian assurance. Nor is faith only feeling. To feel assured is not necessarily to be assured. Feelings change. Some, like Schleiermacher and his followers, reduce all religion to feeling, but others impatiently go to the other extreme, like Flint with his "Pure feeling is pure nonsense." Certainly many a spiritual tragedy has resulted from the identification, though more has been laid to its charge than it deserves. The pathetic instance of the poet Cowper leaps to the mind. Time and again his gentle soul was plunged into dreadful gloom. For a while, like his friend Newton, he felt the sense of "assurance" of salvation. But his dying words to his physician were "I feel unutterable despair." His last poem was entitled "The Castaway," a comparison between the lost sailor and his own storm-tossed soul.

" No voice divine the storm allayed,  
 No light propitious shone,  
 When, snatched from all effectual aid  
 We perished, each alone ;  
 But I beneath a rougher sea  
 And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he"—

We must not attribute to his Evangelical faith what was due to mental instability. Nevertheless a clearer understanding might have brought more lasting comfort to his stricken spirit. Might it not be said, as William Law objected, that, if assurance is only a matter of feeling, it but means "I am self justified, because my justification arises from what I feel and declare of myself. . . ?" The truth is that feeling, like the will and the reason, is the inseparable ally and comrade of faith. We cannot have enduring assurance without all three. We are sure because spiritually we live, and life is more than feeling, more than thought, more than resolution, more than action. Till we realise this we are perplexed by the neurotic types of spiritual experience, by the doubts of many as to its reality or its source, and by the excesses in the name of religion to which unregulated emotion has sometimes brought its devotees. William Law truly writes: "The spiritual life is its own proof." The first Epistle of St. John (v. 10) puts it still more emphatically: "He that believeth . . . hath the witness in him." Faith then brings assurance because it brings life, and that new life quickens mind and will and heart that they may make "one music," and give to us that "full assurance"<sup>1</sup> of faith (Heb. x. 22), which means also

<sup>1</sup> The same word *πληροφορία* (plerophoria) is used in each case.

“full assurance” of hope (Heb. vi. 11) and “much assurance” of conviction (I Thess. i. 5).

(b) *Assurance confirmed by Authority.*

From one point of view the search of man for assurance has been the search for an authority he can trust. The criticism of the assurance that comes from experience has often been made, that it arises from ecstasy or self-delusion. It may be valid for oneself but not for others. It may not represent eternal reality. “There is always room,” to quote Mr. Gladstone’s words, “for the entrance of error in that last operation of the percipient faculties of men, by which the objective becomes subjective.”<sup>1</sup> I have already quoted above his own reminder of the limitation to that objection.<sup>2</sup> But it is clearly right that our assurance should be confirmed by the voice of some authority other than that of our own personal conviction,<sup>3</sup> nor does God leave us without this. In three ways the experience of forgiveness is attested by authority:

(i) By the living voice of God through the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> Christ has not left us orphaned. The Holy Spirit has come, and “Spirit with spirit can meet.” We have the testimony of the Holy Spirit (the “testimonium Spiritus Sancti” of the Reformers) within the soul. Where is there room for doubt when “the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. viii. 16)? He who convicts the world of sin, convinces the world also of righteousness (St. John xvi. 8). When the Gospel comes “in the Holy Ghost,” it comes in “much assurance” (I Thess. i. 5). The fruit of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul is that which grows out of the ground of assurance (Gal. v. 22). The Holy Spirit, Who is given to be our guide into “all truth,” is our Teacher in “all things,” bringing all things to remembrance that Christ has said, glorifying Christ and revealing the will of God not only for the past but for the present and the future (St. John xvi. 13-15). Through the Holy Spirit Christ dwells within us and we in Him. The “*unio mystica*,” the mystic union, becomes a reality. The indwelling Christ is our strength, our confidence, our very life. As of old He speaks to us and within us “with authority.” He shares with us, as Dr. Dale reminds us, His own royal heritage, “His vision of God, His Righteousness, His eternal and infinite blessedness in the Father’s love, His glory as the Son of God.”<sup>5</sup> May we not also share with Him His own assurance of the perfect accomplishment of His own redeeming work of love, “It is finished,” and let His living Presence subdue every doubt and fear.

(ii) By the Bible. We believe the Bible to be the living word

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> p. 342.

<sup>3</sup> We must, of course, be true to our own experience. We cannot, as some of the Pragmatists suggest, believe in a God we know does not exist, because of the practical value of such “faith.”

<sup>4</sup> It is not possible here to deal fully with the work of the Holy Spirit in the forgiveness of sin. This touches only on one aspect of it.

<sup>5</sup> *Fellowship with Christ*, p. 2.

of truth. God's gift to us, speaking with the voice of authority. I deprecate the antithesis so often urged between the Church and the Bible. It is sometimes asserted that the Reformation was but a transfer from one tyranny to another, from an infallible Church to an infallible Book. Without doubt the infallibility of the Church was then denied, but its true authority was not forgotten. The doctrine of inspiration was not generally defined, but the Bible was re-established in the life of the Church and of the individual Christian as the standard of faith, as the revelation of God's purpose, and, to use St. Chrysostom's phrase, as "God's heart in God's words." Through the Bible, through the preaching<sup>1</sup> or the reading of its message, God brings us into living touch with Himself (1 Pet. i. 23). To the Bible we bring our experience of forgiveness as not only instrumental cause but also confirmatory authority. As the two disciples going to Emmaus were taken by their Unknown Companion to the Scriptures for the enlightenment and confirmation of their dawning faith, so led by the Holy Spirit we turn again and again to their sacred pages to find that God is fulfilling His promise also to us "according to the Scriptures," and is speaking to us with the authority of His Divine Word that "liveth and abideth" of the things that belong to our peace.

(iii) By the Church. For multitudes religion scarce passes beyond the stage of a creed accepted at the hand of an authoritative Church. They are born into a creed, live by it, die without questioning it, because it is the religion of their fathers. There is an immense power in such authority for the order and establishment of moral standards of living. It has its place in the spiritual life of the Christian and in the work and discipline of the Christian Fellowship. The penitent soul longs to hear the spoken word of absolution. Our Lord recognised this and clearly committed that power to His disciples (St. John xx. 22, 23) and so to His Church. It is an important part of the Commission given to the Priest in the Ordinal. We must not evacuate this deeply sacred trust of meaning. On the other hand, we dare not abuse it to make it either the instrument of a religious tyranny, or a source of weakness of the Christian character. A vast system of compulsory personal confessions, engaged in with mechanical regularity, has no support in our Lord's words; nor has that amazing spectacle (typical of many others) recently seen at Rome, of (it is estimated) 300,000 persons who had journeyed thither receiving the Papal Benediction and the plenary indulgence that accompanied it at the close of the so-called Holy Year. The history of the past is eloquent of the way in which the authority of the Church has been made the tool of human ambition and greed. "Authority," says a mediæval writer<sup>2</sup> of perception, "hath a waxen nose: that is, it may be twisted in different directions." The authority of the Church consists in its common witness

<sup>1</sup> It is significant to note in the New Testament that the normal means both of conversion and of edification was the "preaching" or "teaching" of "the Word." It was central in the Ministry of Reconciliation.

<sup>2</sup> Alanus of Lille.

to Christian truth, in the ordering and discipline of its family life, in its public declaration of God's forgiveness to all who are truly penitent, in its provision of the prayerful guidance of a devout and learned ministry for troubled souls, in its authentication of our own experience by the testimony of the Christian community of sixty generations of saints, in its unity as the Body of Christ. It has indeed an authority we deeply reverence and value; but it is not an infallible authority that can override our judgment as to truth, or our conscience of what is right or wrong. It cannot displace experience as the source of our assurance, though it can and does confirm it.

(c) *Assurance realised in Character and Action.*

Assurance is not a momentary or transitory phase of experience. It is a permanent influence entering into the character and giving it the calm and confidence necessary for its growth and for its expression in action. "Faith," writes Dean Inge, "can never come to its own except by being lived into—experienced in a life which should be as full and rich and as many-sided as possible."<sup>1</sup> Faith brings life. "He that believeth hath eternal life" (St. John vi. 47). It brings also a life to be lived. "We walk by faith" (2 Cor. v. 7). Faith brings knowledge. "I know Him Whom I have believed," cried St. Paul (2 Tim. i. 12). "I know Christ," said Browning, "by the direct glance of the soul's seeing, as the eye sees light." Faith also brings a life of deepening knowledge of that love of God that in St. Paul's paradox "passeth knowledge." Now we know only "in part" and "see in a mirror, darkly." Faith brings assurance of sins forgiven, and that assurance is at once the source of the gladness of the Christian's victorious life and the spring of his enthusiastic service.

