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incorporating the Transactions of the  
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## EDITORIAL

THE oldest Christian hymn-book in continuous use is the *Ausbund*. This is used by the Old Amish Mennonites in the U.S.A., who still retain the German language and lead a life of strict simplicity. First printed in America in 1742, it is a book of 895 pages, containing 140 hymns, the Confession of Faith of Thomas von Imbroich (executed in Cologne in 1558), an account of Anabaptist sufferings in Zürich between 1635 and 1645, and an appendix of six further songs. The story of this remarkable hymnal has been told by Dr. Ernest A. Payne in a lecture delivered to the Congregational Historical Society and published in its *Transactions*, an off-print of which we have received by the kindness of the author.

About fifty hymns composed by Hans Betz and Michael Schneider and used by a group of Anabaptists imprisoned in Passeau Castle toward the middle of the sixteenth century form the nucleus of this book. Somehow smuggled out of the castle and then distributed among widely dispersed Anabaptist groups, these hymns were later supplemented by others. The first known printed collection appeared in 1564. Then in 1583 a collection of 130 hymns and songs were printed, and the *Ausbund* of the little Old Amish congregations in America today is substantially this 1583 book. Dr. Payne shows that there is greater variety in the book than might be supposed from T. M. Lindsay's reference to its martyr spirit in his *History of the Reformation*. It contains some metrical psalms and there is a lengthy version of the Apostles' Creed, which is parti-

cularly interesting and significant in view of the accusations of heresy which have sometimes been levelled at the Anabaptists. A hymn on the Lord's Supper goes further than the simple memorialism which has been attributed to them. Hymns for feet-washing rites, weddings and funerals are also to be found, while there is a long narrative poem telling of the journey made from Salonica to Moravia by representatives of Anabaptist groups in Greece. Obviously this hymnal of a persecuted and courageous people who believed that one day their faith would be vindicated merits far greater attention than it has hitherto received.

\* \* \*

While in some respects Baptists have a great tradition in the realm of hymnody we cannot claim as ours more than a very few hymns either of distinction or popularity. It now seems, however, that we may add to the number one hymn which is in its way a classic and which has hitherto, even in our own hymnals, been ascribed elsewhere. We refer to *We sing the praise of Him who died*. In an old biography of Samuel Medley (1738-1799) the writer of these notes recently found a version of this hymn which came from Medley's pen and was used by his Baptist congregation in Liverpool. In all the hymn-books, however, including the *Revised Baptist Church Hymnal*, this well-known hymn appears over the name of Thomas Kelly (1769-1854). Kelly is known to have adapted and sometimes re-written other men's hymns before including them in his own published collection. This he evidently did with *We sing the praise of Him who died*. There appears to be no doubt that the original version of this was composed by Medley and, unless clear evidence to the contrary turns up, the compilers of the forthcoming new Baptist hymnal should, therefore, claim this hymn for Medley and the Baptists.

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At a meeting in London in October the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries came formally into existence. Its aims are "to promote the interests of libraries, scholars and librarians" in the fields of theology and philosophy. Its foundation membership ranges from large academic libraries to modest society libraries, as well as a number of individuals, and no doubt its numbers will grow as its usefulness becomes increasingly clear. It hopes to help members by the provision and interchange of information and by undertaking, among other things, projects of bibliographical value. A bulletin will be issued three times a year, and will be sent free to all members of the Association. Non-members will be able to subscribe to it. The officers are : Chairman : Rev. Roger Thomas (Dr. Williams's Library); Hon. Sec.-Treas. : Miss J. Ferrier (c/o Church Missionary Society Library, 6, Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4).

## William Vidler

**W**ILLIAM Vidler, born May 19th, 1758, was tenth and last child of John and Elizabeth<sup>1</sup> Vidler of King Street,<sup>2</sup> in Battle, Sussex. The males of the family were stone-masons and the females domestic helps (one a lady's maid), all being communicants at St. Mary's, the parish church, and very proud to be visited by the Rev. Thomas Nairne, B.A., and Dean of Battle.

Those visits became more frequent as the college graduate found a kindred spirit in the unschooled son of the stone-mason, whose weakness of body kept him confined to a couch but whose mind was "as healthy and as avid" (to quote the Dean) "as any I've had the pleasure of contacting."

In one of his published sermons the ex-invalid recalls those days when he :

"was not ill-considered but yet ignored by the stalwarts of my family, to whom strength was as fetich as skill . . . The town numbered me with its incompetents, those unable to work therefore without the ordinary right to live . . . I owned nothing save desire to read and to remember what I read; the couch I rested on was loan from friend, my books were the Dean's, even my window view of trees and birds was veiled each evening bereaving me of everything save my thoughts."

When he was about eighteen he suddenly essayed to join his family at their stone-craft, with the result that "his life hung on a thread" for many long months afterward. And during those months the "patient understanding" of a neighbour's daughter saved him from despair. And more. For Charity Sweetenham introduced him to George Gilbert, and presently married him.

George Gilbert, independent Calvinist of Heathfield, known as "The Apostle of Sussex," visited Battle "with the Word of God" in 1776,<sup>3</sup> preaching under Great Oak or Watch Oak at the entrance to the town, "not without opposition," and in the cottages. In one such meeting William "dedicated his life to his Lord," and in many such meetings afterwards he "led those assembled by reading some sound discourse."

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Bowling.

<sup>2</sup> Now High Street.

<sup>3</sup> The Presbyterians had long before preceded him, a Mr. Burnard, of Lewes, forming a branch here in 1696 that lingered hesitatingly under visiting ministers until the middle of the next century, when their building was taken over by Vidler.

Dean Nairne, although "troubled by the new spirit of non-conformity," remained his friend, and in the autumn of 1777 sent him to the Isle of Wight to his brother the Vicar of Godshill. Here the youth learned "theology and the art to declaim it," the Biblical languages (his host being as zealous a student as his brother the Dean), and "the logical arts." Here also he clarified his thoughts anent Charity,<sup>4</sup> deciding to marry her as soon as his means allowed.

Here also the cause of his bodily weakness was lost, and his stature and strength grew amazingly. Not long afterwards when the Bully of Battle tried to break up one of his meetings he bound the man's hands and, after the service concluded, "pushed him home in shackled humiliation."

The newly-formed band of disciples gathered by Gilbert<sup>5</sup> recalled William from the Garden Isle to be their leader at £17 per year, and amongst those who attended his first meeting as Pastor were representatives from Sedlescombe of "the pious Lady Huntingdon" Connexion, some Quakers from Lewes, George Gilbert of Heathfield, and Thomas Purdy, for fifty or more years Baptist Pastor at Rye. Purdy had baptized William, as he had the eight first members of the Battle Church (1780), and he and Gilbert were witnesses at the wedding of William and Charity on the 7th of September, 1780, Thomas Nairne officiating.

That union can best be described by a quotation from a letter written twenty years after by Charity to a friend :

"As a man, a husband, a father, a friend, none ranks higher. He has a warm generous heart that feels for all. He is ever ready to do good beyond the extent of his means, even beyond the bounds of prudence. His humour is playful and innocent, his anecdotes and conversation highly interesting. All who know him allow he is so instructive and cheerful a companion as to be the delight of all."

William augmented his stipend by "peddling books when there was no stone to cut or when no stone was allowed to me to cut." One entry of his diary of this time reads : "When I was indebted £15, Thou, Lord, knewest my need and didst send just £15 to pay it with, though I had told no mortal." Thus were met

<sup>4</sup> William Sweetenham, her father, came from Brighthelmstone (Brighton) to make bricks, joining the Heathfield brethren each Sunday (a twenty mile walk) until Gilbert's fellowship was formed.

<sup>5</sup> George Gilbert, 1741-1827, born Rotherfield, enlisted 1759 in horse regiment of General Elliot, fought through Seven Year's War under Prince Ferdinand and the Marquis of Granby, distinguished himself in the capture of a French standard, converted 1776 at Nottingham, appointed superintendent of General Elliot's estate workmen the next year and became minister of Heathfield Independent Church, that he founded, introducing the message of His Mercy into more than forty different parishes, forming some churches that remain to this day.

again and again the expenses that increased so rapidly, five children coming in seven years and Charity's mother and his own mother presently being added to the household. Soon he made the front room of his house, 22 High Street, into the first bookshop possessed by Battle, and the only one in all the district between Rye and Lewes.<sup>6</sup> Amongst his customers was Thomas Paine, then living in Lewes, who had just published his *Rights of Man*.

By 1790 his fellowship had grown to 150 baptized believers, his stipend to £50, and his services to six weekly, some in cottages more than ten miles away. A new Meeting House was opened, costing £700, of which £160 was raised locally and the rest by William in several tours of the country. During those journeys he met a youth at Northampton who was to be known as Dr. Ryland of Bristol, a venerable father at Arnsby whose son became Robert Hall of Leicester, and Andrew Fuller of Kettering. With the last William corresponded for some years, on Socinianism, the letters afterwards becoming public.

His diary during those years suggests he was not fully at ease regarding the theology he had been taught. In 1784 he writes: "I have lately had some serious thoughts of the God Head of Christ and the eternity of hell torments." And in 1787 there is the entry: "Much stirred by reading Mr. Winchester<sup>7</sup> on the final restoration of all things." There is also that paragraph in the *Life* he wrote of his friend:

"I preached Calvinism for sixteen years, during which time my heart, with its feelings of love, and my head, with its cold unfeeling creed, were at perpetual variance. I have reason to bless the day which, by a full discovery of Divine Truth, set me at liberty; my heart and my head now both agree, and I both know and feel that God is Love."<sup>8</sup>

Being the man he was the fellowship had to be informed of his change of creed, and in December, 1792, after Winchester and he had changed pulpits, a series of meetings culminated in 153 members out of 168 voting he should remain Pastor. Other churches, however, opposed his staying; future engagements at both Baptist and Independent chapels were cancelled, and Rye and other Particular fellowships publicly disowned him.

He had been chosen, for the second time, to preach the Association Sermon<sup>9</sup> at Chatham, and went there ready to do so, and

<sup>6</sup> The Dobell family continued the business to recent times, one of whose sons was Bertram Dobell the Charing Cross book-seller and author.

<sup>7</sup> Elhanan Winchester, 1751-1797, came from New Jersey to succeed Universalist James Rely, once a ministerial helper of George Whitefield, at the Philadelphian Chapel, Windmill Street, Finsbury Square.

<sup>8</sup> *Life of Elhanan Winchester* by Vidler.

<sup>9</sup> Kent and Sussex; of which he had been Moderator.

was met not only by oral abuse but also by threat of physical harm. June 4th and 5th, 1793, were days of drama in the stiff, square Chatham building with its narrow windows and the three-decker "that could with ease accommodate more than a dozen leaders." The agenda contained the items: "Separation of Mr. Vidler's society at Battle from the Association,"<sup>10</sup> and "Acceptance of 15 late members of Vidler as the Particular Baptist Church,"<sup>11</sup> and "Excommunication of William Vidler; self-confessed heretic."

The substitute preacher was Middleton of Lewes, who decided to "improve the occasion" by taking as his text "God be merciful to me a sinner." But eloquence was impossible in so demonstrative an audience. Middleton stood in the great pulpit and Vidler stood in the deacon's pew, and whenever the preacher said something Vidler thought not altogether fair he raised his hand asking leave to answer (that was never granted), and at anything complimentary Vidler elaborately bowed, as he did when Middleton said: "Some of my hearers might conclude that those who maintained such doctrine must be *bad* men, yet heretics are sometimes the holiest and best of men; but they are the more dangerous on that account."

The excitement continued in the tavern around the dining table, where the delegates talked as rapidly as they ate, some, who had wished to exclude Vidler from the meal, turning their venom on the preacher, asserting he was tinged with the heresy he had pretended to condemn. Middleton, it is said, appealed to his living text, who rose and cleared his friend of the charge before leaving tavern and Assembly for ever.

Two years later Vidler was chosen to succeed Winchester<sup>12</sup> at Parliament Court, where his ministry was to last more than twenty years. In 1796 he moved home and family to Bethnal Green, soon after joining John Teulon as Bookseller and Publisher. On the retirement of Teulon he shared the business with Nathaniel Scarlett<sup>13</sup> in the Strand and (1804) Holborn, dissolving the partnership when Scarlett published his *British Theatre*, but retaining the friendship.

In January, 1797, he began his occasional periodical, calling it *The Universalist's Miscellany* (with sub-title, "The Philanthropist's Museum": Intended Chiefly as an Antidote against the Anti-Christian Doctrine of Endless Misery), in 1802 *The Universal Theological Magazine*, and in 1804 added *The Impartial*

<sup>10</sup> It became Battle Unitarian Church.

<sup>11</sup> The 15 who afterwards built Zion in Mount Street, Battle.

<sup>12</sup> Who wished to return home to America.

<sup>13</sup> Converted by Winchester after being baptised by Vidler.

*Review: New Series.* The year after it was bought by Robert Aspland,<sup>14</sup> a contributor to its pages.

The thirteen numbers published in the nine years by Vidler had fair sales, especially the earlier issues, bought largely because they contained the controversy between Andrew Fuller and Vidler on Socinianism.<sup>15</sup>

He had now become the recognised head of the British Universalists. Crowds filled Parliament Court and London discussed, not quietly, his sermons. He was a much sought after preacher, touring some part of the country each year, making many friends and converts.

During the final months of the century he received a call to Boston of the United States to lead a congregation that included some of the best-known poets and writers of the land, at last refusing it. The reason he gave was that he was pledged to his friends Nathaniel Scarlett and James Creighton, an Anglican clergyman, and James Cue, a Sandemanian, in a *Translation of the New Testament from the Original Greek: with Notes.*

Parliament Court was to experience a similar upheaval to that witnessed long before at Battle when their Pastor formally declared his Socinian belief. Three-quarters of his people left. His stipend dropped from £250 to £30. His friends went out of their way to avoid him in the street. But he refused to lose heart, and within a short time his pews were filled again and overflowing, his income once again became secure, and London returned to the discussion in coffee-house and tavern of his fiery and provocative sermons. He was also filling Leather Lane Chapel, Holborn, with his lectures for the Unitarian Evangelical Society he had founded, and travelling far and wide for the Unitarian Fund, of which he was a founder and trustee.

It was when he was touring the Eastern Counties and staying in Wisbech that he heard that Charity, his wife, was seriously ill. They were then living in "the little village called West Ham; a health resort," Mrs. Vidler never having quite recovered from the shock of her eldest son's death in 1796. At fourteen he had promised to be as brilliant as his father.<sup>16</sup> He was one of the many victims of an epidemic that devastated East Sussex that winter.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Aspland, 1782-1845, baptised 1797 Devonshire Square, won Ward Scholarship at Bristol Baptist Academy, 40 years minister Gravel Street Unitarian Chapel, Hackney.

