

Contemporary Commentary

BY THE REV. F. J. TAYLOR, M.A.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

THE years of war have witnessed the emergence of juvenile delinquency as a major social problem of the times. The war, however, did but aggravate an evil which was already a serious problem in the years of peace. Lord Templewood in a recently published lecture on *Crime and Punishment*, delivered for the Faculty of Law at Cambridge, declared that in the years of his service as Home Secretary (as Sir Samuel Hoare) he had come to the conclusion that juvenile delinquency was "the fundamental problem of crime and its prevention." The state cannot afford the wastage of young lives which now occurs annually through juvenile crime, apart from the danger presented to the community at large by such a state of affairs. The Church cannot neglect the challenge which juvenile delinquency on its present scale offers to the claim, often made all too glibly, that no human life however degraded is beyond the reach of the Gospel of redemption. The lecturer had some wise proposals to offer in suggesting that work in prisons should be hard but never lifeless and that probation should be regarded not as acquittal, but as a method of supervision, which if the probationer makes good, should lead to the erasing of the conviction. Much will clearly depend upon the spiritual penetration of probation officers, and here is an exacting but rewarding field for Christian endeavour. Beyond these methods Lord Templewood recognized a need for "the force and heart of moral fervour" directed towards the recovery of the offender's soul as the only thing likely to touch the hard core of the problem. When an administrator can make such an admission, acknowledging the limitations inherent in any action he can take, it points to the possibility of a fruitful partnership between Church and State in dealing with one of the gravest social issues of the hour.

AN ADEQUATE MINISTRY

THE debate about the meaning of ministry in the Church proceeds with unabated zeal since it has so obviously become the crucial topic which still divides participants in oecumenical conversations. *The Apostolic Ministry* of Dr. Kirk and his collaborators, with its claim for a ruling power inherent in the hierarchy derived through ordination in unbroken succession from Christ, is matched by *The Gift of Ministry* in which Daniel Jenkins seeks to break the deadlock in discussions on validity by asking and answering the question what the ministry is in the Church and what it should be. It is evident that much more work will need to be done along these lines before there can be any prospect of reunion. In the meantime the Church possesses a ministry and is still recruiting and training men for this sacred office. There can be little doubt that the quality of service and leadership

displayed by the ordained ministry is, and always has been, crucial for the whole life of the Church, whatever may be the doctrine of ministry professed by any particular denomination. This probably accounts for the fact that most of the significant revival movements in Christian history have led to a strong criticism of the pastoral competence and spirituality of the official ministry, and even on occasions, as in the sixteenth century, proceeded to an open revolt against its authority. If the rank and file members of the Church manifest no interest in the questions involved in recruitment and training for the ministry, the Church will get that inadequate leadership it deserves and ultimately compromise the integrity of its faith. It can therefore be regarded as a generally healthy sign that considerable discussion of these questions both at home and overseas has been proceeding in all the churches for a number of years.

The Tambaram Conference meeting in December, 1938, included in its findings the statement, "It is our conviction that the present condition of theological education is one of the greatest weaknesses in the whole Christian enterprise and that no great improvement can be expected until churches and mission boards pay far greater attention to this work." In England an Archbishop's Commission was appointed for this work and made its final report in 1943. The proposals, many of which in their detailed form were commendable, suffered from a lack of any clear understanding of that common life of the Body within which the ministry is set to serve as an organ. To recruit and train officials of an institution is a very different thing from making provision for the due maintenance of an essential organ in the body.

The National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon in 1939, instructed its committee on theological education to make a thorough examination of existing methods and to investigate the possibilities of greater co-operation in the work of training ministers. Though delayed by the war, the task was completed and an interim report presented in January, 1944. The secretary of the Council was instructed to prepare for publication an authoritative report on theological education in India, and *The Christian Minister in India* by C. W. Ransom (Lutterworth, 8/6) is the book which has emerged from these investigations. No one concerned with the vital task of training men for the ministry of Christ's Church can afford to neglect it.

Much of the detailed information it contains is of primary interest to those whose life work is in India and to missionary committees at home who carry responsibilities for ministerial training in that land. But the book also opens up the problems which surround the question of the ministry in every land. The difficulties occasioned by rapid and far-reaching changes in the organisation of society, the growing industrialization of the towns and the political uncertainties of approaching independence, can all be paralleled in the disintegration of Western Society. The need for a higher standard of education to keep pace with the growth of education in the nation is comparable to a similar need in Britain; and the same tendency in many of the abler men to shirk the disciplines and self-sacrifice of life in the ministry by choosing government or industrial service, is to be observed. Rural

India, to which the great majority of the population belongs, cannot be evangelised "by a city-based movement and a city-trained ministry." The same problem seems to be pressing hard upon the fortunes of Christianity in the rural areas of Britain, and the solutions which are proposed bear all the marks of an urbanized misunderstanding of the country.