When John Wesley went unwillingly to that little meeting-house in Aldersgate Street and heard one reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, as he listened (he records) his heart was strangely warmed. "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation. And an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sin, even *mine*, and saved me from the law of sin and death."<sup>2</sup> Did not the mighty witness to the power of Christ proclaimed by the great evangelical leaders rest upon their experience of the certainty of their redemption, and was not the very fire of their missionary work at home and overseas kindled by the conviction that it was God's will that every man should come to rejoice in the same great truth? Was it not this same confidence that gave courage and buoyancy and undaunted daring to their enterprises and brought new light and hope into countless hearts? Here were the springs of a joy and a strength that came from on high and made the common path of life the road to Heaven. The truth had set them free from the trammels and tyranny of sin. Henceforward they must live to God, they must glorify Him in character. They

<sup>1</sup> *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 223; a most illuminating and learned study.

<sup>2</sup> *Wesley's Journal*, vol. i, p. 102.

must serve Him by word and by work. If we lose that sense of "assurance" we lose a distinctive part of the witness of the Evangelical faith, and with it goes the deep and unshakable conviction, the glowing fervour, the irresistible and irrepressible vigour of consecrated effort that have marked so much of the noblest adventures for Christ in the annals of His Church on earth. But we must not lose grip of so mighty a truth. It is powerful to-day as ever. For human need does not change. And God's mercy standeth sure.

#### PERSEVERANCE.

There is one thought that must keep us for ever humble even in the sense of our sharing in Christ's victory, and our confidence in the efficacy of His redemption. It is that there is a possibility of falling from grace. We are not left without warning, lest we should presume. We dare not remain content with that experience. Whilst we live here there is temptation. Assurance of forgiveness is not assurance of final salvation, unless we tread to the end the path to which it leads us. "If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end" (Heb. iii. 14) is the condition. To have been illuminated with the gift of new life, to have shared in its power, and tasted the glory of its revelation and the spiritual joys of that Kingdom, and then to fall away, is described as to "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to open shame" (Heb. vi. 1-6). Into this sombre and difficult subject I cannot enter here.<sup>1</sup> Even St. Paul had to guard lest he himself should "become reprobate" (*ἀδόκιμος*).

"The grey-hair'd saint may fail at last,  
The surest guide a wanderer prove."

It is enough to know that even as we rejoice in our assurance of sin forgiven, "reconciled to God through the death of His Son," we shall be "saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). There need be no fear of falling away, whilst Christ is our life. "Perfect love casteth out fear." It is this that will bring us with "boldness"<sup>2</sup> to the day of our judgment (1 John iv. 17).

<sup>1</sup> Augustine appears to have held two distinct predestinations, to regeneration, and to final salvation. William Law, reminding us that the greatest trials of Our Lord came towards the close of His earthly life, combats the view that we can be assured of our final salvation. See "The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration." The teaching of "Perfectionism" is condemned in Art. XVI. See also the Homily entitled "Of falling from God," the Catechism, and the Baptismal Service and the Burial Service.

<sup>2</sup> The word *παρρησία* (*Parrësia*) means "frank and open speech," so, "free and fearless confidence, boldness, assurance" (Grimm-Thayer, *ad loc.*).

## A "CITY" WITHOUT THE "FOUNDATIONS."

BY THE REV. W. E. CHADWICK, D.D.

We regret to inform our readers that within a few days after receiving this article from Dr. Chadwick, we learned of his sudden death. He was a frequent contributor to THE CHURCHMAN and one of our regular reviewers. He had a distinguished career at Cambridge University, where he obtained his D.D. degree in 1907. He was also a B.Sc. of Victoria University, Manchester. After his ordination in 1881 he held several important positions in the Church, including St. Giles, Northampton, and St. Peter's, St. Albans, and for eight years he was Chaplain of the Colonial and Continental Church Society's Church, Christ Church, Clarens. He had also been a Select Preacher and Hulsean Lecturer at Cambridge. He was always a diligent student and was specially interested in social problems and the relation of Christianity to them. He was the author of several books on these subjects. Among the best known were *The Social Teaching of St. Paul*, *The Social Principles of the Gospel*, *Social Relationships in the Light of Christianity* (Hulsean Lectures), *Christian Citizenship*, *The Church, the State and the Poor*. He was a convinced Evangelical Churchman and maintained his principles with a wide and sound scholarship. We shall greatly miss his help.—THE EDITOR.

CIVITAS DEI. By Lionel Curtis. *Macmillan & Co. Ltd.* 10s. 6d. net.

MR. CURTIS is a politician with a noble political ideal: one which, he admits, will take long to realise; but, as science now leads us "to expect that society will continue to exist for a period enormously longer than that which has passed since men were first able to distinguish themselves from animals"—a view not held at the opening of the Christian era—he believes that his ideal is worth patiently working for; especially as every step realised towards it will produce a further amelioration of our present unhappy conditions. The ideal is that of "a world commonwealth as the goal of human endeavour," which will come into existence when "the commonwealth will no longer be limited to the national state," but "when nations conscious of their own distinctive histories and structures, will have learned to function as organs of one international commonwealth." By a commonwealth Mr. Curtis means "an order of society" [a nation] "which would exercise and develop the instinct in men to serve one another," in other words, "a society in which has been accepted the government of men by themselves as the guiding principle in human affairs."

Over against the principle of the commonwealth stands the principle of "authority," one which may have been accepted involuntarily, like that of a conqueror or a king, or voluntarily like that of a dictator or an oligarchy. The common feature of all forms of authority is that men live under the pressure of a govern-

ment external to themselves, instead of one inspired by principles of mutual responsibility and service.

At least three-parts of Mr. Curtis's book consists of a historical survey, one reaching from the prehistoric age down to the present time. The object of this survey is to show the failure of all the various forms of "authority" to produce the ideal commonwealth. Mr. Curtis's history is not what may be termed scientific history, which records facts or events, and traces the causes or results of these. It is rather the kind of history one finds in a barrister's brief, where every scrap of evidence which will lend credence to a theory which he desires to prove, is carefully set out, but in which all the evidence which might lead to a different conclusion is as carefully ignored.

As Mr. Curtis's object throughout is to extol the commonwealth in which the principle of mutual responsibility and service rules, he naturally finds in Christ the chief exponent of this: "the principles which Jesus propounded on the hills of Galilee were those of the commonwealth." In order to give a background to his elaboration of his conception of Christ, Mr. Curtis devotes a considerable proportion of his historical survey to the period covered by the Gospels, and to the periods preceding and following this.

Mr. Curtis draws a vivid picture of the atmosphere in which Jesus passed the years previous to His public ministry. He believes that "conventional pictures of Jesus, calmly maturing his thoughts in the quiet and retirement of rustic seclusion are at variance with obvious facts. . . . From the rising of Judas to the fall of Jerusalem the valleys where Jesus spent his youth were a furnace of revolution. He analysed life and studied its elements in a crucible white with heat." We have next a picture of Jesus in this atmosphere struggling against the temptation to lead a national revolt; for "it is likely that Jesus had grown to be conscious of his own exceptional powers. He had probably realised his own capacity for handling the revolutionary movement, if he had chosen to do so." This inward struggle Mr. Curtis believes to be the origin of the story of the Temptation—one which afterwards in "the form of a parable" Jesus told to his disciples. The reason why Jesus rejected the temptation to become a national leader was that he saw that "the ultimate good for man was to serve each other and not themselves; whereas to lead a rebellion would be to use the principle of authority. If a rebellion were successful it would only mean the substitution of a Jewish for a Roman authority. We need not follow Mr. Curtis further in what we can only term his imaginary portrait of Christ. He is not the first who within recent years has attempted the same task. Mr. Curtis's own view of the credibility of the Gospels is expressed thus: "The life of Jesus was cut short by his enemies, but not before his ideas had been stated in sayings and parables that his followers remembered and placed on record, together with much else that in course of time they had come to believe that he had said and done." On the question of the credibility of the records

we believe that the majority of people will prefer the picture of Christ drawn by those whose knowledge came directly from "those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."