<sup>15</sup> This became a Battle of Books, including *Memoirs of Andrew Fuller* by Morris, *Letters to Mr. Vidler on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation* by Fuller, and *Letters to a Universalist* by Jerram, an evangelical clergyman.

<sup>16</sup> A grandson, William (D. 1861), a son of Ebenezer the Sailor, was for 24 years Domestic Chaplain (Missionary) at Chapel Street, Milton Street, Cripplegate.



Ten years afterwards the second daughter, "another mother in the house," unexpectedly died when nearing her nineteenth year.<sup>17</sup> "Therefore the home partner of William Vidler's sorrows and joys, tribulations and triumphs, was quite ready to answer her Father's call." She died December 22nd, 1808, in her 56th year.

To help forgetfulness the bereaved husband plunged into ever fresh work, writing a *History of the Particular Baptist Church at Battle*, and a *Life of Elhamon Winchester*, editing Paul Siegvolk's *Everlasting Gospel* and *Winchester's Dialogues*, and publishing sermons, his own and those of his friends, whilst establishing Unitarian Churches here and there, the best known of them being at Reading. As his strength allowed he continued his tours, several through Sussex, where he was guest of noble hosts at Battle Abbey and Ashburnham House, and of friends at Beach Farm<sup>18</sup> and like homesteads, and preaching under some of the many Sussex oaks<sup>19</sup> that sheltered the open-air gatherings of the time.

In his hurried journey to be with his dying wife he had had an accident, from an overturned post-chaise, that severely bruised his more than outsize body,<sup>20</sup> and went for nursing to his daughter and her husband, William Smith, the organist at Parliament Court, at Spencer Street, Northampton Square, and there, "resting of the Divine Goodness and the Paternal Character of God," he died on August 23rd, 1816, in his 59th year.

"At our last interview," said Robert Aspland, "he said, firmly and affectionately—and I am sure had he taken leave of every one of his congregation and friends it would have been in the same words—'Before the face of the Master, the Friend, the Brother, Jesus Christ, I expect to meet you again.'"

Before the burial in the Old Gravel Pit graveyard, Aspland delivered the funeral oration in Parliament Court, and spoke of the periodical his friend had founded, that now under William Johnson Fox<sup>21</sup> had amongst its contributors John Stuart Mill, Crabbe Robinson, Harriet Martineau, Eliza Flower, Ebenezer Elliott, and Robert Browning,<sup>22</sup> and then of his friend. William Vidler was, he said :

<sup>17</sup> She was buried in Bunhill Fields.

<sup>18</sup> That housed a regiment of sons who left one by one to farm in New Zealand. There was a "Hammer Pond" there, the last of those of the once famous iron-fields, the long heavy tree-stem handle of the hammer being uncovered in almost perfect condition in the early years of this century.

<sup>19</sup> Watch Oak of Battle and Elizabeth's Oak at Northiam amongst them.

<sup>20</sup> He is said to have claimed two chairs at meetings and booked two seats for his coach journeys.

<sup>21</sup> His successor at Parliament Court.

<sup>22</sup> In 1836 it passed into the possession of R. H. Horne ("Orion") and the next year into that of Leigh Hunt, who had the assistance of W. S. Landor and G. H. Lewes.

"One of the true old English characters, quiet, simple, human, his bodily make tall and upright, his step angular and firm, his countenance open and varying, indicating great courage, his voice clear and strong, his person dignified. As a student he had himself said he moved slowly and comprehended slowly, not being of quick parts, but whatever he attained it remained with him and became his own. As a preacher he excelled in strength of reasoning, simplicity and perspicuity of style, and an open manly elocution."

On the tablet put on the wall of Parliament Court, Bishopsgate Street,<sup>23</sup> by his son-in-law, is cut this terse biography :

"In early life he became a Protestant Dissenter : his popular talents soon qualified him for the Ministry : his youth was spent without education, but rising superior to every obstacle he attained distinguished eminence as an extempore preacher : his mind, formed for great and noble purposes, was directed by benevolence of design, unshaken integrity, and profound love of truth : the various trials he endured for conscience sake dignified his character : his life and death illustrated the grand doctrines he taught : after a life of active usefulness, in the firm belief of the Divine Unity and the Universality of God's Love, without ecstasy but full of immortal hopes, revered, regretted, beloved, he fell asleep in Jesus, awaiting the Resurrection of the Just."

F. W. BUTT-THOMPSON.

<sup>23</sup> Where Vidler had been Minister 22 years.

*First Epistle to the Corinthians.* A Commentary by F. W. Grosheide. (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 25s.).

This work is part of the New London Commentary on the New Testament. Its author is Professor of New Testament Studies in the Free University of Amsterdam.

The commentary is on the English text. References to Greek words are always reserved for foot-notes. The text used is the American Standard of 1901. The exposition is always helpful, if at times rather over-elaborated. Amid the apparently unrelated variety of subjects treated in the epistle, Dr. Grosheide sees a main thread—the principle of Christian love—in the light of which the character of Christian freedom is to be interpreted. It was a false conception of freedom which gave rise to the particular problems with which the Apostle was faced. On some points, e.g. Deliverance to Satan, and the question of the Virgins in chap. VII, the argument is not convincing. Further one would have welcomed some discussion of the more significant terms in the Pauline literature, such as "sanctification," "redemption," etc. But the volume will be of help and inspiration. One must add that it is a pity that in a work of good appearance, so many minor errors should have passed. We have noted at least thirty errors of reference and the like.

W. S. DAVIES

## Ourselves and the Ordinances

**T**H**ERE** is a growing concern, especially among some of our younger men, that for too long now we Baptists have been sitting lightly upon the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper. An attitude has arisen, almost an atmosphere, that has given rise to most unfortunate repercussions both within as well as outside the Denomination. It seems fairly evident from what one reads that in many circles our standpoint is not only misunderstood, but is very often only superficially regarded. Take for example the following extracts from an article by the Rev. Frank Colqhoun, an evangelical Anglican, in *The Record* of 15th August, 1947 :—

“Baptist tenets appeal so strongly to simple folk who have little or no insight into the great Biblical principles concerning the Church and the Covenant and who do not want to be bothered by such considerations as the continuity of the New Israel with the Old. . . . That is why the Baptist movement is making such rapid progress among people who do not possess great intellectual depth and whose knowledge of the Bible as a whole is decidedly limited.”

We may smile at such a remarkable observation or, alternatively, feel very indignant, but before we make reply we must take ourselves to task and ask : “How can a man resort to an ‘argumentum ad hominem’ in order to refute our position if he is really aware of what it is?” The answer is of course that we ourselves have failed to make convincingly plain our convictions. Let us face it; we have been content to deal with our distinctive sacrament on pamphlet level. We have hidden our light under a bushel. Thus it comes as no great surprise when Cullman claims that Barth's little though extremely valuable contribution to the subject of Baptism is by far the most weighty book yet written from the standpoint of the Baptist position and has no peer even in Anglo-Saxon Baptist circles which have produced so many fine scholars in other spheres.

Consider also our treatment of the Lord's Supper. It has come to be regarded as an extra course to the main diet of worship and is viewed by many as little more than a spiritual Remembrance Day service. Dr. Payne, in his book, *The Fellowship of Believers*, draws attention to the fact that in neither of the Baptist Hymnals is there a hymn by a Baptist in the Communion section. We made no separate contribution to the communion set up by the Faith and

Order movement that dealt with the interpretation of the Ministry and the Sacraments, and with regard to the Lord's Supper were content to accept the statement made by J. S. Whale on behalf of the Congregationalists. This was Calvinistic in its approach rather than Zwinglian, which rightly or wrongly is perhaps the most popular conception of the Lord's Supper current in our Baptist churches, though few of our people would understand what is meant by these terms, which is all the more regrettable. Further, no article has appeared either in the *Transactions* of the Baptist Historical Society or the *Baptist Quarterly*, dealing theologically or historically with the Lord's Supper. (Cf. pp. 58-59, *op. cit.*). Recently there appeared a book, *The Lord's Supper—A Baptist Statement*, which sets out briefly if not very unanimously, our views on this sacrament. Dr. Rowley has a chapter on the Sacraments in his book, *The Unity of the Bible*, and we must not forget the section in *The Gathered Community*. But it is the dearth of works by competent Baptist scholars that is to a large degree responsible for the general ignorance of our theological position regarding the Sacraments, to say nothing of our practice. We have been content to rebut the arguments of those who have differed from us without making any positive contribution to the subject, and it is a sad reflection on us, that most of the matter, if not all that has been written in recent years on the Sacraments, has come from pens outside the Baptist denomination.

But this lack of interest in the Ordinances has not only had its repercussions outside the denomination but within it as well. What do Baptism and the Lord's Supper mean to many of our people? A recent contributor to the *Baptist Times* spoke of Baptism as a beautiful symbol of our trust and dedication, or words to that effect. But is that all we can say for Baptism? Is it but a symbol of that which is so very beautiful? Does the emphasis on our trust and dedication sum up precisely its New Testament meaning? Or to put it in another way, do the Ordinances testify to what we do or to what God has done, or both? The present writer has the feeling that we have been inclined to make the Sacraments man-centred rather than God-centred and the contribution which man makes has overshadowed God's work in redemption. We must regain our perspective and regard the rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as essentially indicative of what God has done and continues to do in Christ for man in the first place and how men respond in the second. These are both integral parts of the Sacraments and must neither be confused or separated. As Dr. Rowley has pointed out: "If Baptism is to be charged with meaning and power it must be both a divine and human act" (*Unity of the Bible*, p. 168). If we emphasise the Godward aspect to the exclusion of the other we must arrive ultimately at paedobaptism and infant Communion. And

vice versa if we glorify the manward we arrive at a position when Baptism becomes purely a sign of our faith and the Lord's Supper a memorial rite with little other meaning. We may even arrive at a point when we come to regard both Sacraments as outmoded symbols of a past age with little or no utility in the contemporary Church. If we are to redeem our present position, if we are to rekindle in the hearts of our people the belief that the Sacraments were meant by our Lord to play an important part in the life and experience of the believer, then we must return to our New Testament documents and re-examine again their evidence.

#### NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

There is not sufficient space, nor is it here necessary, to view all the strands of evidence except as they illustrate our arguments. In any case there are more detailed works on both the Sacraments which thoroughly examine the New Testament material. But we shall take for granted two issues that are generally agreed upon by most scholars as being settled. The first is that the Sacraments owe their place in the life of the Church to the explicit or implicit commands of our Lord. The second is that Baptism in the New Testament was administered solely to those capable of making a faith response to the claims of the Gospel.

In the New Testament Baptism is seen as a comprehensive rite in which the following ideas are clearly shown. (a) The identification of the believer with Christ in His death and resurrection, concomitant with the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, involving for the believer a death to self and sin and a rebirth to a new life. (b) The identification of the believer with, and his incorporation into, the redeemed community which is the Body of Christ, the Church. This in turn entails his participation in its fellowship, privileges and responsibilities. (c) The anticipation of a future hope, for Baptism has also an eschatological content. In his Baptism the believer looks forward to that fullness of life which is to be the portion of all believers at the Parousia. Though not specifically mentioned, "until He come" is as much a byword of Baptism as it is of the Lord's Supper.

It may be objected that such a definition is too unwieldy for practical purposes. But is it not our attempts to define the meaning of Baptism within the limitations of a sentence that have resulted in lowering our general conception of it? We try to say that Baptism is this or that and only succeed in defining half-truths. If the Gospel so frequently and erroneously termed the simple Gospel is such as to command the attention of scholars and thinkers for centuries and not to be exhausted, can we hope to define either of the Sacraments in a line when they are no less than the Gospel in action?

Now we must briefly justify our definition by enlarging on

the various propositions that we have made. First of all let us examine Baptism as union with Christ in His death and resurrection. *Romans* vi. is, of course, the classical example of this idea, but the whole conception of the Pauline doctrine of mystical union with Christ is not only the outcome of Paul's thought and temperament alone, but has a concrete foundation in the life and religious experience of the apostle's and other believer's actions in Baptism. Thus such phrases as "I have been crucified with Christ" (*Gal.* ii. 20) ought to be read in the light of *Romans* vi., and it is suggested that they might well read as the equivalent of "I have been baptized into His death." It will be observed that Paul in *Romans* not only speaks of our union with Christ but of our union with Him in His death and thus removes any idea that Baptism speaks primarily of our faith. We are pointed to the redeeming act which makes our union with Christ a possibility at all.

Baptism is also intimately associated with the gift of the Spirit. Whereas we know that the reception of the Spirit was not necessarily determined by Baptism, in the New Testament generally speaking the reception of the Spirit was believed to take place within the context of this rite. This of course is understandable, for in New Testament times conversion, the reception of the Spirit and Baptism, were the experience of a moment. There was little delay between the faith response and Baptism, such as we know it today. A number of passages in the New Testament suggest this close connection of Baptism in the name of the Lord and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In *Galatians* iii. 27 Paul views Baptism as a putting on of Christ. "As many of you as were baptized have put on (*endusasthe*) Christ." Now in a number of other places the apostle urges his readers to put on (*endusasthe*) Christ, and this 'putting-on' is closely associated with the gift of the Spirit or with spiritual gifts. (Cf. *Rom.* xiii. 14, *Col.* iii. 12, *Eph.* vi. 11, and possibly *Eph.* i. 13-14, but see below). This does not mean that Paul believed in frequent baptisms, but is urging his converts to remember that the gift of the Spirit at Baptism is one that needs to be continually appropriated. It is interesting to notice that while *Luke* is silent with regard to our Lord's command to baptize, he does record our Lord's promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Behold I send the promise of the Father upon you, but stay in the city until you are clothed (*endusesthe*) with power from on high" (*Luke* xxiv. 49). Putting on Christ then or being clothed in Him, has close connections with Baptism, the gift of the Spirit, and spiritual gifts.

Secondly, we shall consider Baptism as identifying the believer with the Church and incorporating him into it. In *Acts* ii. we read that those who responded to Peter's preaching and were baptized continued in the apostles' fellowship and teaching in the breaking of bread and prayers. These converts not only leave the

old life behind them but they take their place in the fellowship of the redeemed community. They become part of the Body of Christ. Here we are reminded of a very important factor in the life of the Christian. While being a very personal encounter between the believer and his Lord, the life of faith is nevertheless not one to be lived in isolation and without vital fellowship with those who have shared a similar experience. The New Testament knows nothing of an independent Christian or one with no real attachment to a worshipping community. Paul expands upon this truth when he writes to the Corinthians and says: "For just as the body is one and has many members . . . so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized in Christ" (1 *Cor.* xii. 12-13).