It is hard to see how the twin demands for a succession of faithful ministers who will live laborious days in the service of Christ amongst illiterate villagers remote from stimulating fellowship, and for an effective leadership of the church in the increasingly complex modern environment, can be fully met. This survey reveals the varied quality of the available material; and the complaints of lack of vital interest in theology and inadequate knowledge of the Bible shown by the candidates, have all too frequently been echoed in this country. Another matter which demands urgent attention in a missionary sphere like India, and ought to receive much more attention in this country, both for the sake of the prospective ministers and still more for the churches they will serve, is the training of the wives.

The two chapters on "The Needs of the Church" and "The Recruitment of Candidates" have some wise things to say and merit very close attention in an Anglo-Saxon environment. Taken together, they offer the beginnings of an answer to the question, *What constitutes an adequate ministry?* This is the crucial question; and Mr. Ransom lays his finger on the chief defect in much recent talk and planning when he says, "It is clear that many churches and missions—possibly the majority—have not really made up their minds as to the kind of ministry they want and the way it is to be trained." The English reader consulting this book is hardly aware of entering into a very different setting for the work of the ministry. Wherever ministry is exercised, certain problems and principles will emerge, but the picture given in this volume indicates that on the whole, western notions of ministry have been imported and used to the hindrance of the process of proper acclimatization of Christianity in India.

Methods of training are obviously dependent upon the meaning which is given to ministry in the Church. The weakness of the report of the Archbishops' Commission on Training lay in its attempts to improve methods without facing at the deepest level the prior question of what ministry really is. The National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon has recorded its conviction that "the paramount need of the Church in India is for men of high spiritual quality, adequately trained and equipped for the ministry of the Word and Sacraments." Most English Christians would endorse these words; but what exactly does such a ministry, truly fulfilled, require of a man in 1947, whether in India or in Britain? How far is our conception still moulded by factors which belong to an earlier and outworn phase of society? So far as the West is concerned, the Church has never yet adjusted itself to the profound changes in the structure of life brought about by an industrial and technological civilisation. Until that happens, the gulf between ministers and the masses will steadily widen. These are questions which concern the whole Church and not merely the men who have the responsibility of training ordinands or those who offer them-

selves as candidates for the ministry. Unless the Church, in the persons of its ordinary members, is moved by a deep concern that God will raise up a succession of true and devoted ministers, there is little prospect of anything worthwhile being accomplished in this generation.

CHRISTIAN VOCATION

THE pre-reformation Church had a very high doctrine of the ministry, though it lacked a doctrine of vocation which could be applied to the lives of ordinary men. Indeed, the ministry itself, like the whole Christian body, was divided into two classes, "religious" and "secular". This division, however harmful in its ultimate effects, sprang out of the recognition of an acute problem in human society. The normal life of men in society, entangled with family obligations, property ties and civic responsibilities, presented a stark contrast to that full following of Jesus which was acknowledged to be the Christian ideal. Only a man who could free himself of the normal entanglements was able to fulfil a Christian vocation and avoid the numerous compromises which life in society imposed.

One of the great insights of permanent validity which comes to us from the reformation understanding of life is the perception that men do not need to renounce the occupations of daily life and enter into a monastic community to serve God acceptably. A vast amount of labour must be given if the life of the world is to go on, as even the monks found within the precincts of their convents; and since life is ordered on this basis by the Creator, participation in "secular" activity must under certain conditions be well pleasing to God. The reformers thus brought vocation out of the cloister into the market place and held up before every man the prospect of being as fully dedicated in that place as a monk had been in his choir. Within the sanctuary this new insight was expressed by the removal of the screen, which had previously separated the main body of Christian folk mixed up with the life of the world from that part of the Church which was reserved for the dedicated community.

The reformers were not concerned to deny the positive truth of the medieval doctrine that some men are called to be prophets and priests of the Lord in a unique way, but to assert that all men are called to serve God in that particular sphere where it has pleased Him to place them. This was pure gain, and it brought a high and holy meaning into the most humdrum occupation provided it served a useful purpose in the community. Nevertheless, like any other Christian doctrine this conception of vocation could be distorted into a divine sanction for any existing state of affairs when certain sectional interests were involved. The sons of the reformers have all too often been deficient in a prophetic and critical approach to society.