Mr. Curtis is not a historian. He is an ardent politician with, as we have already said, a very noble ideal. It is his love of politics which causes him to speak of "our notion of Church and state" being that of "two authorities competing for sovereignty," and which "has led us to seclude religion and politics in separate compartments of our minds. In the teaching of Jesus there is no such distinction. To his mind religion and politics were merely two aspects of life, a sphere viewed from two different angles." Mr. Curtis has built a castle in the air, a very attractive one, we fully admit. But those who build such castles must remember the old saying about the responsibility of putting foundations under them. What are Mr. Curtis's foundations? He calls his book *Civitas Dei*, which he translates "The Commonwealth of God." But how "of God"? We have chiefly in his own words described his conception of Christ—"a young Galilean," with extraordinary powers of insight and intuition, and with an equally extraordinary moral sensibility. But there is not a word to suggest whence these extraordinary powers were derived. Mr. Curtis has no place for the miraculous: "the historian," he says, "would never allow that something had happened outside or contrary to the law of nature. He applies to ancient events exactly the same standards as are used by judges in analysing evidence of recent events." Apparently Mr. Curtis has equally little room for what is usually known as "revelation." Where, as in Jesus, he finds exceptional insight and moral judgment these are attributed to "intuition"—a favourite word with our author. Does Mr. Curtis believe in the existence of God—either objective or subjective, either as transcendent or immanent? Such sentences as the following are not assuring; speaking of Christ he says: "To Him the final reality was the spirit of goodness personified—God, conceived [*sic*] as a Father, possessed with a desire to perfect the children he had made in his likeness."

Mr. Curtis, as we have already seen, is primarily a politician, consequently he looks to political agencies for the formation of the "commonwealth," whether national or universal, indeed he is somewhat sarcastic of the utility of other agencies, as the following will show: "The effect of institutions on those who live under them is immeasurable. Religious and secular teachers have their part to play, and it is an important part. But the claim of Churches and schools to be answerable in the first degree for forming the character of a people, a claim not seldom supported by politicians and public officials, is a dangerous fallacy. The most potent factor in raising or lowering the character of a people, in increasing or diminishing their sense of duty to each other, is the structure of the society in which they live. Politics is the art of so adapting that structure as to raise the sense of duty in

each to all. . . . Teaching and preaching are necessary to the process, but they yield in the end a harvest of cynicism, unless the actual power of men to serve each other is continuously increased" [by what means?] "as they can bear it."

If Mr. Curtis would turn his eyes from his vision of the future and study carefully the actual conditions of the present, from his universal commonwealth to the unhappy relationships—economic, social, political and international—existing in the world to-day, will he not find that there lie beneath all these evils, the evil moral natures of both individuals and nations? In what lies the one hope of changing these? Surely in the power of righteousness proceeding from God, a righteousness not of man's devising, however remarkable his intuitions, but a righteousness whose nature has been most fully revealed by One Who, if once "a young Galilean," is also of like nature to God Himself; and who is not only the revealer of God's will, but the mediator of God's power. This faith is the only foundation upon which the true *Civitas Dei* can be built.

---

CHRISTIANITY IS PACIFICISM. By W. Robinson. *Geo. Allen & Unwin, Ltd.* 2s. 6d. paper, 4s. 6d. cloth.

The Principal of Overdale College, Selby Oak, develops a strong argument in support of his thesis, in the course of which he surveys the teaching of the Old Testament and that of Our Lord.

As to the former, we think he misrepresents the intelligence of those who, while they would agree with much that he says, yet cannot look at the O.T. quite as he does.

As to the latter, we do not find his argument convincing, though he does interpret much of the life and teaching of Christ quite admirably.

Our space is regrettably limited so we are unable to deal adequately with this apologia for pacificism. We should say that while all Christians must hate war, and on every ground should be peacemakers, yet there are circumstances in which it may be a moral duty to take up arms. The parallel cases of prostitution and slavery are not on all fours. Neither is a necessity. But war may be. And we do not think that the Bible or Our Lord would condemn any man who engaged in war in such a case.

---

*Boys Together*, by Dorothy M. Graves (Church Book Room, Wine Office Court, 1s. net), is a study in the lives of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and St. Paul. The booklet is excellently produced with a number of interesting photographs taken by the authoress of scenes in Palestine. The subject matter is well arranged, and aims at carrying out the wishes of the writer to make the Bible a living Book.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

### A FRESH TRANSLATION.

THE NEW TESTAMENT (OR COVENANT) OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Translated by the Rev. E. E. Cunnington, M.A., formerly Vicar of Llangarron, Herefordshire. Revised Edition. *Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd.* 1930. Pp. xxvi + 525. Cloth boards, 5s.

Although this book was published between three and four years ago a copy came into my hands only recently and that by a mere accident. I at once asked the Editor of the *CHURCHMAN* if space could be allowed to me for a short review.

The widespread interest in Biblical MSS. aroused by the purchase of the *Codex Sinaiticus* needs to be fostered and directed into practical channels. How can the man in the street read the New Testament in his own tongue wherein he was born? The so-called Authorised Version, and indeed the "Revised" of 1881, are not in the language of the people, and they represent "construing" rather than "translating." We have to face the fact that (in the words of Mr. Cunnington) "in these days books will not be read unless they are attractive and intelligible; and there seems to be no good reason why the New Testament should not be, apart from the value of its contents, as readable a book as any other." The writer of the present review has often maintained that whereas we supply versions in the vernacular, and rightly, to every nation under heaven, the mass of the English-speaking people never have in their hands a Bible in their own vernacular; and this partly because three and a quarter centuries ago the British nation was blessed with such a version which for that time was a singularly good one. And for purposes of general intelligibility the Revised Version is not essentially an improvement.

Cunnington's translation is an attempt to provide (amongst other helps) a Bible that can be understood not only by the man who reads Greek, or who consults commentaries, or who appreciates the style of Milton, but by the ordinary person. Observe these specimen passages, culled almost at random. Gal. ii. 16: "yet knowing that not by works of law is a man accounted righteous, but through faith in Christ Jesus—even we ourselves put faith in Christ Jesus—that we might be accounted righteous by faith in Christ, not by works of law; seeing that by works of law not one person will be accounted righteous." Or again Rom. iv. 10: "To Abraham his faith was reckoned as righteousness. How then was it reckoned? Was it when he was circumcised? or when he was uncircumcised." Or again 1 Cor. xi. 29: "eateth and drinketh a judgment upon himself." In the Gospels, in a far lesser degree of course, the need for a vernacular exists. So Cunnington, St. Matt. xiii. 41: "will gather out of his kingdom all stumbling-blocks"; xiii. 45: "seek-

ing beautiful pearls"; xv. 2: "transgress the tradition of the ancients"; xv. 3: "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"; xv. 5: "Anything wherewith I might have helped thee is 'Given to God.'"

A special point made by Cunnington is the faulty English of the Revised Version. This he seeks to correct. No one can "purify sins" (Heb. i. : 1, A.V. R.V.). "Teeth cannot weep" (St. Matt. viii. 12, R.V.). *Lycaonia* was not a city like Lystra and Derbe (Acts xiv. 6, R.V.); nor did Paul speak for three solid months after having entered the synagogue (Acts. xix. 8). The R.V. of Gal. ii. 16 has ruined the Evangelical sense (contrast Cunnington's version quoted above). The damage done to permanent religion by the frequent use in the standard versions of the word "shall" for "will" is probably beyond calculation (e.g. Amos vii. 17, "thy wife shall be an harlot in the city"). Only English and German possess a word "shall." No doubt Mr. Cunnington had his reason for retaining "shall" in our Lord's reply to James and John (St. Mark x. 39 and St. Matt. xx. 23), but his general introduction of "will" is most happy; and, moreover, it yields smooth-running English, e.g. St. Matt. xiii. 41 ff, xxiv. 6 ff. ("Ye will hear of wars . . . etc. . .").