It will be appreciated that Baptism into the Body of Christ brought with it certain responsibilities and privileges, and we may notice here the communalism of the early Church. There was a speedy recognition of the social obligations that marked the life of the disciple of Christ and also the high moral tone of the Church's life and witness. Such lapses as were perpetrated by Ananias and Sapphira could not be tolerated. They were a blot on the community, and so discipline had to be strict. Paul warns the Corinthians against presuming too much upon their baptismal experience and reminds them of the need for constant moral vigilance (1 *Cor.* x.). Baptism does not make a man a Christian, it is the mark that he is!

Finally Baptism has a forward look. We may remind ourselves that the baptism of John differed profoundly from contemporary proselyte baptism not the least in its eschatological hope (cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, p. 25). It pointed to One who was to come and baptize with the Holy Spirit. In the same way our Lord's Baptism foreshadowed His Passion and resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit. Now this proleptic aspect is also present in the Baptism of the believer. In *Ephesians* i. 13-14, Paul writes: "In Him also you who have heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation and have believed in Him, were sealed (*sphragizomai*) with the promised Holy Spirit which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it." It is generally agreed by many New Testament scholars that the word seal (*sphragizomai*) is used here in reference to Baptism. If this is so then the intimate connection between Baptism and the gift of the Spirit is further demonstrated. But even if this is not the case in this instance and the sealing does not refer to Baptism, the verse still points to the end time and reminds us of our future hope which is part of the Gospel of which Baptism speaks. However *Ephesians* v. 25-27 and *Titus* iii. 4-7 both contain eschatological references within baptismal contexts. So we may confidently claim then that Paul also sees Baptism as the guarantee of a future hope. It looks forward to a

time when all who are in Christ will obtain possession of it. That time as Paul says in *Ephesians* i. 10 is to be regarded as the crown of God's purposes for the world "when all things will be united in Him."

We turn next to the Lord's Supper. In the New Testament the Lord's Supper was a fellowship meal in which the bread and the wine were given a special significance. In the early days of the Church it is possible that on every occasion when groups of disciples met and entertained one another in their homes, the meal concluded with the distribution of the bread and the wine or at least the serving of bread and wine during the actual meal was given a special place. (cf. *Acts* ii. 46). Later on this meal was held only on the Lord's day. By the end of the first century, due to abuses which were already evident in apostolic times, the distribution of the bread and wine was rapidly becoming a rite in itself and by the time of Justin in the middle of the second century the Lord's Supper as we now call it, or Eucharist, was certainly separated from the fellowship meal or agapé. But our immediate thought is with its meaning and not its history and to an examination of the essential characteristics of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament we now turn.

Once again we find it inadequate to define these characteristics within a sentence and we must go to some length in order to arrive at a comprehensive solution. Primarily the Supper is the Supper of the Cross. It is the celebration of an act; Christ's redemptive act upon the Cross. We cannot erase sacrificial associations from the rite. We need not argue at this point whether the Johannine chronology is to be preferred to the Synoptics on the question of the day of the crucifixion, nor whether the Last Supper was a Haburah or fellowship meal, a sabbatical Kiddush, or the Passover meal itself. Whatever may be the answer to these problems one thing is certain and that is that the week preceding the death of Christ must have been charged with the Paschal atmosphere and sacrifice was in the very air. Our Lord was aware that soon a greater deliverance than that experienced by Israel from Egypt was to be accomplished. He Himself was to be the Deliverer. He was also to be the Offering. In the Cross Christ was to offer up to God on man's behalf His perfect obedience, His total submission to the Will of God the Father, His complete atonement for sin and what He was about to do for His disciples and for the world was conveyed in the simple act of breaking the bread and pouring out the wine. The disciples "were regarding His death as a calamity quashing all their hopes. He presents it to them in a way words could not, by an act of symbol which was also the reality, for the gift at the table was part and moment of the gift upon the cross. It is . . . as if He should say . . . The death you dread is not disaster either to you or to Me. It is



the one gift I came from God to give Him and as such I give it to you here. This is not the Atonement but the gift of it to you. I am not making the sacrifice but making it yours. (P. T. Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacraments*, p. 255). Forsyth goes on to say: "Already the passion had begun and before it came to the pitch that took away the thought of man, He consigned to men in a subsidiary act what He gave to God in the greater compendious act of the cross. The same act moved in two directions at once, and the supper was the donation of its salvation manward as the cross was its oblation Godwards." (*op. cit.*, p. 256). It is quite clear that without the Cross the Supper would never have retained its place or its significance in the early Church and as Paul reminds us it is "as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup" that we "proclaim the Lord's death till He come."

But this act of the Lord's Supper has three complementary aspects which express the believer's part in the meal. (i) The Supper is Commemorative. However the case for or against the veracity of Paul's account of the institution may be argued it seems to be commonly accepted now that "This do in remembrance of me" represents if not the *ipsissima verba* of our Lord, at least His intention. Thus the Supper is retrospective. It goes back to the "night on which He was betrayed." It recalls again the swift passage of events which led up to the Supper and beyond to the Cross. Those who partake of the elements hear again the voice of the Lord: "This is my Body" and "This is my blood." It is not that the bread is the body but rather that it is the body broken! It is not that the wine is the blood but that it is the blood of the covenant poured out. In other words we may say that it is the act rather than the substance that is the all-important thing. It is as though our Lord should say: "Take, eat, drink—these are for you. This action is my life for you in death. I go to offer to the Father that which is beyond your comprehension let alone your ability to achieve. These elements are pledges of what I am about to do for you. They are the guarantees of my redeeming work. You will not lift a cup to your lips nor eat a morsel of bread without remembering this night and what I am about to accomplish in it."

(ii) The Supper is also Participative. Those who share in it share in the Body and Blood of the Lord. Paul writes: "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not a participation in the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ?" (1 *Cor.* x. 16). The Lord's Supper then is a real communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, and these words when read in the light of their context surely give the death blow to any view of the Lord's Supper which is only commemorative? As Forsyth pointedly remarks, the holding of a memorial service is rather incongruous for One who is always present. But in what way are

we to interpret this word 'participation' or *koinonia* in its relation to the phrases "body and blood of Christ"? If we may accept the testimony of a growing number of New Testament scholars, the sharing in His blood means to appropriate the benefits of His death and the sharing in His body means to participate in the fellowship of the Church of which He is the Creator. "In participating, Christians all partake and share in His life the life that creates and sustains the fellowship as it reaches us through His sacrifice." (Moffatt, *Commentary, Corinthians*, p. 135). Whether this conception of sharing in the body was present in our Lord's mind in the upper room may be questioned. Whether it was in Paul's mind, however, is another matter, though his reference to some who did not or were not "discerning the body of the Lord" seems to point in this direction. (Cf. 1 *Cor.* xi. 29). It is certain, however, that the Lord's Supper was in very truth a fellowship meal between the believing participants and their Lord, and the projection of this idea to the fellowship of believers with believers was a natural consequence. Nothing has been mentioned concerning the Johannine teaching in *John* vi. concerning the eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ but, whether we accept this passage as eucharistic in character or not, it must be admitted that sooner or later in the history of the Church and the developments in the Lord's Supper, these words were bound to be considered in a sacramental manner.

(iii) The Supper is Proleptic. That is, there is an eschatological content within it; a hope of better things. Paul asserts in 1 *Corinthians* that "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death till He come" (xi. 26). The eschatological view of the Lord's Supper has of course been held in a more thoroughgoing manner by Schweitzer and others but we need not be afraid to acknowledge this emphasis providing we recognise the presence of the other two that we have already considered. Our Lord Himself looked forward to the day when He would drink again the fruit of the vine in the Kingdom of His Father (*Luke* xxii. 17). He looked beyond the parting and its sorrow to the final reunion in the Kingdom. Furthermore this proleptic element was not simply something that Jesus had Himself introduced into the Last Meal. It was part and parcel of the Jewish hope at that particular season. The singing of the *Hallel* Psalms at Passover is an indication of this fact in itself as will be seen by a swift glance at their content. And a certain Rabbi ben Hannaniah who flourished around 90 A.D. said that the Passover was a night on which the Jews had been redeemed in the past and on which they would be redeemed in the future. (Cf. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, p. 47).

To gather up our thoughts so far, we may say that the Lord's

Supper in the New Testament was a meal during which in the distribution of bread and wine, the redemptive act of Christ upon the Cross was remembered, the blessings of the Cross were by faith appropriated and the consummation of the Kingdom in its fullness was anticipated. It will be seen from our examination so far that the characteristics which belong to the Lord's Supper have their parallels in Baptism also. Thus both rites point to the death of Christ. Both emphasise a union or communion with the Lord in His death and (by implication in the Lord's Supper at least) resurrection. Both have a direct bearing upon the life of the believer in his relations with the believing community and both contain an eschatological hope. The one great difference is that Baptism is not repeated while the Lord's Supper is. The reason, to quote Forsyth again, is that "Baptism is the sacrament of the new birth and birth begins life once and for all. But the Lord's Supper is the sacrament of the new life continued and this by the repeated gift of grace." (*op. cit.*, p. 275).

#### OUR PRESENT SITUATION

Having reviewed if only very briefly the New Testament testimony we must now relate our findings to our present situation and ask whether we as a denomination, or more precisely, whether we as local fellowships are in line with what we have found there concerning the Ordinances and their significance. In attempting this task we are faced at the outset with a number of important questions. Can we continue to regard the Ordinances as signs of our faith only; are they but 'bare signs,' cold symbols of a prior and much warmer experience, or do they convey more? Ought our approach to them be more sacramental in a greater degree than is common now, without being sacramentarian? If we believe that the sacraments are Dominical institutions then surely they were intended by our Lord to play a vital part in the life and experience of the believer. If we still regard them as being 'means of grace' in what sense are we to use such a phrase? Perhaps it is just at this point, within the problem of sacramental experience that we meet our difficulty and we need to ask how the sacraments can become for us the experiential agencies that they quite obviously were in the days in which the New Testament was written.

In suggesting an avenue of approach we might turn our attention to an idea that Dr. Wheeler Robinson put forward some years ago which a number of non-Baptist scholars are taking up as a means towards an interpretation of sacramental symbolism. In his book, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, he writes: "It is possible that we should get nearer to the sacramental experience of the first believers if we approached it through that genuinely Hebrew product 'prophetic symbolism' rather than through the

Greek mystery religions" (p. 192). Wheeler Robinson had in the mid-1920's given a paper to the Society for Old Testament studies in which he had worked out more fully this idea. A similar conception may be traced to the German scholar Julicher. With regard to the Last Supper he held that Jesus was speaking and acting in parable. Forsyth, grasping this idea, developed it in the same connection and called it laden action, while Otto termed it an acted prediction which was effectively represented. Forsyth, in his *Church and the Sacraments*, has suggested that had this principle of interpretation been recognised earlier it would have saved the Church and the world a great deal of strife. This form of symbolism was a striking feature in the prophetic activity of the Old Testament for so often the spoken word was accompanied by a symbolic act, as for example when Isaiah walked the streets of Jerusalem in the garb of a captive prophesying the doom of Egypt and Ethiopia, or when Jeremiah made a yoke of iron and wore it as a sign of the impending captivity of his countrymen under the Babylonians. Now the significance of the symbolism was that it was not simply regarded as a sign but was as Wheeler Robinson points out, "part of the will of Jahweh, to whose complete fulfilment it pointed. It brings that will nearer to its completion, not only by declaring it, but in some small degree as effecting it. It corresponds to the prophetic perfect of Hebrew syntax by regarding the will of Jahweh as already fulfilled" (*O.T. Essays*, pp. 14-15). These acts were not just the product of the oriental mind and evidence of their love for the concrete but were what "Paul might have called an 'arrabon' an earnest of what will be, a little part of reality which is yet unseen as a whole. With something of this realism we may conceive the earliest believers entering the waters of baptism and sharing the bread and wine. The acts resembled those of the prophets of Israel; they did something that corresponded with the spoken word and helped to bring it about" (*The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, p. 193).

Now it may be questioned whether we can possibly enter into the same type of experience as those early believers, living as we do in a different thought world and religious milieu. It may even be argued that such a spiritual religion as Christianity ought not to require such material symbolism. But symbolism is a common factor in the world today and there are few spheres of life that can dispense with it entirely. Whatever difference there may be, there must also be a common core of religious experience between Christians of today and those of days gone by and, as Wheeler Robinson says, "where there is so much common experience there must be some more fundamental ground of agreement, some common recognition of the Divine activity through the Sacraments" (p. 195. *Op. cit.*). Does that ground lie within the activity of the Holy Spirit? Dr.

Robinson thinks it does. "If there is any truth in the claim that the witness of the Holy Spirit with our spirits is in the unity of an indissoluble experience then we may equally claim that the acts in which that experience is incorporated may possess the same unity." (*Op. cit.*, p. 196).

From this point we may go on to ask whether the Sacraments as we value them today do indeed possess a unity with those of the early Church both in form and content. If they do not agree in form then it may well be that our ideas of their effective content may be defective also. To begin with let us consider contemporary Baptism, within our own communion, of course. We may justly contend that we have certainly preserved the New Testament form of total immersion, but can we say that our appreciation of the rite is the same? Is present day baptismal experience part of the conversion experience as it was in the days of the apostolic Church? May it not be that in emphasising Baptism as a sign of faith publicly expressed we have overshadowed Baptism as an indication of what God in Christ has done for us and the world before our faith? Thus the candidate becomes non-expectant as far as God's action in the Ordinance is concerned for we incline to inform our candidates not to expect to feel any different and warn them against emotionalism and the consequence is that their emotions are even more stirred because they feel themselves to be the centre of the picture and barely give thought to the fact that in Baptism they are united as in no other way with our Lord in His death, burial, and resurrection. Furthermore, does not our present baptismal thought tend to isolate the act from membership in the Church? There seems to have evolved amongst many of our folk the idea that Baptism is a separate act from joining the Church and both something extra to conversion. In some cases there is quite an appreciable lapse of time before the initial faith experience and Baptism with another lapse of time before the Christian is received into membership of the local community.

We might tell a similar story with regard to the Lord's Supper. Is it not a fact that our present form, with its neat cubes of bread and its convenient thimbles of wine, have all but destroyed the significance of the symbolism? The important thing at the Last Supper was what Christ did through the *breaking* of the bread; it was the action rather than the substance. It may be argued of course that our present method serves the interests of hygiene and order and this may be valid, but let us beware of sacrificing meaning to convenience in these things. Even if it is necessary to carry out our service as is common today there is no reason why the minister should not himself preserve the essential symbolism by his own action. The late Dr. Percy Evans when conducting college Communion services always broke a piece of bread and poured out

wine from a flask before the elements themselves were distributed. Then the content of Communion needs to be assessed as well. Do our folk expect to receive a blessing from partaking of the elements at the Lord's Supper apart from a reminder that we are recalling our Lord's death for us? Do we ministers lead them in the service to its fitting climax and do so in a way that its spiritual significance is not misunderstood? Are we afraid to regard the Ordinances as anything more than signs of faith because we have lost that sheer abandonment of scepticism which in the past expected to receive something in the Sacraments—and did—or because any suggestion of grace bestowed smacks of sacramentarianism and *ex opere operato* conceptions? Surely as we practice them today the participants of both ordinances being conscious and active and exercising however imperfectly their faith, are safeguard enough against any such ideas.