The medieval dualism of religious and secular life may have been replaced by a reformed doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, but the same dualism has crept back into the thinking of most evangelical Christians with less justification than there was for their medieval forefathers. Alexander Miller in his recent little book on *Christian Vocation in the Contemporary World* has pointed out the way in which

bread and butter jobs, although they are the really vital jobs in the world, are regarded by the average Christian as inferior to the uplift jobs—the ministry, the mission field, youth work and social work. Clearly there is need for some radical rethinking of the whole question of vocation, if Christians cannot think of themselves as called to serve in mines or on docks, for those are the places where the important decisions are being hammered out at the present time. Further, the development of economic power since the sixteenth century requires of us a most searching investigation into the real assumptions which govern the working conditions and aims of most jobs at the present time. In the words of Alexander Miller, “the only real outreach the Church has into the secular order is through the work of Christian men and women in their secular jobs”. The answer to the problem of Christian vocation has to be worked out afresh in the idiom of contemporary life as Christian men and women render obedience to the living God in their several callings.

SAUL AMONG THE PROPHETS

THE evils of modern society and the apocalyptic dangers that pose the question of its continued existence for any length of time, combine to attract the earnest attention of all thoughtful students of human affairs. Mr. Aldous Huxley, who bears a name associated with unquestioning faith in the benefits of science, begins his latest tract *Science, Liberty and Peace* with the assertion that in the last hundred years applied science has touched the lives of individuals and society at many different points and in many contexts to the grave disadvantage of personal existence. Yet to demand the renunciation of scientific activity or to attempt to stifle scientific curiosity is not only a counsel of despair but virtually an impossibility. Without the aid of applied science present populations could not be maintained even at a subsistence level. Preachers who contrast the spiritual interpretation of life with the materialistic outlook of a scientific age are either contenting themselves with the repetition of pointless platitudes or lacking in that discernment into the inner meaning of the signs of the times which they ought to have received from the Gospel.

It is true, as Huxley remarks, that no social evil can possibly have only one cause, but the chief result of the great technical advances in this century has been the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a ruling minority. This development is to be observed everywhere from the Communist “order” in Russia to the free capitalist “disorder” in the United States. The possession of modern weapons provides the executive in any state with “an almost miraculously efficient machine of coercion” which makes nonsense of the old techniques of popular revolt. In the realm of ideas, technical developments have put into the hands of the political and economic bosses unrivalled means of convincing the masses, through the radio, the cinema and the popular press, that such concentration of political and economic power is for the benefit of the many. “Never have so many been so much at the mercy of the few.” The application of the work of inventors and technicians to the problems of mass production

and mass distribution has starved both individuals and small co-operative groups of the means of production for their own use or for a local market. Western Society has thus come to look upon man as made for industry and not industry for man, with the result that it has been afflicted with chronic social and economic insecurity. Even the basic postulates of thought have been moulded by the dominance of scientific activity, so that a general theory of human life has been founded upon technical progress while the methods of simplification and abstraction used in scientific research are being ruthlessly applied to persons in this age of planning. The whole picture is terrifying in its revelation of what is happening to human life in this present age.

An overwhelming concentration of power in the hands of a minority not only leads to a tyrannical despotism but produces the age-old determination in a ruling group to hold on to power at all costs. Even under the forms of a paper constitution, the masses are deprived of all real liberty. "Power is in its essence expansive and cannot be curbed except by other powers of equal or at least comparable magnitude. Under a regime of state socialism there would be no power systems within a community capable of opposing any serious resistance to the politically and economically almighty executive."

Is there then no means of avoiding this universal servitude. The argument of this tract is designed to show that once the traditional methods of overthrowing tyrants have been outmoded, men must find new ways or perish. Two courses of action are proposed. First, it is suggested that non-violent direct action (which might easily be developed in Germany) is now the only practicable form of political action left to the masses and is the only alternative to collective suicide. Secondly, a resolute attempt must be made to achieve independence within a localized co-operative community. This is only possible if the nations give up their habit of war-making, which requires a highly developed mass-producing industry. Scientists can exercise enormous influence in this direction by refusing to participate in any work which has as its object the successful conduct of war. If they would apply the results of their work to local communities, the drastic decentralisation which is necessary if liberty is to survive would become a possibility. In place of debates about security, pacts and armaments, international conferences alike of politicians and of scientists should give priority to the question how every man, woman and child can get enough to eat. Scientists should be required to take a professional oath (like the oath of Hippocrates) to remember in all their work the responsibility they bear for suffering humanity. Science for the sake of science has become a menace to the community. These are proposals which must be taken seriously, and the Christian, while recognising the proper autonomy of science, will be concerned to insist that scientists must recognize both the due limits of their method and their responsibility to the community. He will welcome any practicable action which holds out the prospect of successful resistance to the further depersonalization of human life.