Intelligibleness, lucidity, good English, accuracy are the key-notes of this version. The twenty-four introductory pages cover in a compressed form a very large number of principles of translation-making; and the final thirty-two pages of the volume contain some excellent Appendices. The long list of Western readings in the Gospels and Acts will interest many. (It is a pity that a few *omissions* are left unrecorded, e.g., St. Luke xxiv. 40; "and when he had said this, he shewed them his hands and his feet"; xxiv. 51: "and was carried up into heaven"). On p. 512 is a useful short note on 2 Peter iii. 10, giving the reason for adopting the text of the Sahidic version "will NOT be found," as against the impossible reading of the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. "will be found." (With regard to text in general, however, Mr. Cunnington's version is made upon the basis of Nestle's Greek Testament which appeared for the Centenary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, so that the main items of value in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. are made available to the English reader.) Many sermons on Whit-Sunday would be clearer of dangerous ground upon the character of the "gift of tongues" if the modest Appendix upon Acts ii. were read by the preacher. The footnotes throughout the volume are short and to the point. The writer has no use for the Roman exegesis of St. Luke vii. 47. His note is: "Christ's reason for declaring her (the woman) forgiven was that she had manifested her love."

We cannot close this review in a better way than by quoting from Cunnington's appendix upon "Inspiration." "More than any other book, or all other books put together, it (the New Testament) serves the one purpose for which we must hold that its writers were inbreathed and assisted by God; to teach us about himself,

to raise us to higher levels, to bring us to true knowledge of ourselves and our relation to him, to guide us into that righteousness of conduct which leads us to our highest well-being here and hereafter." May this devout and dignified version, written from the results of a life of study, be a means of attracting many (within and without the churches) to the Central Figure of our faith.

This is not a library book but a pocket Testament, and its low price puts it within the reach of all.

R. S. CRIPPS.

---

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE GREEK BIBLE. By Frederic G. Kenyon, F.B.A. The Schweich Lectures, 1932. *Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press*, 1933. Pp. 119. 6s. net.

Thirty years ago the best practical book upon textual Criticism<sup>1</sup> bore the name of Kenyon; and now to-day after so much has been added to the store of material it is Kenyon who provides the most exact and readable little treatise in this field. In all subjects it is all too common a phenomenon for the man in the street (and at times also the more advanced student) to have to rely upon the work of "book-makers." But in Sir Frederic Kenyon (like Kirsopp Lake in the same sphere), we have one of those who write of the things which, from their own labours, they do see and know. Nor is Sir Frederic a scholar of Biblical Texts only, as witness the publication in 1932 of his masterly *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*, not to mention his *Guides* to the MSS., Charters and Seals exhibited in the British Museum.

Chapter I, entitled "Westcott and Hort and the Revised Version," contains a short summary of history and principles. Chapter II, "The Discoveries of Fifty Years," tells of the finds during the period since Westcott and Hort's work, especially the Washington ("Freer") and Koridethi Uncials. The next chapter, "Developments in Textual Theory," deals with the work of Von Soden (Senior) and of Streeter, and to some extent also of C. R. Gregory, Burkitt and Lake. The theory of the Cæsarean text is made clear, that he who runs may read; and those who have of recent years let slip their Textual Criticism may get abreast of the present position in a short and easy way.

Chapter IV is of special interest as it deals with the Chester Beatty Papyri ("P. 45"), the discovery of which was first made known to the world on November 19, 1931. It is to be Sir Frederic's duty to edit these papyri, now in his care in the British Museum, and already last year he published the Gospel Text. The final 50 pages of *Recent Developments* (including material upon the Septuagint unknown to Swete when he compiled the four-volume Cambridge Manual Edition in 1900-5) are worthy of the high traditions of the

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Revised edition, 1912).

Schweich Lectures of the British Academy. We confidently predict a large sale for these 1933 Lectures.

All who love the Bible rejoice at the boldness of Sir Frederic in taking the lead this winter in acquiring the *Sinai Codex* for the British nation. We believe that a new interest in the study of Holy Scripture has been aroused amongst all classes of the community.

R. S. C.

---

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. By Thomas Hywel Hughes, M.A., D.Litt., D.D. *George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.* 10s. 6d. net.

The New Psychology, we are told, is having a very extensive influence on the thought of the younger generation. The study of mental processes has become a subject of general interest, and its bearing on life and conduct is becoming a matter of increasing importance. Formerly, physical science was represented as the great opponent of religious belief. It is now the turn of the New Psychology to take its place. It is therefore most important that the whole relationship of the New Psychology to religious thought and experience should be carefully examined, and the results set out for the benefit alike of learners and teachers in the sphere of religion. Dr. Hughes has undertaken this task, and publishes in this volume a series of lectures given to research students in the post-graduate school of Edinburgh University. Many of these students came from the United States where Psychological teaching has been keenly taken up, and this volume should prove exceptionally useful to a wide circle of readers in all English-speaking countries. Dr. Hughes says that religion has weathered the storm of scientific criticism, and it has beaten back the forces of a materialistic philosophy, but the most serious menace to religion in these days is the attack from the side of Psychology, for it imperils the validity of religious experience. He proceeds to examine the various aspects of Psychological teaching, and provides for the student a most useful summary of the chief points of the several schools. The two chief schools are the Behaviourists and the School of Psychoanalysts. The first lays emphasis on environment; the second on heredity. They both agree in dispensing with the need of anything supernatural, and seek to explain religion without it. The idea of a Creator is only the projection of the mind's consciousness of creative power. In making this judgment of validity Psychology goes out of its own province, for value and validity are ultimately metaphysical problems. The result of making God merely a subjective idea is to make religious experience an illusion, and this is the deepest menace from the New Psychology. In Part I, Dr. Hughes examines these basal assumptions of the Psychologists. He deals first with the Behaviourists and exposes their mechanistic theory of life. He shows that the Behaviourist position becomes untenable in the realm of Teleology where values get their deepest meaning. Freud is the chief representative of the Psycho-

analysts and bases his whole theory on sex-instinct in which the "Œdipus Complex" forms a chief part, and in this he finds the origin and formative factor of all religion. Dr. Hughes deals with the teaching of this school in regard to the Unconscious, the Sub-conscious, and the Pre-conscious, and the distinction between an instinct and a sentiment. Rationalism and Sublimation, the dualism between the Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle, between the Ego and the Id are explained, and the whole position is subjected to criticism which shows that "The principle of Psychological determinism which is basal to the system cannot be maintained in the light of such facts as Ideals, the Sense of Responsibility and Obligation which are at the heart of the moral consciousness, the feeling of guilt and the consciousness of sin, and the reality of moral achievement and progress." In Part II, Dr. Hughes proceeds to examine some of these points in detail. He deals first with the idea of God as Projection, and here again he gives a useful summary of the views of the chief teachers of Psychology. He then proceeds to show the inadequacy of the theory, and the grounds for believing in the character of ultimate reality as a personality with whom men can have fellowship on the basis of love and sacrifice. He next deals with the instincts in relation to the religious life. He shows the lack of agreement among the Psychologists as to the nature of an instinct. While Freud bases religion on sex instinct, Dr. Hughes shows that a more convincing cause can be made out for the instinct of self-preservation, because that is the basal and primary urge of life at its deepest. It is the strongest urge towards the complete satisfaction of mankind, and is a motive power for the attainment of ever fuller life, so that "Religion all through history has been the mainspring of progress towards higher ideals of life, and deeper satisfaction in life alike for the individual and for the race." The religious consciousness is next examined and its origin and content set out. The fiercest attack of the New Psychologists is directed against religious experience, which they regard as an illusion devoid of reality. In the succeeding chapters he considers the chief points of this experience. First, the Consciousness of Sin; the explanation of conscience with the "ambivalence" of the Freudian system, and the sense of obligation as being derived from the herd instinct. An interesting chapter on Conversion examines the various theories that have been put forward by such writers as McDougall, Prati, Starbuck, and William James, and here again the theories of the Psychologists are shown to be inadequate. The restored harmony which is the chief element in Conversion demands the reality which these theorists deny. Conversion means the harmony that is attained by breaking the tyranny of repressions and complexes, and so allowing the individual to exercise freer self-expression, and whether this is catastrophic and sudden, or is a gradual growth, it results in a peace that ultimately has a background of cosmic reference. Similarly, it brings an accession of power. Three attempts at explanation are given through Illusion, Sublimation, and Auto-suggestion. Sublimation

is shown to "have meaning in the deepest sense only when [it is] a response to a pull from the front, the appeal of some ideal or value for which the effort is made." The chief points in regard to Auto-suggestion are concerned with the nature of prayer, and the final conclusion is that of Canon Streeter—"Prayer brings the inspiration which comes from contact with a Personality greater than one's own; auto-suggestion is, in the last resort, of the nature of a dope." The last chapter on "New Psychology and Christianity" is one of the most important, as it presents the Christian point of view against the fantastic theories of some of the Psychologists which can only be regarded as a travesty of the facts. A useful list of books for further study is given, and Dr. Hughes's volume will be found a valuable handbook on the whole subject.