There seems reason to suppose, then, that we have no grounds to be complacent in our attitude towards the Sacraments and that there is room for closer thought and renewed interest in sacramental theology and practice within the denomination. Although it is not our purpose here to suggest even a tentative answer to the problems that have been aired, the following observations might serve as helps towards a clearer conception of the Ordinances on the part of the majority of our members.

(a) We ought to emphasise at all levels that the Ordinances are the Gospel in action, and the important thing is that they testify to what God in Christ has done and is doing for men rather than what we ourselves do. The part that faith plays is in receiving the benefits of which they speak and in making them effective for us. Faith does not condition the primary act of God though it is necessary for the reception of its benefits. (b) We must re-affirm the New Testament teaching regarding the Ordinances, and see that no one aspect is exaggerated to the detriment of another. These New Testament conceptions ought to be taught in our Sunday Schools and Bible classes as a normal part of the body of Christian truth. Why is it that we save up the specific teaching of the Ordinances until our young folk have made some profession of faith? We do seem to suggest by implication that these things are separate from initial Christian experience. Ought we not try to make it possible for conversion, Baptism and Church membership to be more closely associated in time and thought? In the early days of the Church these acts were practically simultaneous (cf. Selwyn on 1 *Peter*, p. 297). There was no need for delay because the right religious conditions existed and subsequent teaching made up for any lack. Similar conditions might be forthcoming if we treated our children as catechumens and not just as boys and girls who may or may not become Christians. It is a source of perplexity to many of our young

people and others, too, that though they have made a declaration of faith they are not able to enter fully into the life and privileges of the Church until they have been baptized. This is not to suggest that we baptize indiscriminately or make it easier, but it does seem to indicate that if our young people were thoroughly grounded in the meaning and importance of the Sacraments and made to see that they constitute accompaniments rather than extras to faith it would prevent the unfortunate time lapse. Moreover they would be spared an attack of spiritual indigestion brought about by trying to swallow in six or more weeks the whole content of the Christian life. Baptism, Communion, church membership, its privileges and responsibilities, and other kindred subjects. Baptism ought so to be taught that when the right time comes our young folk, and especially those whose parents are church members, will look upon Baptism as a joy to be experienced rather than a duty to be performed in order to please their parents. They will view Baptism as an act of loving obedience to and union with their Lord rather than an outward symbol of faith shorn of any real meaning and coldly bare. They will know it as a living experience full of the prophetic eloquence of which we have been thinking and consummate with their deepest yearnings and highest ideals. Lastly, we should encourage our folk to expect something from participating in the Ordinances both as onlookers at a baptismal service and active communicants at the Lord's Supper. Most folk expect to receive something from the preaching of the Word so why not from the Sacraments which are the Word in action? We should be the better for participating, not from any sense of duty performed but from grace received through faith. Both Ordinances ought to be a constant challenge to our zeal and devotion to Christ, our consciences ought to be stirred and our hearts open and receptive to receive the grace of God.

We have in our Ordinances living symbols that express more than anything else the fullness of the apostolic *kerygma* and its meaning for the world of men and women. Let us not abuse them by taking them for granted. Let us not weaken them by an inadequate conception of their theology. Let us hold fast to what we believe to be their New Testament significance even at the risk of being called legalistic or literalistic, not because others are entirely wrong but because we know them to be, by personal experience, holding fast to ideas that are really inadequate.

H. W. TRENT

## Some Free Church Reactions to Episcopacy

LOOKING back over the first half of this present century, O. Tomkins<sup>1</sup> is no doubt right when he suggests that perhaps the outstanding feature of the history of the Christian Church during these fifty years is the Ecumenical Movement. In this country, the Movement has roused considerable interest in recent years, largely as a result of the sermon, *A Step Forward in Church Relations*,<sup>2</sup> preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury on November 3, 1946, before the University of Cambridge. In it,<sup>3</sup> the Archbishop made the suggestion that the Free Churches in this country might adopt episcopacy and try it out on their own ground in order that ultimately they might grow to full communion with the Church of England.

This sermon was followed by a report of conversations between representatives of the Archbishop of Canterbury and representatives of the evangelical Free Churches in England,<sup>4</sup> dealing with the further implications of the Archbishop's sermon, whilst three other statements from different branches of the Church were also presented to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. The first to appear was *Catholicity: a Study of the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West*,<sup>5</sup> drawn up by Anglicans of the "catholic" school of thought. The second was edited by R. Newton Flew and Rupert E. Davies, representing the Free Church view-point, and entitled, *The Catholicity of Protestantism*.<sup>6</sup> The third was compiled by representatives of the "evangelical" school of thought in the Anglican Church and bore the title, *The Fullness of Christ*.<sup>7</sup> All these reports were concerned primarily with the underlying cause of the contrast or conflict between the catholic and protestant traditions, and the possibility of a synthesis at any particular point or points.<sup>8</sup>

Since that time the various branches of the non-episcopal churches in England (notably, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Congregational and the Methodist) have been concerned to discuss the question as to what would be involved if they attempted to take episcopacy into their systems. It is still too early perhaps to say whether anything definite will come from their consideration of the Archbishop's suggestion, but sufficient time has already elapsed for us to pause for a moment in order to take stock of the reactions thus far.

Such reactions are of two kinds :



(a) *Official Pronouncement.* The Methodist Conference of 1951 set up a committee to examine the Report that followed the Archbishop's sermon with the result that the Methodist Church, at the Conference of 1952, adopted an official reply<sup>9</sup> to the Archbishop, making clear precisely where they stood in the matter of episcopacy. The Baptist Union Council, similarly, appointed a special committee, as a result of which a report<sup>10</sup> was approved and published in March 1953. At the time of writing, no official word has yet come from the Presbyterians or Congregationalists.

(b) *Personal Opinion.* A Presbyterian, Mr. J. M. Ross, has written a pamphlet called *Presbyterian Bishops?*<sup>11</sup> It takes the form of a dialogue in which a certain "Telling" points out to other clergymen how episcopacy could be fitted into a Presbyterian system without the sacrifice of Presbyterian conviction. Though this is not to be taken as the voice of the whole Presbyterian Communion, it is not to be despised on that account for its writer was one of the Presbyterian representatives in the recent conversations which resulted in the report, *Church Relations in England*.

From the Congregational side there comes *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*<sup>12</sup> by Nathaniel Micklem, who besides being well qualified to speak from the point of view of the Congregational churches, was one of the two chairmen of the commission which drew up the Report on the Archbishop's Sermon, whilst much the same thing has been done for the Methodists by J. Lawson, *Full Communion with the Church of England*.<sup>13</sup> He discusses what it would mean for Methodists to take episcopacy into their system and, as might be expected, sees no real obstacles, though Rev. J. Huxtable<sup>14</sup> questions whether his view point is typical of Methodism.

From a slightly different angle, the Archbishop's suggestion has also been the subject of more than one address or article by prominent Free Churchmen. Dr. Hugh Martin, for instance, made *The Free Churches and Episcopacy*<sup>15</sup> the title of his address to the Free Church Congress, and Dr. E. A. Payne dealt with the question, "What are the Free Church Objections to Episcopacy?" in an article in *Theology*,<sup>16</sup> bearing the same title as Dr. Martin's address. Other articles in *Theology* have included one by L. Hodgson on "The Religious Value of Episcopacy,"<sup>17</sup> which was prepared for the Anglican-Free Church conversations in September 1949, and one by G. Every on "The Historic Episcopate,"<sup>18</sup> consisting of three objections to the view of the ministry as presented in K. E. Kirk's *The Apostolic Ministry*. In *The Ecumenical Review* for January 1952, two articles were published on "The Apostolic Succession as an Ecumenical Issue";<sup>19</sup> the Anglican point of view was put forward in one by F. Gray, and a reply to it was provided by Henri d'Espine.

This is by no means to be regarded as anything like a complete bibliography, but merely serves to give the reader some indication of the amount of literature which has been produced in a comparatively short space of time.<sup>20</sup>

## I.

When first confronted with the Archbishop's Sermon, the immediate reaction of the Free Churches is to ask why such a suggestion is made at all, and the simple answer is that it is intended to be a step towards reunion. This may seem trite but it is important. The suggestion is not made with a view to uniformity, but because it is felt that if the Free Churches have an episcopal ministry they will at least be one stage nearer to intercommunion, and therefore to reunion. To regard this suggestion as an end in itself is to miss the all-important point that such parallel Churches could only be tolerated as a temporary stage on the road to full unity.<sup>21</sup> The underlying assumption, of course, is that any re-united Church will have episcopacy in it somewhere, and E. W. Thompson, in a paper prepared for the Methodist Faith and Order Committee,<sup>22</sup> even goes so far as to maintain that since those Churches based upon a Presbyterian, Independent or Methodist polity form but a small minority, when compared to the Episcopal Churches throughout the world, it is reasonable that unless there be something contrary to Scripture or inherently unchristian in episcopacy the views and practice of the many should prevail rather than those of the few. It is, however, an argument which will not commend itself to every Free Churchman,<sup>23</sup> and even those who are inclined to accept it will want to pause first in order to understand further what is involved.

He is justified in asking, for example, whether any advantages are to be found in the episcopal government of the Church, other than as a step to reunion. Strangely enough this is a question which has scarcely been dealt with, though Ross<sup>24</sup> has drawn attention to five points in this respect :

- (a) it would ensure a good Moderator of Presbytery whereas the current practice of appointing the most senior minister to the position does not necessarily do so.
- (b) a permanent official would be more satisfactory than one that changes every year. Ross<sup>25</sup> does insist, however, that such an official would be appointed by the Presbytery, subject to ratification by the General Assembly or its Executive Commission, and E. W. Thompson<sup>26</sup> also makes it clear that in any Episcopal order, which Methodists would accept, the Bishop would be chosen by the Church and would be, in effect, a *Constitutional Episcopate*.

- (c) To have someone, to whom a congregation where trouble was brewing could turn, would enable that trouble to be solved far more quickly than if it had to go through the slower and more cumbrous constitutional method of appeal to Presbytery.
- (d) Such a person would be able to keep in closer touch with the various congregations under his wing.
- (e) He would be an excellent person to whom young ministers could turn for counsel and advice.

All the advantages of episcopacy which Ross here claims would result from its adoption are already enjoyed by the Baptist Churches through their Area Superintendents. Yet no-one would dare to equate a Baptist Area Superintendent with a Bishop, neither would the Baptists be anxious to change the status of their Superintendents to fall into line with the Bishop's suggestion.

Thus it is apparent that apart from the question of reunion there is no valid reason for the Free Churches to take episcopacy into their system. Many would claim, no doubt, that that in itself ought to be sufficient reason, but let us first see what the cost of episcopacy would be.

## II

In the first place, it would mean the acceptance by the Free Churches of the 'historic episcopate.' That is to say, it is not sufficient for us to enlarge the powers of our Moderators and Superintendents, nor in fact to adopt the name of 'Bishop'; they must also submit to consecration through Bishops of one or more of the historical Episcopal Churches.<sup>27</sup> With this also go the theories of validity and Divine grace.<sup>28</sup> This is where the Free Churches want to object most.

It must be admitted that we are being asked to accept episcopacy without any particular theory of it, and that the same liberty of interpretation will be allowed as is at present permitted in the Anglican Communion<sup>29</sup> but, as we shall see presently, this is by no means an unmixed blessing. P. T. Forsyth<sup>30</sup> points out, for instance, that such a plea does not cohere, since if a fact is to have a monopoly claimed for it, it can only be in virtue of a theory of it establishing such a right. It cannot be as mere fact.

The Free Churches welcome this liberty of interpretation<sup>31</sup> and, where there is a leaning towards episcopacy, feel that the Free Churches could develop their own interpretation and later offer it as one facet of the truth to the rest of Christendom. Even K. D. Mackenzie<sup>32</sup> feels it necessary to point out that no one is being asked to take the episcopal system of the Church of England as a model, and allows the possibility that we might be able to teach episcopalians how to improve episcopacy.

Be that as it may, it is important to know what we are accept-

ing before we accept it.<sup>33</sup> E. A. Payne<sup>34</sup> maintains that no small part of the objection of the Free Churches to episcopacy lies in the fact that it has become difficult to the point of impossibility to find an agreed definition of what episcopacy really is, but Bishop Stephen Neill<sup>35</sup> makes it plain that in modern discussions on the subject 'the historic episcopate' is meant simply to express the element of historic continuity "and nothing else." If such is the case, the reply of the Methodist Church<sup>36</sup> is a clear rejection of it, and no doubt the other Free Churches would say the same. Indeed the Free Church objections to such an interpretation have been clearly and concisely stated by E. A. Payne,<sup>37</sup> who finds both Biblical and theological grounds for his argument. Finally he concludes by drawing attention to certain protestants' unfortunate experience at the hands of Bishops, and contrasts that with the indubitable fact that God's spirit has been given even to the non-episcopal branches of the Christian Church.

But would anything less than this satisfy? It should be borne in mind that the Report itself has been disowned by the Anglo-Catholic Council, which has stated that either the reunion of, or intercommunion between, the Church of England and a body that remained wholly or partly non-episcopal in its ministry would involve discarding the theological basis of episcopacy to which the Church of England is committed.<sup>38</sup> If the 'catholic' party in the Church of England remains firm on this point it seems quite certain that reunion will never come, but it should not be overlooked that for the Church of England to adopt such a position<sup>39</sup> it would mean that they are demanding more of those who unite with them than they demand at present of their own members, since not all they accept the sacerdotal theory of apostolic succession.<sup>40</sup>

We must not fire our shots at the 'catholic' party in the Church of England, however, as if they were the only "awkward" people.<sup>41</sup> L. A. Zander,<sup>42</sup> speaking for the Eastern Orthodox Church,<sup>43</sup> says that for them the episcopacy is essentially a eucharistic institution, for the Bishop is the one who celebrates the sacrament; he is the priest performing the "un-bloody" sacrifice. Consequently, where there is no priesthood, there is no episcopate, but only the administrative functions of a senior pastor, even if he is called a Bishop and has received this name in the order of apostolic succession.