WHOLENESS AND UNITY

AT the end of 1945 the Archbishop of Canterbury invited Dom Gregory Dix to convene a group of Catholic Anglicans for the purpose of examining the causes of that deadlock which occurs in discussions between Catholics and Protestants and to consider whether any synthesis between Catholicism and Protestantism is possible. The terms of the invitation were further defined in four questions which asked (1) What is the underlying cause of conflict between the Catholic and Protestant traditions? (2) What are the fundamental doctrines where the conflict is most acute? (3) Is a synthesis of these insights possible? (4) If not, can they co-exist within one ecclesiastical body? Those questions are relevant to the life of the Anglican communion in which the two main Christian traditions share in an uneasy partnership and to many of the problems which must be debated at Lambeth in 1948. The group was speedily constituted with an impressive membership, and after several meetings has presented a report under the title *Catholicity: A Study in the Conflict of Christian Tradition in the West*.

The report begins with an exposition of the meaning of primitive unity as a way of life made up of belief, worship and morals. This unity, which sprang out of the entrance of God into human history in the eschatological event of Redemption, found visible expression in the church, the ministry, the sacraments and the Scriptures. Within this primitive wholeness there were considerable tensions—between the temporal and the eternal setting of the church's life, between its apartness from the world and its mission to ensoul the world, between the holiness of the Body and the sinfulness of the members. The loss of wholeness which became notorious and palpable with the schism of the sixteenth century has for its background the many divisive movements in earlier centuries, of which the most serious was the final separation between East and West after the middle of the eleventh century.

The authors of the report proceed to an examination of Protestantism under the two headings of orthodox Protestantism and Liberalism and Post-Tridentine Roman Catholicism. "Our difficulty is that neither in the Reformation period nor since have Protestants ever been able to agree on a positive statement of their common convictions." This appears to ignore the confessions of faith put out in the sixteenth century which through varied circumstances and language clearly embody common convictions. It would, moreover, be equally difficult to find a statement of common Catholic convictions. Anglican, Orthodox Old Catholics and Roman Catholics do not agree on a common statement of faith beyond the limits of the Apostles' Creed, and there are profound differences between these communions. An effort is made by drawing up a theological profit and loss account to assess the importance of Protestantism. Its emphasis on the Bible, on preaching, on faith, on the Gospel and on the place of the laity are commended, but two radical errors are noted. First, the doctrine of Grace was distorted through "a catastrophic pessimism concerning the results of the Fall. The nature (of man)

contains in itself no point of contact to which the redeeming action of God can address itself without violence." This is to ignore the radical criticism passed by the Reformers on the theological method of their day in which alien categories of thought had displaced Gospel insights. It fails to reckon seriously with the fact of a fallen rational nature and that, in the words of Barth, man is nevertheless not a cat but man as he is addressed by God. The second error is alleged to be the dissociation of Justification from Sanctification; but the misunderstanding of Justification is so grievous as to make the whole paragraph of little worth. Similar distortions appear in the discussion of the doctrine of the Church and of Authority. Luther did not suppose that the Church is constituted by the presence of the means of grace. For him it was founded upon the forgiveness of sins, and the means of grace revealed the presence of that hidden reality, the community of faith. The estimate of the Post-Tridentine Roman Church does not consider the serious plight of the Church which resulted from persistent refusal to initiate reform until it was too late, nor the failure adequately to answer reformed criticism of its usurpation of the sovereign rights of Christ over His Church.

The breaking apart of tensions within historic Catholicism has led both to the distortion and to the omission of truths in different parts of Christendom. The way forward is not by fastening broken pieces together but by going behind our contemporary systems and striving for the recovery of the fulness of Tradition within the thought and worship and order and life of each of the sundered portions of Christendom. The authors of the report believe the Church of England by reason of its Catholic continuity and its Reformation heritage to be a "school of synthesis over a wider field than any other Church in Christendom," but they do not make any false claims that it possesses wholeness.

Some reflections are suggested from a study of this important and significant report. It is a very great pity that no comparable document has been required from a representative body of Evangelicals. What is needed, if the Catholic and Protestant traditions are to form a just estimate of their importance for each other in the Church of God, is the maintenance of a regular theological conversation between representatives of each tradition who are concerned not to find some third way of compromise but to set forth the fullness of that tradition. The report does not work closely to its terms of reference but on the plea of the difficulties involved in any strict interpretation of these terms proceeds in effect to substitute its own. While it recognises the ambiguity attached to the word Catholic as to the word Protestant, the text fails to analyse Catholicism in the way that it attempts to understand Protestantism. The Archbishop in his foreword justly observes that "when it comes to synthesis the report shows more of anxiety to avoid wrong methods than of ability to elaborate a right method."

The analysis of Protestantism shows clearly that Justification by Faith has again become the battleground in modern theology. Doctrines of the Church, the ministry and the sacraments are judged by their logical dependence upon the central affirmation of justification.

(Concluded on page 117).