---

KARL BARTH AND CHRISTIAN UNITY. By Professor Adolf Keller, D.D., LL.D. *The Lutterworth Press*, 10s. 6d. net.

This is the English translation of Professor Keller's *Der Weg der dialektischen Theologie durch die kirchliche Welt*, and it is one of the most interesting and useful studies of the Barthian Theology. Professor Keller has had unique opportunities of becoming acquainted with the religious thought of the lands on both sides of the Atlantic, through his connection with the ecumenical movement and in his position as Secretary of the Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid. His book serves a twofold purpose. It gives an account of the main features of the teaching of Karl Barth, and as that teaching is somewhat difficult to grasp, this account of it possesses the great merit of making clear to the ordinary reader its distinctive characteristics, and having done this he takes it as a standard of test to show how the religious thought of the various countries stand in relation to it and how they react to it. To use his own phrase he uses it as a sort of "theological sextant" to show how it stands related to the current conceptions of Christianity. The outcome is a statement of the teaching of the various Churches and an estimate of their respective merits as presenting Christianity in its completeness.

To many readers Barthianism is little more than a number of abstractions and paradoxes without any systematic form such as theology in the past has demanded from its teachers. Dr. Keller explains that this is one of the points of contrast presented as a challenge by Barth and his fellow-teachers. They demand "existential" thinking, and this word is a newly coined German term which can hardly be translated. "It is applied to a theology that is not merely held by the intellect, but one which deeply concerns the whole life of the person who holds it." Dr. McConachie's explanation of it is given and is on these lines. The mathematician or the scientist thinks non-existentially. His work demands no personal decision, but when it comes to personal life, a question is addressed to a man which he must answer with his life, that is existential thinking. The teaching is also designated a "theology of crisis,"

and this term is also difficult for English and American students to understand, as they do not perceive the special background of Continental thought to which Barthianism presents its challenge and upon which in fact pronounces a vigorous condemnation. Its antitheses give sharp emphasis to the tenets of current Christianity. It is also described as "dialectical" in contrast with discursive methods of thought. "Its depositions are made not with cold, scientific calm, unconcerned about their effect, but rather in vehement discussion with modern, in a real disputation; an antithesis, not only to culture but also to theology and Church as we know them." Dr. Keller explains the fundamental teaching of Barth on God and shows the contrast between it and the usual theological conceptions.

The larger portion of the book is devoted to an examination of the impact of the Barthian teaching on the older theologies of the Churches. "Barthianism on its way through the Churches" is the title of this survey. The author's knowledge of the conditions of thought in all the various countries considered gives his treatment of the subject special value. Barth's views are most favourably received in countries like Holland where there is a strong element of Calvinism. The Lutherans of Germany are disposed to be controversial towards some of its main features. Denmark is sharply divided. England with its emphasis on the Incarnation is not disposed to accept an altogether transcendental view of God. America has scarcely yet been affected to any large extent by it. The Roman Catholic Church has taken it seriously, but endeavours to show that all that is valuable in it is already to be found in the theology of that Church. The Barthian attitude towards foreign missions receives special notice as it practically condemns existing methods. The closing sections deal with Barthianism and the Ecumenical Movement to which it offers a special challenge. It may become a "bridge-theology," for it does not proceed from a national or confessional heritage, but the more it extends itself the more it gets into the difficulty of mediation which confronts all efforts of religious communions to understand one another.

Dr. Keller's work has value not only as an explanation of the Barthian teaching but also as a statement of the religious position in the various countries on both sides of the Atlantic. No one is more qualified to deal with these important points than himself from his unique knowledge of them.

---

THE LIFE OF CARDINAL MERCIER. By John A. Gade, Citoyen du Hainaut. *Charles Scribner's Sons, London.* 10s. 6d. net.

Probably the name of Cardinal Mercier would be unknown to the majority of English Churchmen were it not for the Malines Conferences which he arranged between representatives of the English Church and the Roman Church for the purpose of considering the question of reunion. It was felt at the time that any approach on the side of the Roman Catholics to the English Church should have

been made by the representatives of that Church in England, and there was no doubt considerable irritation on the part of the English Roman Catholic authorities at the action of Cardinal Mercier. The Conferences were destined to failure from the outset, but it is interesting to know that a Roman Catholic Cardinal was willing to inaugurate such a Conference without making in advance any claim to submission to the Roman See. We gather from this biography, which it is interesting to note is written by a Protestant, that the Cardinal was in many ways a remarkable man who acquired his position by the force of his intellectual and spiritual qualities. The great opportunity of his life came during the Great War when he had to maintain a difficult position during the occupation of Belgium by the Germans. He was sixty-three at the time, and at that age the student, thinker, and intellectual, had to become a man of action. "By character he was fitted for the part; he had the indomitable will that was necessary, the self-control, the sanctity, wisdom, authority. And is it too fanciful to suggest that the War gave him opportunity to test in practice the philosophy he had so long pronounced in theory?" An interesting account is given of his varied experiences both in Belgium and in Rome during the War, and of the position which he acquired. The reference to the Malines Conferences is slight. When he died in January, 1926, his country mourned a man who had played the part of a good patriot.

---

EVOLUTION OR CREATION? By Sir Ambrose Fleming, F.R.S.  
*Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd.* 3s. 6d. net.

Bishop Knox has admirably expressed the purpose and value of this book. He says: "An epoch-making book. It should call a halt to widespread misconception as to the scientific theory of Evolution, whereby it has been assumed that the whole existing order of the Universe can be explained as a spontaneous development of the most rudimentary forms of matter, and consequently that any idea of Creative Agency may be abandoned as superfluous and untrue. In measured scientific demonstration, it goes to the root of this error, and it does so with the singular advantage of pervading lucidity of language and of argument, and with remarkable freedom from the *odium scientificum* which is as undesirable in study as the *odium theologicum*. The reader incidentally gains a bird's-eye view of the progress of research during the last half-century, and is led by sure steps to the conclusion that no branch of science popularly so called has been able to cover the field as ascertained fact, while excluding the great truth summed up in the first words of the Bible, 'In the beginning God created.' It is bound to exercise a widespread and most wholesome influence."

Sir Ambrose Fleming is well known as a scientific writer whose views deserve respectful attention. His object in this work is to examine the validity of the doctrine of Evolution as it has grown up out of the Darwinian theory of the origin of animal species, and

extended to cover the origin of the human race, and generally to provide a theory of the origin of the universe. Some years ago it was thought that the present stage of the world and of man could be fully explained by the theory of Evolution. It seemed to provide a universal principle of continuity and harmony, and by its inexorable laws to exclude the work of a Creator, and to uphold materialistic Monism. More recent studies have shown the serious limitations of the theory, and Sir Ambrose Fleming has done useful work in pointing out the limits of its application. Even those who regard it as a complete explanation of man's bodily development now realise that it is inadequate to account for those higher elements that make up personality and that give man his place in the universe as a Son of God. No longer can Herbert Spencer's "Unknowable First Cause" be regarded as a sufficient explanation of the work of creation. To-day we have the explanations offered by leading astronomers who find in the universe evidence of the mind of a great mathematician. The facts brought together by Sir Ambrose Fleming are sufficient to show that there are gaps which the theory does not fill. For example, "there is at present an unbridged gap between living and non-living matter, and declarations that it has been bridged in the past, or prognostications that it will be bridged in the future, are devoid of any basis in observed or experimental truths." He further shows that the evolutionary theory can give no better account of the beginnings of mind than it can of the beginnings of matter or life. It has not been able to solve these problems of origin. The activities of a Purposive Mind are manifested in the life and mind of man, and atomic materialism can give no adequate explanation of them. In a chapter on "Evolution and Religion," the Author questions the validity of the evolutionary theory of the origin of Religion; and in his "General Conclusions" he states the evidence for Christian belief. If, he says, "the word Evolution has its meaning strictly limited to describe a series of events or processes, without denying that there is or has been a continual manifestation of Divine Thought and Will, it is not open to great objection. If, however, it is employed as a substitute for such Divine Creative Power, and, in short, has characteristics of Deity attributed to it, which is very commonly done, then it is atheistic in tendency and unlimitedly pernicious."