If we have our eye on the world-church (and what else can ecumenicity mean?) it clearly does matter what interpretation of the apostolic succession we have.<sup>44</sup> The Report<sup>45</sup> itself makes it clear that episcopacy cannot be offered to or accepted by the Free Churches as a mere matter of expediency or in a completely undefined form, but it has been pointed out that there is grave danger

of this being the case,<sup>46</sup> and this seems to refute the suggestion<sup>47</sup> that we might first 'try out' episcopacy on our own ground. The Abbot of Nashdorn<sup>48</sup> maintains that the Church of England ought really to have developed a clearer doctrine of episcopacy for themselves before offering to hand it over to another body.

If, therefore, the 'catholic' half of Christendom is going to say 'No' to reunion unless the 'historic episcopate' is an essential part of it, it seems that all the discussions on ecumenism might as well stop now so far as the reactions of the Free Churches hitherto can be estimated. Henri d' Espine<sup>49</sup> says, "I make so bold as to claim that the doctrine of the apostolic succession, and the ecclesiology it implies, form the great obstacle to the unification of the Church, since those who maintain it are unable, much as they would often like to, to state that the non-episcopal Churches are part of the Church of Christ," but Hodgson<sup>50</sup> makes it clear that he does not believe it is right for the Anglican Communion to interpose obstacles in the way of sharing their episcopal orders with others by demanding of them a repudiation of their existing ministries and sacraments, or subscription to theories involving their repudiation. Such a view sounds strangely like P. T. Forsyth's remarks in 1918<sup>51</sup> when he said that from the episcopal side there must come frank recognition of our existing orders, before any conditions can be discussed of regularising us in the episcopal system.

Supposing, however, that some way round that problem could be seen, what have the Free Churches to say then? Here we are able to turn to more positive material, for few Free Churchmen will go so far as to reject episcopacy in all its forms. Craig,<sup>52</sup> for instance, is willing to admit that if by historic episcopacy all that is meant is some adaptation of a diocesan form of organisation, that would be acceptable to all but the most rabid independents. Indeed, the protestants claim that they themselves have a succession which is even more valid than that of the episcopate, and that is the faithful preaching of the Word, the believing celebration of the sacraments and the exercise of Gospel discipline.<sup>53</sup> Here, at least, is a theory which cannot easily be gainsaid, which is more than can be said either for the three-fold ministry<sup>54</sup> or for the evolution of the episcopate from the apostolate.<sup>55</sup> How far, then, can the Free Churches go in adopting the form of episcopacy?

### III

In order to answer this question it is necessary to examine the *functions* of a Bishop. According to the Report,<sup>56</sup> his functions are three:

- (a) ordination;
- (b) decision, in concurrence with Presbyters and laity, in any suggested changes in matters of doctrine and polity;

(c) pastoral oversight of ministers and congregations.

Concerning ordination, Micklem<sup>57</sup> finds little difficulty. He points out first how the custom of laying-on of hands at ordination is rapidly becoming the custom for Congregationalists, and it is asking but a small thing to suggest that the "Bishop" should be among those taking part in this ceremony. Ross<sup>58</sup> has a similar finding from the Presbyterian point of view, but the Baptist report<sup>59</sup> very carefully points out that, for them, ordination is the task of the whole church, and to say 'that someone must of necessity by virtue of his office take part in such a service because, if he does not, there will be no regular or proper ordination, would be to introduce a new and alien element.' Micklem<sup>60</sup> and Ross<sup>61</sup> also agree similarly regarding changes of doctrine, the former commenting that he can as little envisage the Congregational Union changing its doctrinal basis against the judgment of its leading ministers as without the consent of deacons and church-members. Ross notes that it would necessitate a change in Presbyterian policy in that any such proposals would not only have to go before the Presbyteries, but would also have to be approved by the "Bishops" voting as a separate body, but he feels there is something to be said in favour of such a change, in that it would be difficult for Bishops to guide their Presbyteries on principles of which they did not approve. No comment is made on the question of pastoral oversight, presumably because this has already been incorporated in most Free Church policy.

What are we to say concerning authority, for the very suggestion of Bishops seems to strike at the very roots of independent Church government under the guidance of the Spirit? Micklem<sup>62</sup> has been a staunch advocate of our independence and has claimed that our objection to episcopacy lies simply in the claim of the Bishop to rule by virtue of his office. He even maintains<sup>63</sup> that we have asserted the independence of the local congregation as the sole Congregational principle. In the same work, however, he is careful to point out that true Congregationalism involves a mutual interdependence of all the Churches,<sup>64</sup> and he quotes Henry Dexter to the effect that Congregationalism differs from Independency by its recognition of this practical fellowship between the Churches,<sup>65</sup> whilst, in 1917, P. T. Forsyth<sup>66</sup> emphasised the weakness of autonomy. E. A. Payne<sup>67</sup> has also been careful to draw attention to the fact that whilst among the early Baptists a group of believers which duly observed the sacraments and exercised discipline over its members might claim to be a Church, it must be in communion with other local Churches. He also goes on to say how that although the decisions of the "assembly" could not be imposed upon the particular Churches, yet the spiritual authority of such an assembly was, in fact, very great.

Thus, it would appear that modern independence has lost some of its real basis. Micklem,<sup>68</sup> however, sees something akin to episcopal authority in the Congregational Union where the keeping of the list of recognised ministers is concerned, as well as in the legal authority concerning trust funds. At the same time, he stresses the fact that every Bishop uses his legal authority as little as possible, working mainly by persuasion and exhortation, and in this way he sees no real gulf between episcopacy and independency. To the present writer, however, the important point seems to lie in the fact of the body imposing the authority rather than in the way it is imposed; authority might very profitably be imposed on occasions, but it should be by a body comprising both ministers and laymen, rather than by a body of ministers alone or, even worse, by an individual minister.

We turn next to the question of the lay-administration of the sacraments. Here again the divergence is not so great as it might appear at first sight. The Report<sup>69</sup> states the matter simply when it says that in the Free Churches which practice the lay-celebrations of Holy Communion it is infrequent, and in almost every case depends on formal authorisation by the Church to meet a special situation or a special need. This is a position with which most of the Free Churches would agree.<sup>70</sup>

The difficulty concerning episcopal confirmation is greater. The Report<sup>71</sup> expresses the hope that in due course episcopal confirmation would come to be widely, in fact generally, used in the Free Church. This would lead to a great revelation in Free Church practice, as Micklem<sup>72</sup> has pointed out and one which he believes would not quickly commend itself to us, though he is careful to draw attention to the fact that there is something to be said for having the admission of new members on one day in the year and inviting the Moderator to preside at such a service. Such a change in practice would not violate any Congregational principle. The real question, however, is whether such a change would be desirable, and it should be remembered that it is only within the last hundred years that episcopal confirmation has become universal in practice in the Church of England, owing partly to improved communications and partly to the insistence of the Tractarians on its necessity.<sup>73</sup> The Methodists, at any rate, are doubtful about the desirability of such a change in method, but declare that if no exclusive claims were made for episcopacy, and if Presbyters were associated with Bishops in the rite, the possibility of episcopal confirmation becoming the general practice might come to be sympathetically considered.<sup>74</sup> Since such a possibility is envisaged in the Report itself<sup>75</sup> this is perhaps the most likely solution to the difficulty.

This brings us to the point when it is convenient to draw

attention to some of the ways in which this suggestion of the Archbishop would necessitate certain changes in Anglican practice, for it is often asserted that the Free Churches are being asked to do all the 'giving'. Ross<sup>76</sup> draws attention to three ways in which the Anglican Church is called upon to make sacrifices :

- (a) the Church of England would have to relax the rule regarding episcopal confirmation as necessary for admission to Holy Communion.<sup>77</sup>
- (b) Many Anglicans would think it illogical to have inter-communion with a Church which remained on terms of inter-communion with other (non-episcopal) Churches with which the Church of England cannot be in communion.<sup>78</sup>
- (c) To many Anglicans it is a cardinal principle that the Bishop of any place is the symbol and focus of Christian unity in that locality, which would be contradicted if there were more than one Bishop in the same place, all in communion with each other.<sup>79</sup>

How, then, are we to sum up the reactions of the Free Churches to episcopacy? As regards the historic episcopate the answer is an emphatic 'No', unless it can remain only as permitted theory.<sup>80</sup> In other ways it appears possible to modify Free Church practices in such a way as to come one stage nearer to the Anglican Church. Most people now feel that some such modifications would be desirable in the interests of reunion, but it should not be forgotten that we are, in reality, dealing with two fundamentally different kinds of Church.<sup>81</sup> It would indeed be a sad day if, even in the interests of reunion, by a slight change here and a modification there, we finally signed away those convictions for which our forefathers fought so dearly and which have undoubtedly made a contribution to the Church in Christendom. The Archbishop's suggestion is to be greatly appreciated. The question for us now is how far we can go towards reunion without losing what we have always believed we held in trust for Him who is the Head of the Church.

A. GILMORE

<sup>1</sup> *The Church in the Purpose of God*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Church Relations in England*, pp. 5-12.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 13-48.

<sup>5</sup> Dacre Press, London, 1950.

<sup>6</sup> Lutterworth Press, London, 1950.

<sup>7</sup> S.P.C.K., London, 1950.

<sup>8</sup> *Catholicity*, p. 9; *The Fullness of Christ*, p. vii; *The Catholicity of Protestantism*, p. 5.



<sup>9</sup> *The Report of the Faith and Order Committee on "Church Relations in England,"* Epworth Press.

<sup>10</sup> *Church Relations in England,* Carey Kingsgate Press.

<sup>11</sup> Presbyterian Publishing Committee, London, 1952.

<sup>12</sup> Independent Press, London.

<sup>13</sup> Epworth Press, London; cf. E. W. Thompson, "Can the Methodist Church take Episcopacy into its system?" in *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 40 (June, 1951), pp. 11-16.

<sup>14</sup> *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 43 (June, 1952), p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> For an abridged version of this address, see *The Free Church Chronicle*, June, 1952.

<sup>16</sup> *Theology*, vol. LIV (1951), pp. 209-217. This article was also published separately in 1952 by the Carey Kingsgate Press, London.

<sup>17</sup> *Theology*, vol. LIV (1951), pp. 281-284. Cf. *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 41 (November, 1951), pp. 13f.

<sup>18</sup> *Theology*, vol. LV (1952), pp. 83-87. Cf. *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 43 (June, 1952), pp. 7f.

<sup>19</sup> *Ecumenical Review*, vol. IV (1952), pp. 139-161. Cf. *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 43 (June, 1952), pp. 9ff.

<sup>20</sup> For a fuller bibliography on the Ecumenical Movement, see O. Tomkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-109.

<sup>21</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 46; Micklem, *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*, p. 12; The Methodist Church, *Report of the Faith and Order Committee on "Church Relations in England,"* p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 42 (February, 1952), pp. 15-20.

<sup>23</sup> It may be noted further that the other two arguments which E. W. Thompson puts forward here in favour of episcopacy will also be questioned by many non-episcopalians. He argues, for instance, that the Episcopate, more than any other institution of the Church, has been the means by which the organic continuity of the Church has been maintained through the centuries, and that there is an indefeasible reasonableness about the Episcopate, in that it is the embodiment in the Church of the principle that a great society must have a great minister.

<sup>24</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 5f.

<sup>25</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> *loc. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> Abbot of Nashdom, "Brief Notes on Certain Points in the Report, 'Church Relations in England,'" in *Faith and Unity*, No. 59, Vol. II (April, 1951), p. 250.

<sup>29</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> *Congregationalism and Reunion*, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> The Methodist Church, *The Report of the Faith and Order Committee on "Church Relations in England,"* pp. 4, 6; Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Micklem, *op. cit.*, pp. 14f.

<sup>32</sup> K. E. Kirk, *The Apostolic Ministry*, pp. 465-466.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. H. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *The Free Churches and Episcopacy*, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> *The Ministry of the Church*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *op. cit.*, *passim*. Cf. G. Every, "The Historic Episcopate," in *Theology*, vol. LV (1952), pp. 83-87.

<sup>38</sup> *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 41 (November, 1951), p. 8; *The Times*, September 21, 1951.

<sup>39</sup> The possibility of the Church of England being swayed by the 'Catholic' party is not to be scorned. C. T. Craig (*The One Church in the Light of the New Testament*, p. 65), reminds us how the Church of England

had to postpone for five years a decision on whether those who had entered the Church of South India were still in the Church. Obviously the 'Catholic' party held the upper hand on this matter. (cf. Henri d'Espine, "The Apostolic Succession as an Ecumenical Issue," in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. IV (1952), pp. 154-155.)

<sup>40</sup> Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>41</sup> cf. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> *Vision and Action*, pp. 168f.

<sup>43</sup> And incidentally for the Anglo-Catholics. cf. L. B. Haselmayer, "Priest and Presbyter," in *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 44 (November, 1952), p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> cf. M. B. Dewey in *The Approach to Christian Unity*, pp. 30-31; E. W. Thompson, Report of an Address given at a meeting of the Council of the Friends of Reunion held on Sept. 11, 1951, and printed in the *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 41 (November, 1951), p. 3; A. G. Hebert, "Priest and Presbyter," in *Friends and Reunion Bulletin*, No. 44 (November, 1952), p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 38.

<sup>46</sup> Abbot of Nashdom, "Brief Notes on certain Points in the Report on 'Church Relations in England,'" in *Faith and Unity*, No. 59, vol. II (April, 1951), pp. 248-249; the relevant extract is also quoted in the *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, No. 41 (November, 1951), p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 43; cf. Micklem, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>48</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>49</sup> "The Apostolic Succession as an Ecumenical Issue," in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. IV (1952), p. 159.

<sup>50</sup> *Apostolic Succession and Christian Unity*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> *Congregationalism and Reunion* (1918 ed.), pp. 13f.

<sup>52</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>53</sup> Micklem, *Congregationalism and the Church Catholic*, pp. 53ff.

<sup>54</sup> B. S. Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 226.

<sup>55</sup> J. P. Hickinbotham, in S. Neill, *The Ministry of the Church*, p. 39.

<sup>56</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*, pp. 16f.

<sup>58</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 4. Ross does point out, however (*op. cit.*, p. 3) that the Bishop would not by himself determine the fitness of candidates for ordination.

<sup>59</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>60</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>61</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> *Congregationalism and the Church Catholic*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>63</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>64</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>65</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>66</sup> *Congregationalism and Reunion* (1918 ed.), p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> *The Fellowship of Believers* (enlarged edition), pp. 29f.

<sup>68</sup> *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*, pp. 17f.

<sup>69</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 42.

<sup>70</sup> Micklem, *Congregationalism and the Church Catholic*, p. 59; Micklem, *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*, pp. 19ff.; *The Lord's Supper: Baptist Statement*, pp. 44f.