---

TOWARDS REUNION: WHAT THE CHURCHES STAND FOR. *Student Christian Movement Press, 1s. 6d. net.*

The purpose of this little book is excellent. It aims at setting out the distinctive features of the teaching of the various denominations in the British Isles with a view to enabling their members to have a better understanding of the whole situation and so helping forward the movement towards reunion. The Editor, the Rev. Hugh Martin, contributes an Introduction on "The Road to Unity," urging the need for unity. The other contributions are of varying value. The clearest and ablest state-

ment is that of the Congregationalist position by Mr. B. L. Manning. The worst, in our opinion, is the account of the Church of England written by the Master of the Temple. Its tone lacks the seriousness which the subject demands. Many of the statements are so one-sided as to give a wrong impression of the Church, and quite a number of them would be repudiated by a very large section of Churchmen. The bias of the statement that the House of Commons was stampeded in its decision on the Revised Prayer Book is obvious. He misuses the word "Catholic" to represent the Church as holding all the errors of Anglo-Catholicism. His jocular style is not impressive. "We could no more propose to take a walk in the direction of union with the Free Churches without the Episcopate, than I could physically set out to go to a conference at Swanwick without my backbone." The Editor has been distinctly unfortunate in his choice of a representative of the English Church.

---

MODES OF FAITH. By Clement F. Rogers, M.A. *S.P.C.K.* 3s. 6d. net.

In this his latest contribution to Christian Evidences Professor Clement Rogers covers a wide field. As an excellent reference book it might well find a place on anyone's bookshelf. Well printed and produced, with a good Index, it is a marvel of cheapness. Not the least pleasing feature is the citation in footnotes of an abundance of authorities. The Professor introduces many apt quotations in the text to clinch his meaning, but he does not overquote. It would be strange if on such a wide front (extending from Agnosticism, Rationalism, Materialism to Sacramentalism and Catholicism) there were no weak places. The Professor is not invulnerable. His chapter on Catholicism, for example, needs some amendment.

Nevertheless, as an armoury of weapons well adapted for defence and attack in the conflict for truth to-day, we recommend our readers to equip themselves with this useful work.

H. D.

---

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION. By Dr. Charles F. Juritz. Pp. 192. *Marshall, Morgan & Scott.* 3s. 6d.

Nine lectures delivered to the students of the Bible Institute of South Africa, on the evidences of Christianity, are here repeated. The Institute accepts the trustworthiness of all the historical records of Scripture, the authority of all its teachings, and the truth of all the utterances of the Lord Jesus Christ contained in it. Its professed purpose is to equip the students for their work by giving a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of God's Word.

Dr. Juritz has admirably fulfilled his purpose. Whether dealing with evidences from Astronomy, Mathematics, Geology, Chemistry, Meteorology, Biology, or Archæology, he makes out an excellent case. The lectures are packed with fact and illustration, not the

least effective being quotations from studied statements by outstanding leaders in the scientific world.

Young students should profit greatly from a careful study of this volume.

H. D.

---

THE WORD TO PETER. By J. A. Heaton. *Elliot Stock*. 3s. net.

Peter is a little boy brought up in the atmosphere of strictest orthodoxy. Various early experiences make impressions on him. As a youth he falls in love with Amy, and begins to compose music. Alas! his friend James completes and carries to a successful conclusion the music which Peter has attempted. And, worse still, he usurps Peter's place in Amy's affections.

Peter reacts to this tragic situation by spending much time in meditation. He commits to paper his musings on things terrestrial and eternal.

His reflections cover a wide range and are concerned with such topics as God's Omnipresence, the Trinity, Personality, the Bringing in of the Kingdom, Satan, Prayer. Peter's thoughts are of varying interest and quality. Some things are happily put. Others we should dissent from. On the whole (we hope Peter won't take it unkindly) we are inclined to congratulate Amy.

H. D.

---

GOD WITH US. By Dorothy Dunning. *Elliot Stock*. 6d.

This little book is described as "an Introduction to scientific Christianity." It lays down four axioms. 1. God is. 2. God is Absolute Good—the only cause. 3. God is everywhere at all times; therefore Good is everywhere at all times. 4. This knowledge of God is available to all, at all times, in all places. Nine chapters on different aspects of Prayer follow with an abundance of Scripture quotation.

H. D.

---

ADDRESSES AND PRAYERS FOR WOMEN WORKERS. By Mrs. G. H. Morrison. *Allenson*. 2s. 6d. net.

This attractive book of 148 pages is issued at a low price. It will be found most helpful by those for whom it is primarily intended, viz. Women Workers.

There are 35 addresses, 22 to women, 5 to girls, 4 to children, and 4 missionary talks. Some of the talks are on Temperance. A number of prayers, including some for children, find a place.

The addresses themselves are very simple, and for the most part they deal with familiar themes. Busy workers will find material that can be used for the freshening of their own thought and the stimulation of that of their hearers!

H. D.

**THE INVISIBLE BEAM: AND OTHER TALKS TO BOYS AND GIRLS.**  
By S. Greer, M.A. *Allenson*. 2s. 6d. net.

Here we have twenty-eight talks to boys and girls which demonstrate what Professor Gossip, in his brief but interesting Foreword, calls "the elusive art of writing children's sermons." All the talks are fresh and suggestive. Each one is certainly calculated to hold the attention of young people, though none perhaps teaches a very profound lesson.

In the reaction from heaviness we have become used to lightness, and it is possible that some might wish for a little more "body" even in talks for the young. These addresses are, however, excellently done and are worth possessing.

H. D.

**THE EDUCATION OF CHARACTER.** By Eleanor Anne Mountford.  
Pp. 92. *Lincoln Williams*. 2s. 6d. net.

Miss Mountford writes more particularly for teachers and others engaged in that work of supreme importance—the training of character. The child-mind is pictured as a leaf with a midrib from which branch off many veins. All are divided into two classes, those whose midrib is "strength," and those whose midrib is "weakness." Both are natural: consequently neither is primarily defective. Failure in character building is failure to use the material naturally given. How to use to the best advantage, Miss Mountford sets out to answer, not, we think, always quite convincingly.

F. B.

**COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST.** By the Bishop of Jarrow. *S.P.C.K.*  
3s. 6d.

The Bishop of Jarrow takes Dr. McDougall's list of instincts—Curiosity, Pugnacity, Acquisition, etc.—and shows in clear and untechnical language that each of them is satisfied fully, and only, in Christ. And not only so. Christ alone secures harmony between them. The title of the book exactly describes its theme, and to those whose thoughts run on the lines of psychological study it will be very helpful. The style is simple, the argument sound, and the price cheap.

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST.** By Vaughan Stock. *Methuen*. 6s. net.

Those who desire an account of Our Lord's life in consecutive chronological order will find it here. The book is divided into seventy short chapters, each with a heading summarising the narrative it contains. The whole story is in the words of the A.V., though it is not divided up into verses. There are no notes or comments, but a list of the Scriptural references for each chapter is appended. There are eight woodcuts as illustrations.

A simple straightforward narrative well printed and attractively produced with no perplexities of explanatory matter.

## NOTES ON RECENT BOOKS.

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN has become known as a philosopher versed in the lore both of the east and of the west. His Hibbert Lectures on "The Idealist View of Life" brought him into prominence in the west, and since then his writings have been the subject of frequent comment. In his *East and West in Religion* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 4s. 6d. net) he has brought together five lectures of great interest to students of comparative religion and more especially to those interested in the inter-action of Eastern and Western thought. It is important that we should understand to-day how a highly cultured Hindu regards our Western religion and civilisation. The author of this book surveys the present position of religious thought and life, and comes to a number of important decisions regarding the future of Christianity especially in relation to the work of Missions. The extent of his reading and his application of it to the problems of the day are very striking. His reflections upon them are of special interest. For example, he says: "A few demagogues and adventurers with their control over the press and the radio lay down the law, and the masses unthinkingly march to their death. Our wills, our minds are not our own. A machine stronger than ourselves has made tools of us all. We are dressed in uniforms which enter the flesh. The silence of steel suppresses our sense of values. We are unable to look facts in the face." He expresses the yearning of both East and West when he says, for example: "Even if we have extensive agriculture and efficient transportation, and every one possesses his own aeroplane and radio set, if all disease is eradicated, if workmen receive doles and pensions and every one lives to a green old age, there will still be unsatisfied aspirations, wistful yearning." His treatment of revolution through suffering is specially thought provoking. The last lecture is an estimate of the work of Rabin-dranath Tagore. Although the subjects of these lectures are loosely connected, they give an excellent presentation of the outlook of Eastern thought.

---

Miss Maude Royden's *Here—And Hereafter* (Putnam, 7s. 6d. net) is a series of addresses dealing with Life Here, and Life Hereafter. Miss Maude has a special gift of dealing with those problems of everyday life which face most of us at some time or another during our career. "The Secret of Joy," for example, deals with common difficulties and points out the necessity of being in harmony with the Best. Her explanation of the Beatitude "Blessed are the Meek" falls into line with that given by Radhakrishnan, and shows how truly the people who enjoy true inward peace are the real possessors of the best in life. "Are We Missing Anything?" shows that we have to make a choice in life and that it is of the essence of life that we must miss something, and "Life's business

is just the terrible choice." "Beginning with Me" is an excellent lesson on personal responsibility. We might go through other chapters and point out the useful lessons that are given, but we have said sufficient to show the character of the book and the sort of help that it gives to those perplexed by the many problems of life as Christian teaching is applied to them.

---

The life and work of Mr. C. T. Studd has been an inspiration to many and a warm welcome will be given to the account of his career which has been written by Mr. Norman P. Grubb, and issued by the Religious Tract Society under the title *C. T. Studd, Cricketer and Pioneer* (3s. 6d. net). Mr. Alfred B. Buxton, who was his co-pioneer in the heart of Africa, contributes a Foreword in which he tells of the inspiration that Studd was to him by his heroic spirit and his complete devotion to the service of Christ. The story of the Cambridge Seven is well known and their offer of service in China which aroused so much enthusiasm in 1885. Studd had made a great reputation for himself as a cricketer, but when the call came he did not hesitate to give himself to the work, and both in China and Africa he proved a veritable apostle. His complete reliance on God was illustrated by many incidents in his eventful life and not least by his renunciation of his inherited wealth. The story is told in a chapter headed "He gives away a Fortune." "As coolly and deliberately as a business man invests in some 'gilt-edged' securities, as being both safe and yielding good interest, so C.T. invested in the Bank of Heaven." Those who remember the missions held in this country by Moody and Sankey will be interested to recall that Studd's work was indirectly the outcome of their work. Many other instances could be given of the wonderful influence exerted by these evangelists who so deeply stirred the country. Mr. Grubb has had the advantage in writing this life of consulting the letters which were preserved by Studd's mother and wife and he writes with whole-hearted sympathy with his subject. "He lived to glorify his Saviour. The object of this book is likewise to glorify Him as He is seen at work in and through this utterly surrendered life."

---

The centenary of the birth of Charles Haddon Spurgeon has been marked by the publication of a special record of his life by the Rev. C. H. Carlile, C.H., C.B.E. (The Religious Tract Society, 7s. 6d. net). The present generation who have never heard the great preacher can little realise the influence that he exerted at the Tabernacle in South London which was crowded Sunday by Sunday to hear him. Although his death occurred over forty years ago his memory is still treasured by those who owe much to his sermons, a new edition of which has recently been issued by Messrs. Marshall, Morgan & Scott. The Rev. H. Tydeman Chilvers, the present Pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, contributes a Foreword and bears his testimony to the continuance of the influence of his great predecessor. Dr. Carlile does not intend his work to be

merely a biographical record ; it is an attempt to interpret Spurgeon for our time and to give a picture of his manifold personality. There are a number of letters which have not hitherto been published and there is also a quantity of fresh information which will be welcomed by all who are interested in the life and work of one who was described in his day as the Prince of Preachers. Dr. Carlile numbers him among the four great evangelists of England, the others are Wycliffe, Wesley and Bunyan. He was a leader in his day and has left his mark on the religious life of the country, far beyond the limits of his own denomination which he served so well.

---

In *The Achievement of Nazareth*, the Rev. C. D. Hoste, M.A., presents "A study of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Longmans, Green & Co., 6s. net). His purpose is indicated in his statement in regard to our Lord's life: "Its real object was nothing less than to impart to mankind a share in the great Achievement of Nazareth. The public ministry was to do for men what the thirty years of Nazareth had done for the Son of Man. They, like Him, were to die to self and to rise to a new life of Sonship of God. They, like Him, were to respond to the revelation of God as their Father, by themselves entering into the relationship of sons to Him." This theme is worked out in thirty-seven short chapters, of which twenty-seven under the heading "Then" follow out the events of our Lord's life and the remainder under the heading "Now" show the method of application to some of the problems of life to-day. There is much helpful thought and many useful suggestions in the treatment of the subject.

---

*A Catholic Plea for Reunion* is described on the cover as "A remarkable Book by a Roman Catholic Priest." On reading it we were doubtful as to the correctness of the statement that it was written by an R.C. priest. We doubted if any priest would dare to indulge in the criticism of his superiors which this book contains, and we felt that some reprimand awaited the author if he should prove to be a member of the Roman priesthood. We soon learnt that the author, who is described as "Father Jerome," was a member of the Jesuit Order and that on the discovery of his authorship, he was transferred from Liverpool to some place on the Continent. His main theme is that there is no need for a division between the Anglican Communion and the Church of Rome, and that some arrangement should be arrived at, by which the Church of England could be united to Rome as the Uniate Churches in the East are—each having its own distinctive rites. Some modifications in doctrine he believed might be necessary, but as the Anglo-Catholics already accept so many of the doctrines of the Church of Rome this ought not in his opinion to be a matter of any great difficulty. The Roman Church suffers from rigidity and too much discipline and it would be for its advantage to receive some of the spirit of freedom and initiative which characterises the English Church. We are not surprised that these

sentiments did not meet with the approval of his superiors, who will have nothing short of abject submission to the Pope and a complete repudiation of the errors of Protestantism. The book is interesting as showing the feelings of some of the rank and file of the Roman Communion. All is apparently not well in the one true Church!

---

Mr. G. Wilson Knight has already won for himself a place as an interpreter of some of the great masters of literature and especially of Shakespeare. In *The Christian Renaissance* (The Macmillan Company of Canada) he has extended his researches to a wide field and deals with various manifestations of the Prophetic imagination. He brings the writings of such authors as Shakespeare, Dante and Goethe into association with the New Testament. His desire is to consider the Bible in a somewhat unusual light. It is to be considered not merely as an historical narrative, but as presenting an art form for which analogy can be found in the writings of some of the great masters of poetic art. The highest poetic interpretation of life is essentially Christian, but so far there has not been an adequate effort to interpret in its full meaning the symbolism which presents the deepest truths of life. He seeks to lead his readers to a full understanding of all that is to be learned of these deeper truths. The result of his studies is a stimulating volume, and even if we cannot always adopt the terminology which he adopts, the reader will find food for useful reflection and will discover many new aspects of old truths and of the significance of the works of the great poets which are brought under review.

---

To the Modernist Series Dr. H. D. A. Major, Principal of Ripon Hall, contributes *The Church's Creeds and the Modern Man* (Skeffington & Sons, 3s. 6d. net). An interesting account is given of the origin and early history of the Creeds with an explanation of their anti-Pagan and anti-Gnostic expansions. Dr. Major then deals with the difficulties presented to the modern mind by some of the expressions used and urges that alternative forms should be permitted to meet the needs of those who require a modern statement of their faith. It is true that ancient modes of expression may not be altogether suitable for the twentieth century, but many doubt whether modern substitutes would be found serviceable and whether they might not also prove in a short time to be out of date. There is also the fear entertained by some that the Modernists wish to omit from our statements of belief some of those elements which they regard as essential to the full faith of the Church as it has been held from primitive times.