<sup>71</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 45.

<sup>72</sup> *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>73</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> The Methodist Church, *The Report of the Faith and Order Committee on "Church Relations in England,"* p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> *Church Relations in England*, p. 40.

<sup>76</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>77</sup> *cf. Church Relations in England*, p. 45.

<sup>78</sup> It may conveniently be added at this point that the Free Churches welcome the point that if a Free Church accepted episcopacy and subsequently entered on terms of inter-communion with the Church of England, this would not effect the relationship between that Church and other Free Churches which may still be quite separate from the Church of England (*Church Relations in England*, pp. 38, 45). They make it emphatic, moreover, that unless some such clause were inserted they would in no way consider the suggestion. (Mickletham, *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*, pp. 11f.; The Methodist Church, *Report of the Faith and Order Committee on "Church Relations in England,"* pp. 4, 6). There are those in the Church of England, however, who believe that this may well prove an insuperable obstacle to Anglicans. (The Abbot of Nashdom, *op. cit.*, p. 249.)

<sup>79</sup> *cf. Church Relations in England*, pp. 25-26, 45.

<sup>80</sup> Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>81</sup> Henri d'Espine, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

*The Claims of Christ. A Study in His Self-Portraiture*, by Hugh Martin, (S.C.M. Press, 7s.).

Dr. Martin has given us a sane and well written little book which is free from some of the extravagancies sometimes found under this heading. He seeks to affirm the Person of Christ as the centre of Christian faith. The author is sympathetic with the difficulty felt by some with the phrase "The claims of Christ"—not from scepticism but from a reluctance to think of His insistence upon personal dignity and upon particular categories and titles. Nevertheless Jesus did associate His own person intimately with the Divine mission. Dr. Martin maintains that the view that Jesus made claims for the Kingdom and not for Himself is a mistaken antithesis. He goes on to examine terms used explicitly by our Lord—Son, Son of Man, concepts implied in His words, such as Servant of the Lord, Saviour, and sayings which have a deep implication, such as those on forgiveness.

But Dr. Martin's is no 'jigsaw' method of fitting sayings together, but to let the Person of Jesus make its own challenge through the words spoken. It may be summed up in a sentence in the closing chapter: "We have been concerned with the title Jesus gave Himself and with the claims implicit in them and in His deeds. Many more are the titles given Him by His followers. For hardly less astonishing than His claims is the fact that men acknowledged His right to make them: that the Church was born and the New Testament written."

W. S. DAVIES

## The Signatories of the Orthodox Confession of 1679

ON 30th January, 1679,<sup>1</sup> fifty-four General Baptists met, probably at Aylesbury, to sign the Fifty Articles drawn up by Thomas Monk, Messenger in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, in order to unite all orthodox Baptists in opposition to the heresies maintained by the Kent and Sussex churches which cried up Matthew Caffyn "as their Battle Axe and Weapon of Warre."<sup>2</sup> The General Baptists in London and the south-eastern counties were strongly influenced by the anti-Trinitarian movement among the Mennonites and Remonstrants in the Low Countries; the Bucks. and Herts. Baptists, on the other hand, had English Lollard antecedents and regarded these continental tendencies with deep suspicion. "The soil had been prepared in the district by the Lollards. Foxe tells us of Hardings, Bennets and Treachers, of Dosset, Willis, Hobbs, Lee, Norman, Widmore, House, Dell, between 1506 and 1521 around Amersham, Chesham, Hitchenden (Hughenden), Missenden, Upton and Wycombe. All these names reappear after a century and a half in Baptist churches."<sup>3</sup> Other surnames could be added. It is a happy coincidence, and perhaps more, that Richard Monk was leading the Buckinghamshire reformers in 1428 and Thomas Monk in 1654-79. The Orthodox Confession itself mentions "our worthy and famous antients." The connection was with the orthodox rather than the radical wing of Lollardy; the extremists became Quakers, and the Baptists in and around Buckinghamshire remained "stiff in their mode of faith"; they preserved the three Creeds, the threefold order of the ministry, and the historic structure of the Christian year. Like their Lollard ancestors, they rejected any form of music in worship. Their church discipline was severe, and they refused to seek any indulgence from the State. Within the Baptist denomination they were noted for constancy under persecution and strict adherence to the faith of Nicaea and Chalcedon.

It is unfortunate that Crosby, on whose work many subsequent historians have relied, was less well informed concerning the orthodox than the Caffynite wing of the General Baptists. He did not even transcribe the names of those who signed the Fifty Articles, and it is time that justice was done to them. Their firm stand arrested the drift into Socinianism, and their restatement of the doctrines of grace, a century before Fuller's, helped to reconcile

Arminians and moderate Calvinists. Mr. Eustace Little (1827-1921), treasurer of Ford, drew attention nearly fifty years ago to the importance of local records in presenting a more balanced picture than Crosby's. I have had access to some of his papers through the kindness of the Rev. Maxwell Berry of Princes Risborough.

Of the 54 "stars of the first magnitude" who subscribed the Confession, some 44 came from Buckinghamshire, six from Hertfordshire (including three from hamlets then in Bucks. but now in Herts.), and probably two from Bedfordshire, one from Berkshire and one from Surrey. Thirteen of the signatories were members of the church at Cuddington or Ford, which then comprised meetings throughout the Vale of Aylesbury and in the Chilterns; twelve or thirteen came from Benjamin Keach's old church at Winslow and six from the church at Wing, which between them covered most of North Bucks.; some ten others belonged to the church at Berkhamsted, Chesham and Tring, three came from Aylesbury, and at least one from Olney. The countrymen outnumbered the townsmen by about three to one. All the known signatories either had private means or followed secular callings. They included five gentlemen, two shopkeepers later described as gentlemen, a bookseller and publisher, two grocers, thirteen yeomen, farmers or husbandmen, a labourer, two carpenters, a currier, a retired naval officer, a barber-surgeon, and an ostler.

The following notes are based mainly on the Bucks. Quarter-Sessions records, calendared by Wm. le Hardy and G. Ll. Reckitt, the Episcopal Visitation Book of 1662, the Clergy Returns of 1669, the Church Books of Ford and Amersham and the minutes of the General Assembly, General Association and Buckinghamshire (or Aylesbury) Quarterly Association, edited by Dr. W. T. Whitley. Crosby, Taylor and Urwick made use of some records not now readily accessible. Other sources are mentioned in the text or foot-notes. I have taken no great pains to search parish registers,

where to be born and die  
Of one and all makes all the history.

It is of more consequence to know what a man did in between. I have, however, been enabled through the kindness of the Vicar of Dinton and Cuddington to make use of his registers, now kept in the Muniment Room of Aylesbury Museum, but have consulted other documents preserved there only through the calendar published by the Records Branch of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

1. THOMAS MONK of Bierton, farmer and theologian, is best known as one of the Twelve Confessors of Aylesbury, probably the last English Protestants to be sentenced to death for their faith. At some time before 1654 he was elected and ordained Messenger or Bishop of the General Baptist churches in Mid-Bucks. and Herts. The churches in North Bucks. were separately

organised under John Hartnoll, thatcher. With twelve other Messengers and twelve Elders, Monk signed the Humble Representation and Vindication, disclaiming any Fifth-Monarchist sympathies and professing willingness to submit to the civil power and to assist in public affairs, provided that liberty of conscience was maintained. In 1656 Monk and other leaders subscribed eighteen resolutions of the General Assembly, which declared confirmation by laying on of hands essential to communion, allowed recourse to common law, and prohibited mixed marriage, reckless speculation and the resignation of elders. One of these resolutions foreshadowed the coming struggle with Matthew Caffyn. "How is Jesus Christ David's Root and offspring? Thus: he that was with God and was God, as he was such, was David's Root. And he that was with God and was God, that same was made flesh, made of or born of a woman of the seed of David, and so was David's offspring." Caffyn held that Christ was "born of a woman" but not "made of a woman," His flesh not being derived from that of the Virgin but miraculously formed in her womb. In his later tract, *Envy's bitterness corrected*, Caffyn declared that the Eutychnian error "at no time was, nor yet is by me believed"; but he held strongly that since the Fall man's body is under condemnation, and he therefore could not believe that "the Redemption of Mankind is no more pretious than the Death, and Blood-shedding of a body of Flesh, in the fallen Estate." Caffyn's friends said that he only meant that since Christ's natural body was formed by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was not subject to the law of sin; but there seems no doubt that Caffyn taught that Christ's body was not derived from the Virgin Mother, and was not a true human body similar to ours. Caffyn's form of words concerning the Incarnation was "that the true Messiah, whom the Father hath sealed to be the Blessed Saviour of the World, was conceived in the Virgin Mary, and there took our Nature, and our Form, and so was, in all points like unto his Brethren, sin excepted; the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, confessed to be, while the first Man was of the Earth, Earthy, the second Man the Lord from Heaven." This was read by some in a docetic, by others in an Arian sense. A Declaration of Faith issued in 1660 by Monk, Caffyn and others was also rather vague concerning the Incarnation; yet it became the standard brief confession of the General Baptists, was ratified by the Assembly in 1663, edited and versified by Thomas Grantham, reaffirmed with his additions in 1691 and revised at the instance of the General Association in 1702, and is still accepted by some American churches. Various recensions have been reprinted by Crosby, Underhill, McGlothlin and Whitley. The subscribers declared themselves "not only resolved to suffer Persecution, to the loss of their Goods, but also Life itself," rather than abandon their belief and practice. This profession was soon to be tested.

On 3rd May, 1661 Thomas Monk and six others issued the famous tract *Sion's Groans for her distressed*, a dignified and moving plea for universal toleration. Soon afterwards Monk, Caffyn, Grantham, Hartnoll and others presented a petition from the General Baptists of Bucks., Kent and Sussex, Lincolnshire, Dorset and Notts., asking that the Declaration of Breda be fulfilled. The printer, S.D., was probably the mysterious Simon Dover who published seven other Baptist pamphlets this year. The Dover family is often mentioned in the Ford records until 1788, but no Simon occurs.

The petition went unanswered, and persecution soon began in earnest. In July, 1662 Robert Sanderson, Bishop of Lincoln, began his primary visitation of Buckinghamshire and demanded that churchwardens should supply detailed information concerning Anabaptists and other sectaries. Thomas Monk was among fourteen dissenters (five Romanist and nine Protestant) denounced on 24th September by one of the Bierton churchwardens, the other two having failed to act. He was charged with "con-

temptuously absenting himself from the publique congregacon" and having four children unbaptized. Others accused were his wife Mary, William and Elizabeth Monk and Thomas and Mary Whitchurch. On 11th October the Bierton churchwardens reported that "William and Thomas Monke who usually do absent themselves from divine service are now in the goale for this county by the order of the justices of the peace, but whether for that reason or for being taken at conventicles wee are not certainly informed." On 30th September proceedings were started against twenty-one Aylesbury Baptists, including Stephen Dagnall (No. 2 below) elder of the church at Aylesbury, William Whitchurch, glover and deacon, Thomas Hill, linen-draper, William Welch, junior,<sup>4</sup> tallow-chandler, Nathaniel Elliot,<sup>5</sup> carpenter, Mary Jackman or Jakeman, a widow with six children, Samuel Hunt, William Trulove, John Verey, and Richard Dalby, schoolmaster, who fled to London. Before any further steps were taken the Bucks. magistrates decided not to wait for the ecclesiastical courts. Within a few weeks they filled the county gaol with nonconformists and had to secure two large annexes. Next they determined to revive "the old practice of punishing Hereticks with banishment and death."<sup>6</sup> An Act of 1593 provided that conventiclers could, after three months' imprisonment, be declared felons without benefit of clergy, unless they either conformed or left the country after swearing not to return without permission. Proceedings were taken under this statute against Dagnall, Hill, Welch, Elliot, William Whitchurch, Richard Wilkinson,<sup>7</sup> William Miles (see No. 26), John Toveye,<sup>8</sup> William Franklin, a shoemaker called Brandon,<sup>9</sup> Ann (or Jane) Turner, spinster, and widow Jackman, one of whose children fifty years later related the proceedings to Benjamin Stinton.<sup>10</sup> According to her account those charged included Thomas Monk, but a copy of the Royal Warrant of 20th July, 1663<sup>11</sup> mentions only William Monke; both had been in prison since October, and Thomas's name may have dropped out in transcription; alternatively, if the Confessors were really twelve in number and not thirteen, William may be a slip for Thomas, as there were four other Williams in the list.

The prisoners threw themselves on the mercy of the court, declaring that they could neither conform nor abjure their native country. After a short adjournment, during which several magistrates left the bench in protest, the chairman, Thomas Farrer of Aylesbury (known to Stinton and Crosby as Farrow) sentenced them to death. They were returned to gaol and their goods were seized. Brandon, overcome by his wife's entreaties and by the fear of death, recanted and took the oaths, but later returned in the most abject distress to the prison and asked to be allowed to die with the others.

The Baptists were not numerous in Aylesbury, which had no tradition of Lollardy, but many, perhaps most, of the townfolk had Puritan sympathies; shops were closed and business came almost to a standstill. Meanwhile, Thomas Monk's son of the same name had ridden to London. William Kiffin, the most influential of the Particular Baptists, introduced him to Clarendon, who laid the case before Charles II. The King, who genuinely disliked persecution and needed Kiffin's money, seemed surprised that such a sentence was possible and granted an immediate reprieve, with which young Monk rode back to Aylesbury. His father and the rest remained in prison until next Assizes, when a pardon arrived and they were released. Next year a new and milder Conventicle Act was passed, but the older statute was not repealed, and as late as 1683 an attempt to invoke its provisions against a Quaker of Bristol failed only because of technical errors in the indictment.

After his release Monk continued to preach assiduously in all parts of his diocese. He was reported in 1669 from Bierton, where he and Stephen Dagnall taught thirty inconsiderable people in the house of Anthony Darvall, maltster (still active in 1690); from Redbourn in Herts., where he and John Russell preached; and from the old priory of St. Margaret de

Bosco which had become the mansion of George Cathedral (No. 36 below): The present writer's ancestors were then living a mile from St. Margaret's, and probably often worshipped there.

Persecution was fairly active during 1670-71, though in Bucks. neither civil nor ecclesiastical court records have survived. When in 1672 Charles II issued his Declaration of Indulgence Monk and the elders of his churches decided not to apply for licences. Only one Baptist in Bucks, was licensed, Thomas Taylor of Wycombe, lace buyer. Monk's fears were justified; the licences were soon recalled and sometimes served as evidence against those who had accepted them.

During the years of severe persecution, all Baptists made common cause, but even before the Indulgence the divisions within their ranks were widening, especially the cleavage caused by the opinion that Christ's natural body was not made of the seed of David. Richard Haines, in his pamphlet *New Lords, new laws*, calls this "an error that Caffin hath preached up, and owned, and had printed it too, had not some of the Brethren prevented it." The anonymous pamphlet *A Search for Schism*, probably published in 1668, enquires "whether ye may not . . . if that Notion of Christ's not taking flesh of the Virgin get but Proselytes enough, adopt that also into the number of Fundamentals." This startled Grantham in Lincolnshire. "Many of our Congregations never heard of such a thing, till the Searchers became their informers . . . I can do no less than protest against that Opinion as a most dangerous conceit."<sup>12</sup> John Griffith, writing in London, admitted that the "wicked and absurd opinion" that Christ was not of one substance with the Father "did get Proselytes, and found opportunity to make a Schism in the Body of Christ."<sup>13</sup> About this time Monk had several conferences with Caffin's adherents. They asked of what matter the flesh of Christ was made; did He not bring it out of Heaven? "Not long since I communed with some men, who very confidently did affirm, that the eternal Word did not take any flesh of the Virgin Mary . . . it was Heavenly matter, viz.: the Divine Nature was turned into Flesh in the Virgin's Womb."<sup>14</sup> Monk found worse heresies than this. "They deny (or at least doubt of) God's omnipresence; and, with the Anthropomorphites, think of God as if he were some old Man sitting in some one place on a Throne." By 1672 most General Baptists seem to have been persuaded that the Eternal Word ceased from being Creator to become a creature, and that the God-head was turned into flesh. In October Monk completed his book, *A Cure for the Cankering Error of the New Eutyrians: Who (concerning the Truth) have erred; saying That our Blessed Mediator did not take his Flesh of the Virgin Mary*. It was sold at the Elephant and Castle near the Royal Exchange, "the price of a shilling, well worth the money and reading," noted Haines. In spite of the title, not much of the book is polemical; in his preface Monk says truly: "I have had no mind to Dispute, much less to Write about these great Mysteries, which I humbly believe and adore." For many years Monk had instructed his churches in systematic theology; he recalls "this Article which we reason'd so much on in our Church-meetings, when we were upon the Creed." Hence even when addressing "the poorer sort of Christians," he used the scholastic vocabulary with some precision. He could write that God is "pure and simple act, without any Potentiality at all"; no doubt the terms had been explained in many sermons. Copies of his work were treasured in humble Baptist homes for generations, but as the book is not now generally accessible a few quotations may illustrate Monk's thought.

Of the Holy Trinity: "Seeing the Scripture doth not use the Name of the Trinity, doth the Church well to retain the same? Yea no doubt . . . the sense of it, and the very thing itself is found in the Scriptures."

Of the union of natures in the person of Christ: "Some of you have been as brands pluck'd out of the fire (I mean out of the Eutyrian Heresie).



... The right knowledge of Christ, and union of his Natures, is so absolutely necessary to salvation. . . . There is no Communication of the Essential Properties of these Natures, but in the concrete only (as Logicians speak) not in the abstract; as we may say truly, and according to the Doctrine of Godliness, that God died for us; but we may not say therefore, the Deity died for us."

Of the sacrifice of Christ: "Christ, as Man, is the Lamb, as God, the Altar; and, as God-Man, the Priest."<sup>15</sup>

Of the Sacraments: "As all the Ordinances of God's instituted Worship, as Sacrifices under the Law, so all the Sacraments under the Gospel, seem to have immediate relation to Christ, as God manifested in the flesh . . . they consist of two parts, the one Natural, the other Spiritual; the one External, the other Internal; the one as it were the Body, the other the Soul of it; the one representing the Humanity, the other the Divinity of Christ: so that every Ordinance of Worship is (as it were) a representation of Christ incarnate."

Of the Virgin Mary: "We do willingly honour her three ways, First, by thanksgiving to God for her: Secondly, by a reverent estimation of her: Thirdly, by imitation of her excellent Vertues."

Of heretics and hypocrites: "Their Fathers, Mothers, Wives, Husbands, Children, Friends, Loves and Acquaintance . . . shall deride and laugh at them, forgetting all bonds and obligations of Nature, and rejoicing at the execution of God's Justice in their Condemnation."

Matthew Caffyn, the leader of those whom Monk was threatening with "the endless, easeless and remediless torments of Hell" considered that the best form of defence was attack. At the annual meetings in June, 1673 he "endeavoured to engage the whole Assembly against Mr. Monk, and also had prepared something in writing in the nature of a charge against him, in order to bring him under the Censure of the Church." It has been said, on D'Assigny's authority, that the charge was of fornication, but whether this implied more than marriage out of the connexion is not certain. The General Assembly acquitted Monk by a large majority, but Caffyn's teaching was not condemned, and the Assembly went on to hear the appeal of Richard Haines, whom Caffyn had excommunicated for patenting a method of cleaning trefoil or hop clover so as to improve the seed. According to Haines, Caffyn instructed his congregations not to have any dealings with Haines, and said: "Me, I can as freely have Communion or Fellowship with any Idolatrous or unclean person, as with a man that should obtain a Patent; and if he shall persist in it, he shall be dealt with or excommunicated. . . . It is my Privilege, and hath been my privilege this twenty years, and what, do you think that I will lose it now?" Monk proposed that the appeal be heard at once: "We can chuse out a party, six or more persons, and refer the matter to them, who may determine it presently before we part." Caffyn demanded that the case should first be heard by another local church and then by the Quarterly Association for the county. The dispute was not finally settled until 1680, when the Assembly directed Caffyn to reverse his excommunication.

Until 1673 Caffyn, while in effect denying the reality of Christ's human nature, had accepted His Divinity. Soon afterwards, in an unguarded moment, he admitted to his fellow-Messenger Joseph Wright of Maidstone that he no longer believed that the Word was of the uncreated substance of the Father. As the Kent and Sussex Association would not assume jurisdiction over its own Messengers, Wright preferred a charge of heresy before the General Assembly, but Caffyn's somewhat disingenuous explanations led to his acquittal. At a subsequent Assembly at Aylesbury<sup>16</sup> Wright obtained another (probably Monk) to join with him, but was again unsuccessful. The date of these proceedings is uncertain, as the Assembly minutes are missing, but we know from the Berkhamsted records that in 1677 the Assembly met

in London<sup>17</sup>; Monk seems to have failed to secure the adoption of unambiguous declarations concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation. In that year an overtly Arian Baptist Church was established at Biddenden with Caffyn's assistance. Monk thereupon drew up his Fifty Articles, which were signed by the leading General Baptists in and around Buckinghamshire in January, 1679 and published later that year. The title, *Orthodox Confession*, was justified; except perhaps for Article 7, on the communication of attributes, the Confession expounded the historic faith of Christendom, our common inheritance from Fathers, Schoolmen and Reformers.

Even in Buckinghamshire, some churches held aloof; on 24th April, 1679 the church at Amersham warned a member who desired "to sit down with Thomas Monk" that they would have her "Consider well what shee does least she fall into a snare." A reference in the Amersham church book to Berkhamsted as "ye Church under the Care of Thomas Monke" has misled Taylor and others. Berkhamsted was under Monk's pastoral care as bishop, not as presbyter; from 1676 or earlier until 1698 its sole elder was John Russell.

Monk sometimes used highly Arminian language, e.g. "How shall he pay them, that by Almes-deeds and holy Works, have lent unto him?"; but he was sound on justification by faith and was anxious to secure a reconciliation with the Calvinist Baptists, which "would be very much to God's honour, and the Churches' peace." To this end he wrote but did not publish an *Essay for a right stating of the question, whether Christ died for all men, or for the Elect only?* In this he anticipated later discussions concerning God's love of compassion and His love of delight, "which the Scriptures make distinct: But they are usually confounded by the inconsiderate." The Orthodox Confession does in fact define the position on which Particular and orthodox General Baptists converged over a century later. Meanwhile the churches whose representatives had signed it formed a union or "General Compact" which maintained the orthodox evangelical faith throughout the worst years of the eighteenth century, until the rise of the New Connexion revitalised the denomination.

Thomas Monk probably died soon after his Confession was adopted, and certainly before 1685, when his widow Mary was again charged with absence from church. Dr. W. T. Whitley<sup>18</sup> was inclined to extend his career to 1699, but the Thomas who represented Aylesbury at the General Association that year was his son. Strangely enough, this Thomas Monk the younger acted as crier of Quarter Sessions until 1686, when he resigned. In a lease of a cottage in "Coblers Rowe in Castle Fee" dated 30th June, 1682<sup>19</sup> he is called "scr." (? scrivener). He was constable of the Parson's Fee in Aylesbury in 1688 and of Bierton in 1695. The General Association which he attended issued an encyclical letter against Caffyn's heresies. "In vain it is for you to separate from such as err about the subjects and manner of baptism; if, at the same time, you maintain communion with heretics and idolaters; as those must needs be who deny the Deity of the Son of God, and the immensity and omnipresence of the Divine Essence."<sup>20</sup>

Monk the younger was still living at Bierton in 1706, when he served as juror. Thomas Monk, who assisted the church at Ford about 1741, was perhaps his son. Other members of the family included Benjamin Monk junior and James and Joseph Monk, all of Bierton, presented by the grand jury on 30th April, 1685 for absence from church. Joseph Monk of Hulcott, presented in 1680 for "a new erectt cottage," was perhaps the same; it was illegal under 1 Eliz. 1 c. 7 to build a house without laying four acres of land to it, but the proceedings may have been merely vexatious. After the Revolution the meeting at Bierton was at the house of Elizabeth, widow of William Monk. Richard Monk of Aylesbury is mentioned in 1679 and was assisted financially by the Buckinghamshire Association in 1703. Susan Monk was baptized at Amersham in 1704-5. The genealogy of the family

needs working out: anyone should be proud to claim descent from Thomas Monk, that "remarkable farmer" who was a martyr in will though not in deed and a true Father in God to the churches which he fostered.

(To be continued)

ARNOLD H. J. BAINES

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> 1678 in the old style, in which the civil year began on 25th March.

<sup>2</sup> A. Taylor, *History of the English General Baptists* (1818), i. 168, citing Thomas Lawson, *An untaught Teacher witnessed against, or, The old Bottle's mouth opened* (1655), which describes a disputation at Southwater.

<sup>3</sup> MS. "Summary of the history of the church" preserved with the minute books at Ford, to which Miss J. Welford, secretary of that ancient church, has kindly given me access.

<sup>4</sup> Constable of Aylesbury in 1678, indicted for neglect of duty; apparently he had failed to sell the goods of convicted Nonconformists. He was indicted in 1684 for absence from church. In 1691 he is called a grocer. In 1693 a labourer and cordwainer of Aylesbury were fined for assaulting him.

<sup>5</sup> By 1669 he had moved to Winslow, where Hartnoll was preaching to forty Baptists at his house. He was known to Stinton and Crosby as "Ellit, a teacher." In Bucks., Elliott was sometimes spelt and pronounced Ellet.

<sup>6</sup> Crosby, *History of the English Baptists* (1739), ii. 181.

<sup>7</sup> Probably of Newton Longville, presented for absence from church in 1683. William Wilkinson of Chesham was "denounced excommunicate" in 1662.

<sup>8</sup> Probably one of two Turville Baptists called John Toovy, who were excommunicated in December, 1662 for not having their children baptized.

<sup>9</sup> Probably Thomas Brandon the younger of Buckland, imprisoned in December, 1662 for being taken at a conventicle. In 1690 James Brandon built himself a cottage on waste land at Baker's Lane End, where the General Baptist meeting-house (demolished in 1938) was later erected: H. Parrott, *Annals of Aylesbury* (1952), p. 41. The present General Baptist church in Aylesbury and its chapel at Southcourt both date from 1930.

<sup>10</sup> *Trans. Bapt. Hist. Soc.* (1910), ii. 88.

<sup>11</sup> *State Papers (Domestic)*, lxxvii. 26.

<sup>12</sup> T. Grantham, *A Sigh for Peace* (1671), p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> J. Griffith, *The Searchers for Schism search'd* (1669), p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> T. Monk, *A Cure for the Cankering Error* (1673), pp. 50-52, 116.

<sup>15</sup> In 1802, the Norfolk and Suffolk Association included among the essential truths of the Gospel "the sacrifice of Christ's spotless humanity, presented to infinite justice upon the altar of his divinity."

<sup>16</sup> Crosby, iii. 281.

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, i. 233.

<sup>18</sup> *Baptist Bibliography*, i. 223; *Trans. Bapt. Hist. Soc.* (1921), vii. 221.

<sup>19</sup> 322/22 No. 4 in the County Museum, Aylesbury.

<sup>20</sup> For evidence that Caffyn's followers still denied God's omnipresence, see *A second Address to the Anabaptists* (1702), p. 22, citing *The Vail turn'd aside*, which I have not seen.

## Reviews

*The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, Studies in Honour of C. H. Dodd. Ed. by W. D. Davies and D. Daube. (Cambridge University Press, 70s.).

The publication of this outstanding volume will have given pleasure to all friends and old students of Professor Dodd. It is a worthy tribute to the international repute and respect which he has gained for his rich scholarship and lucid power of exposition. Scholars from eight lands have made their contribution, and the contents of almost every essay reveal the significance of Dodd's work in the field of New Testament studies. The editors' open letter, which serves as a preface, is a moving tribute which will evoke echoes in many minds.

The book consists of twenty-six essays, planned to cover the areas in which Dodd's work chiefly lay. In such a composite work unity is sometimes limited to the general title, but here the editors have succeeded in achieving a much greater internal unity than usual, particularly in the second part of the volume.

To write a brief notice which can do justice to the compass and quality of this volume is virtually impossible; to single out one or two essays would seem invidious. There remains the task of giving as many glimpses as possible, however brief.

Ten essays are grouped under the title "Towards an understanding of the Background of the N.T." A salutary reminder is given in the opening essay by E. C. Blackman ("The Task of Exegesis") that theological interpretation is the true goal and that historical investigation is but a means to that end. The task of the expositor is not simply to clarify the original meaning of a passage but to relate it to Christ and to the central Biblical doctrine of salvation and to the modern situation.

In an important article on "The Effect of recent Textual Criticism on New Testament Studies," K. W. Clark sees the present era as one of collecting and reclassifying of old and new material as a foundation for a fresh apparatus criticus and a revised text. In "Gnosis, Gnosticism and the New Testament," R. P. Casey is critical of the views which see Gnosticism as a significant factor in the origin of Christianity. Their lines seem to cross in places, but the explanation of this is a common heritage of Greek ideas and in part indebtedness of Gnostics to the N.T. "The remarkable thing about the earliest Christian literature is not what it perpetuated but what it created." H. Riesenfeld ("The Mythical Background of New Testament Christology") examines the various elements and motifs in Jewish Messianology in relation to our Lord's consciousness of His mission and attributes to Him a creative process involving selection, combination and transformation. But while it is necessary to examine the components of Christology in order to interpret the intentions of Jesus, "the most sublime and essential result of the creative process is the conception of the mission of Christ in its entirety."