---

*Mary of Nazareth*, by Mary Borden (William Heinemann, Ltd., 7s. 6d. net), is an account of the various aspects of the relationship of His mother to our Lord, written after a careful study of all the available literature and with insight into the conditions of the life of the time and the social conditions of Palestine. The

New Testament narrative is accepted as a true record, and only minor incidents and characters are invented. She found herself obliged at the outset to take her stand on the controversy over the perpetual virginity of Mary that has agitated the minds of theologians for many centuries. She believes that our Lord's brethren were the children of Mary, and many will agree with the view that she has taken as the most adequate explanation of all the facts when they are regarded apart from preconceived ideas derived from ecclesiastical theories.

---

A London Journalist has written a most attractive appeal to those who do not attend Church in a small book, *Why go to Church?* (The Lutterworth Press, 1s. net). It follows on a previous appeal by the same author for the observance of Sunday, *Why Sunday?* which has had a wide and useful circulation. Mr. Isaac Foot, M.P., in a commendatory Preface depicts the change which reinstatement of Sunday worship would make in the lives of people, and indicates that these are the results at which the author aims. The journalist is Mr. Newman Watts and we heartily congratulate him on the effectiveness of his presentation of his case. His arguments are clear, they are convincingly expressed and they are driven home with a number of anecdotes that many advocates of Sunday worship will be glad to have at hand for their own use. He deals with all the usual excuses that are made for absence from Church and exposes the weakness of most of them. An earnest appeal is also made for the restoration of worship to its old place in the life of the people and an attractive picture is presented of the blessing that would assuredly accrue.

---

Students of Liturgiology will find *A Study of the Byzantine Liturgy*, by the Rev. Henry Holloway, M.A., B.D. (The Mitre Press, 8s. 6d. net), a useful guide to the study of the development of the modern Byzantine Liturgy. The services of the Eastern Church are marked by many elaborate ceremonies and they differ in many respects from those of the Western Church. Mr. Holloway brings together a mass of information on the historical development of these services and exhibits the various points in detail with quotations from the Greek sources.

---

*Annals of an Indian Parish*, by the Rev. Stephen Neill, M.A., Warden of the Diocesan Theological College, Tinevelly, some time Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge (C.M.S., 1s. net), should be as widely read as possible for the admirable insight which it gives into the conditions in which much of the work of the Missionaries in India is carried on to-day. The details of the daily round are faithfully depicted, with all the anxieties which beset the path of the worker and all the conflicting interests that have to be considered. The disappointments are set out, but there are many compensations in the earnest Christian witness of the faithful. Mr. Neill has a human touch that gives his book a special fascination.

## CHURCH BOOK ROOM NOTES.

### 7, WINE OFFICE COURT, LONDON, E.C.4.

**Sunday School Lessons.**—The Rev. LI. E. L. Roberts, M.A., Vicar of St. Andrew's, Whitehall Park, has completely revised his series of *Sunday School Lessons on the Collects*, illustrated from the Epistles and Gospels, which was originally issued in quarterly parts in 1927. These lessons have been written to meet a felt need in Evangelical Church Sunday Schools—the need for lessons which are Spiritual, Scriptural, and Evangelical in their teaching and at the same time constructed along the lines of modern Sunday School methods. The lessons are prepared on the Collects, using the Epistle and Gospel to illustrate one definite thought or lesson from the Collect. They have the additional advantage of containing many missionary illustrations together with two lessons devoted directly to missionary instruction. The book will be published by the Church Book Room in a few weeks' time at 2s.

In response to many requests for a Lesson Book on the Church Catechism, the Book Room, in conjunction with "Home Words," has reprinted *Children of the Church: A Year's Lessons on the Catechism*, by the Rev. G. R. Balleine (2s.). This book is published with Church Art Stamps, price 4s. per book, sufficient for ten children for a year. Albums, 1d. each.

Other books by the Rev. G. R. Balleine still obtainable are: *Christianity in Action*, *Lessons from the Hymn Book*, *The Message of the Prayer Book* and *The Young Churchman* (2s. each).

For children from four to eight the following books are recommended: *Days in the Life of Christ*, by Marcella Whitaker (1s. 6d.); *Bible Tales for Little Folks* and *More Bible Tales for Little Folks*, by J. M. Macdougall Ferguson (1s. 6d.); *Stories for Little People* and *More Stories for Little People*, by Deaconesses Oakley and Ethel Luke (1s. 6d.); and *The Bible Zoo: 52 Lessons on the Animals of the Bible*, by W. A. Cunningham Craig (1s.). For adolescents, *The Complete Christian*, by the Rev. Cuthbert Cooper, Vicar of St. James's, Gloucester (2s.), is recommended. This book contains full Lesson Notes for a year's Bible Class, and the course touches the salient points of the Christian religion as taught by the formularies of the Church—the Bible, the Life of Christ, the Creeds and the Christian Life form the skeleton of the lessons.

The postage on any one of the above books would be 3d.

---

**Book Racks.**—Now that the holiday season has commenced may we remind clergy and others, who have Book Racks in their Church porches and Parish Halls, of the facilities provided by the Book Room for the purchase of pamphlets. A special discount of 25 per cent. is allowed on all manuals supplied for this purpose. A full list will be sent on application, but we may mention the following 2d. pamphlets which have been recently issued and which will be found very acceptable: *How to Say Your Prayers*, by the Rev. R. E. T. Bell, Vicar of St. John's, Reading, which is particularly suitable for boys and girls; *Secret Prayer: A Great Reality*, by the Rev. Henry Wright; and the following three pamphlets in the Church Booklet Series, price 1d. each: *Confirmation*, by the Bishop of Chelmsford, *Protestant and Catholic: Can We be Both?* by Prebendary Eardley-Wilmot, and *Holy Baptism*, by Bishop H. C. G. Moule.

**Nation and Church.**—The Bishop of Norwich, in his speech at the Annual Meeting of the National Church League, referred to his Visitation in the diocese of Norwich held last year, and his reference there to the importance of this question. The Bishop's Charge has been reprinted under the title of *The Nation and the Nation's Worship: A Proposal*, which is published at 1s. (postage 1d.). This has now reached its second impression. Mention might also be made of the very useful book on the question of Reservation which the Bishop wrote some little time ago entitled *Holy Communion and Reservation*, price 1s. 6d. (postage 2d.). Another book by the Bishop is entitled *Disestablishment and the Prayer Book*, price 6d.

**Roman Catholic Missions.**—We have received several letters lately, drawing attention to Missions organised by Roman Catholic Communities, particularly in seaside resorts, and asking for suitable literature to circulate in the various districts. The following pamphlets can be recommended for distribution, and three pamphlets published by the Joint Board of Divinity in the Diocese of Liverpool for distribution in that diocese under the general title *Is Rome Right?*. These pamphlets are: (1) *Some Questions and Answers*, (2) *Marriage*, (3) *Infallibility and the Bible*. Other useful pamphlets are: *St. Peter and the Pope and Purgatory*, by Archdeacon Thorpe, and *Eighteen Reasons why I am not a Roman Catholic*. These are published at 1d. each.

**The Church and Publicity.**—The Rev. Cuthbert Cooper has published a well-illustrated and comprehensive book entitled *The Church and Publicity*, his object being to show how the methods of publicity employed in the business world may be adopted and used to bring home the message of religion. Mr. Cooper has words of wisdom for all, and there are very few incumbents who will not profit from reading his book, which will save them from wasting money in ineffective publicity, and guide them in utilising whatever funds they may have at their disposal for this purpose. The book is published at 2s. 6d. in paper cover, in cloth at 5s., postage 6d.

**First Peter.**—The Golden Lectures on 1 Peter by the Rev. C. M. Chavasse have just been issued at 9d. under the title of *A Letter from the Catacombs*. These six lectures make clear the devotional and concrete application of the epistle to the present time, and will be of great service to preachers who make a practice of expounding Bible books to their congregations, and the devotional treatment should prove exceptionally helpful to lay students.

**The Keswick Convention.**—Arrangements have been made to have a National Church League Stall at the Keswick Convention this year, July 14-21, and it is hoped that members of the League attending the Convention will make a point of visiting the Stall and making it known to their friends.