Other essays are F. C. Grant's "The Economic Background of the New Testament," a valuable survey, H. J. Schoep's "Die ebionitische Wahrheit des Christentums," W. D. Davies's "Reflections on Archbishop Carrington's 'The Primitive Christian Calendar'," a criticism of the theory that the Gospel tradition was moulded by a very early lectionary scheme, Matthew Black on "The Account of the Essenes in Hippolytus and Josephus," and P. Katz on "Septuagintal Studies in the Mid-century."

One of the outstanding essays is that of W. F. Albright on "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John," in which he develops his view that the Aramaic 'colour' of that gospel is due, not to a written

Aramaic original but to the transmission of oral tradition in Aramaic. The persecutions of Christians in the decade 60-70 could have led many to seek refuge outside Palestine. This probability, he urges, would be strengthened if the gospel reveals data which is validated by topographical and archaeological research. The essay attempts this validation and concludes that the basic material of John dates back to Palestinian oral tradition before 70, then transmitted for a decade or two prior to being written down.

The second part of the volume is concerned with the Eschatology of the N.T., and here the influence of Dodd's work is most manifest. T. W. Manson introduces it with an essay on "The Life of Jesus: some Tendencies in Present-day Research." He examines the two outstanding tendencies of recent years, Form Criticism and Realized Eschatology. When the former, a literary tool, began to be used as a means of historical judgments, it led to a scepticism in the train of Wrede. "The Wredestrasse is the road to nowhere." The alternative road, that of Schweitzer's thoroughgoing eschatology, if followed to the end, could be as misleading. In effect the thing that mattered for Schweitzer was what in his theory was the least significant, the 'interimsethik.' Manson shows how, following the direction of Schweitzer's signpost, but early deviating from that road, the course of N.T. studies has opened a promising vista. "There is no escape from historical enquiry," he concludes, "and there is no need to be despondent about its prospects."

There follows a series of studies of the eschatology of different parts of the New Testament; on *Matthew G. Bornkamm*—"Endwartung und Kirche in Matthauevangelium," and A. Feuillet—"Le sens du mot Parousie dans l'Evangile de Matthieu." Feuillet argues that in contrast with the usual N.T. concept of the word of the final manifestation of Christ at the end of world history, Parousia is identified in *Matthew* with the divine judgment on the Jewish people, and he finds this sense confirmed in *James* v. 1-11. E. Stauffer—"Agnostos Christos"—finds in *John* ii. 24 a neglected but important key to the better understanding of the eschatology of this gospel. Maurice Goguel and H. Clavier write on Pauline eschatology, C. K. Barrett on *Hebrews*, E. G. Selwyn on *1 Peter*.

In a brief essay "The Bible Today' und die Eschatologie" Bultmann pays tribute to the work of Dodd, but in a series of questions to the author offers a criticism of his treatment of the relation of Revelation and History. O. Cullmann ("Eschatology and Missions in the N.T.") repudiates the view that Christianity became missionary because it had renounced eschatology when its hopes seemed to be unfulfilled. In fact the Christian mission is an essential part of the divine eschatological plan of salvation. The essay contains an interesting discussion on the difficult passage in *2 Thessalonians* regarding the Restraining Power. Space precludes extended reference to significant essays on the Church as the "new creation" in the light of the realized eschatology of the N.T. (N. A. Dahl), and on the Sacraments an anticipation of the Final Judgment (C. F. D. Moule).

In the concluding essay—"Kerygma, Eschatology and Social Ethics"—A. N. Wilder discusses the relevance of modern N.T. studies for a social ethic. The pressure of external events creates a pressing demand upon the Church for moral leadership to human society. Problems of social ethics have become central in many theological discussions. On the other hand Prof. Wilder points out that some emphases in the latest Biblical theology tend to militate against a Christian social ethic. There is the tendency to give to the "kerygma" an excessively individualistic interpretation which to Wilder has a resemblance to the older pietism. And going further, there is the view that there can be no such thing as a systematic Christian ethic, a view which N. H. Soc, supported by Barth, regards as "not only wrong but dangerous." Wilder concludes that the N.T. in general and Paul in particular, offer at the very centre of their message a theological basis for social-cultural action. "The drama in which the Church Militant is engaged must

not be theologized into an other-worldly abstraction or a banal version of the moral struggle of the individual." We hope that these brief references will show what a rich mine is here for the student.

W. S. DAVIES

*The Faith of Israel*, by H. H. Rowley. (S.C.M. Press, 18s.).

This book now offers to the general public the James Sprunt Lectures delivered at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, in 1955. We are grateful for their speedy publication, and much more grateful for the material they contain. Professor Rowley mentions in the Preface that they had to be prepared within a short time. However, there is no indication of this in the book, which is obviously the product of intensive study and prolonged reflection on a subject which has warmed the lecturer's heart. This work, in the interests of the general reader, has avoided excessive footnoting, although the scale of this is still reasonably lavish and numerous references to fuller bibliography in the author's other publications adequately extend the field of investigation for the specialist. In the Introduction Professor Rowley indicates the limits of the book; its subject is Old Testament theology rather than a history of Israel's religion, which would cover "every religious idea and practice"; and even within this narrower field the limited number of lectures has restricted the choice of the aspects of Old Testament thought to be considered. These are, Revelation and its Media, The Nature of God, The Nature and Need of Man, Individual and Community, The Good Life, Death and Beyond, and The Day of the Lord. To these subjects some 180 pages are devoted.

What is unique in Biblical revelation is a combination of historical and personal factors which dovetail into one another. This is evident in the crises of Israel's history but is seen most clearly in the Passion of Christ. The distinctive elements of Israel's doctrine of God lie in His moral attributes: compassion, justice, love, holiness, faithfulness and free-will (leading to election). Her monotheism is the gift of revelation, begun in Moses and continued in the prophets. Through his being created in God's image, man has spiritual kinship with God and so the possibility of real fellowship with Him. Sin isolates man from his Maker, but God readily responds to man's desire for the restoration of fellowship by exercising his divine power to remove the barrier which man has erected. The relationship between the individual and the community is admirably summarized: "In the true faith of Israel every man was his brother's keeper, and his brother was every man." The prophets conceived of religion in terms of fellowship as well as ethics, and the good life is the life that is lived in harmony with God's will. The well-known words of *Job* in ch. xix. vv. 25ff. may possibly be the "bold suggestion" of, rather than "a formulated faith" in resurrection after death. In *Isaiah* xxv. 8, however, there is no thought of *individual* resurrection, but *Daniel* xii. 2, has a clear and undisputed reference to the resurrection of the dead. In the Psalter there is a "glimpse" of an after-life in the presence of God, e.g. in *Pss.* xlix. 14ff.; lxxiii. 23f.; xvi. 11. Universalism was part of Israel's faith long before the time of Deutero-Isaiah, who related it to the mission of Israel.

These sentences must suffice to give some indication of the scope of the book, but only the reading of it can convey the discriminating thought and balanced judgment of the author. In one footnote Professor Rowley informs us that one of his audience challenged a statement in the lectures. Some of his readers may occasionally put a small question mark in the margin. But far more pages are likely to be marked for a second reading. If there are still those among us who doubt whether sound, critically biblical scholarship can be evangelically stimulating, let them read this book. And every lover of the Old Testament may read it with joy and profit.

GEORGE FARR

*The Southern Convention, 1945-1953*, by William Wright Barnes. (Broadman Press, \$3.75); *History of the Christian Church in the West*, by Barton Warren Stone. (The College of the Bible, Lexington, 50 cents); *A. G. Matthews' Walker Revised, Supplementary Index of "Intruders" and Others*, by Charles E. Surman. (Dr. Williams's Trust, 3s. 9d.).

Dr. Barnes, Research Professor in Baptist History at Southwestern Theological Seminary, describes his book as "The First History of a Great Denomination." Southern Baptists constitute at the present time one of the largest, most self-conscious and vigorous groups of Christians anywhere in the world and the organization which unites and directs their activities is correspondingly powerful and important. Some record of its growth and development is timely. The author has not had to contend with the difficulties facing the earliest Baptist historians in this country, nor with the problems which will confront anyone who tries to put together the history of the Baptist Union. The Southern Convention was not formed until 1845, when it had become customary to keep full records and minutes, and when denominational periodicals and biographies were already numerous. The ten pages of bibliography indicate the wealth of material at the disposal of Dr. Barnes. His task—and no light one—has been to reduce this to some kind of order and to make clear the salient features of the story, which began with a gathering in Augusta, Georgia, attended by 293 Baptists representing nine states and 166 churches, and ends with the 1952 Convention in Miami, at which there were nearly 11,000 registrations, the Convention then uniting 28,865 churches with a total membership of over 7,600,000.

A "General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions" was formed in 1814. It was composed of individuals, not of representatives of state conventions or of associations. Some of the leaders wished to transform this into a comprehensive denominational body, but there was opposition. The Baptists of the Northern States favoured separate and distinct organizations for each particular phase of work—foreign missions, home missions, education, etc. The Southerners preferred centralized thinking and action. Then came the slavery issue on which Northerners and Southerners took different sides. The result was the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention, firmly based on the churches and associations, and with provision in its constitution for a full denominational programme.

Dr. Barnes divides his story as follows: (1) 1845-60, during which the Convention gained in momentum, though the emphasis continued to be mainly on foreign missions; (2) 1860-65, a period of disruption due to the American Civil War; (3) 1865-79, an era of reconstruction, at the close of which it became clear the the Northern and Southern Baptists would continue to be organized separately; (4) 1879-99, two decades which saw the steady development of home missions of their own by Southern Baptists and resistance to infiltration from the North; (5) 1899-1919, during which horizons widened and new relationships were worked out between the various boards of the Convention and between the Convention itself and the state organizations; (6) 1919-46, a period during which church membership and Sunday School enrolments were nearly trebled, many new developments took place and denominational self-consciousness increased; and (7) 1946-53, a further period of expansion, described in a brief supplementary chapter by Dr. Porter Routh.

In the course of this development there were a number of internal crises. There were anti-missionary trends to be overcome. There were those who challenged the authority of the Convention. There were disputes over what constitutes the right kind of "succession" in religious life and organization. The Convention was nearly split in the 1850s by "Landmarkism" (with its exaggerated emphasis on the primacy of the local church), in the 1880s by "Gospel Missionism" (which urged that missionaries overseas

should live like natives) and in the 1890s by the stand of Dr. Whitsitt for inductive methods of historical study. Dr. Barnes gives details of all these disputes. Non-American readers may sometimes find it difficult to see the wood for the trees, but they will find the references they need for further study. They will also find here information about the Sunday School work, theological training and educational activities which have been important features of the work of the Convention in recent decades.

The chapters on relations with other Baptist bodies and with non-Baptist bodies are of special interest. Unfortunately, since Dr. Barnes wrote, there has been increasing tension between the Southern and the Northern (now American) Conventions. Although ready to participate in 1911, the Southern Convention later declined the invitation to join the Faith and Order movement. It was represented at the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences in 1937 but refused to join the World Council of Churches on the ground that the Convention has "no ecclesiological authority." It describes itself in 1940 as "a voluntary association of Baptists for the purpose of eliciting, combining and directing the energies of our denomination in missionary activity at home and abroad, and in educational and benevolent work throughout the world." How long Southern Baptists will be able to avoid facing the theological issues which are raised as soon as local Christian fellowships combine and which are multiplied when their combination creates an extremely powerful central body, remains to be seen. In the meantime Baptists in all parts of the world will be grateful to Dr. Barnes for the material he has gathered and for the careful documentation he has provided. Later historians will have to relate his story more closely to contemporary American history and to the general religious developments of the past century.

Dr. Barnes refers incidentally to the activities of Alexander Campbell, the early leader of the Disciples and quotes the lengthy but negative reply sent by the Southern Convention in 1894 to a fraternal communication from the General Convention of Disciples. In the pamphlet, *History of the Christian Church in the West*, there is reprinted an interesting series of articles written in 1827 by Barton Stone about a Kentucky movement, of which he was the leader and which later merged with the Campbellites. The writer was clearly a man of strong convictions, deep personal piety and a real concern for Christian unity.

Mr. Surman—well-known for his work for the Congregational Historical Society—has provided a most useful, indeed essential, supplementary index to A. G. Matthews's edition of Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*.

ERNEST A. PAYNE

*Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the 19th Century*, by Willis B. Glover, Jr. (Independent Press, 17s. 6d.).

This interesting and well documented book is really concerned with the problem how a really evangelical faith may be combined with a critical attitude to Holy Scripture, and it deals with this problem by a historical survey of the impact of Higher Criticism on religious Victorian England. The problem is still with us, for either faith or the critical attitude gains the ascendancy or else faith and criticism become separated, which is quite a bad.

Dr. Glover begins with the Reformation doctrine of the supremacy though not the inerrancy of Scripture and shows how evangelical faith at first fell victim to the Roman doctrine of inerrancy. Then gradually the later evangelicals under the influences of the middle Victorian age gradually renounced inerrancy and opened the way for Higher Criticism. Even so the movement had a bad start, because it appeared as the ally of forces that were humanist, rationalist and foreign—"the German poison," Spurgeon



called it. Soon, however, Higher Criticism became a challenge when it was seen to be advocated by devout Christians and by convinced Evangelicals. From a wide survey of contemporary literature of all kinds and by reference to outstanding personalities and events of the closing decades of the 19th century, Dr. Glover illustrates his thesis and proves his case. No one can fail to be interested in the information he gives, the sources he quotes and the great names with whom he deals. His treatment of the latter day traditionalists is fair, and he advances the view that whereas before 1890 the Anglicans had the lead in Biblical scholarship, since then and especially in the 20th century they "have been surpassed in critical scholarship by the representatives of the Free Churches."

The reference on p. 262 to Norman Henry Smith should probably read Snaith. There is no evidence that Higher Criticism affected women at all. Also I missed any reference to the meaning of Higher Criticism in terms of the adjective. An explanation of the word "Higher" would remove a good deal of prejudice against the title.

Altogether this is an interesting book which leads up to the question of vital faith and critical method. The historical chapter on the Problem of Authority contains many acute observations, and is helpful in its estimate of P. T. Forsyth. Dr. Glover shows the clue to the problem of Higher Criticism. It is possible to be both a Higher Critic and an Evangelical. It is probably true to say that Baptists have been slower to learn that lesson than most of the other Free Churches.

G. HENTON DAVIES

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