
A table of contents for the *London Quarterly Review* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_london-quarterly-and-holborn-review_01.php

THE SPIRIT OF ANGLICANISM IN THEOLOGY AND WORSHIP

'"THE ink of the scholar", so runs an Arabic proverb, "is of more worth than the blood of the martyr." ' One may question this judgement in an age when the ink comes from a typewriter ribbon and the scholarship is as plentiful as academic theses, which may satisfy the examiners but, for the most part, will be read by no one else. But the quotation comes from a lecture by Professor E. C. Ratcliff on *The Liturgical Work of Archbishop Cranmer*[1] and with that application it is indisputable.

It may also be true of that sound scholarship which has guided churches in periods of ferment and controversy, when their institutions and methods were still plastic and could have been moulded into any one of a variety of shapes, some of them grotesque and heretical. Wesley was not a scholar of Cranmer's eminence, but it may be argued that it was his wide learning as well as his religious experience which saved Methodism from the aberrations of enthusiasm. In the seventeenth century, Christianity in England could have become predominantly Calvinist, or the religious settlement could have held the ring for the multiplicity of sects, which sounds attractive, but might have led both to incredible confusion and to the godless state. As it was Anglicanism prevailed, though not overwhelmingly, and the victory may in part be due to the ink of its scholars, a band of remarkably gifted men, which included some of the most attractive characters in Church history, who united rational enquiry with deep devotion.

The most recent and very full account of them is found in the Hale lectures of H. R. McAdoo, now Bishop of Ossory—*The Spirit of Anglicanism* (Adam and Charles Black, 35*s*.). Dr McAdoo is known for his previous study in the same period, *The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology* (Longmans, 1949), a pioneer work of great importance, but which failed to do justice to the Puritans and suffered from limitations of space.[2] Both these defects are made good in the present volume—I wish that the author had read Geoffrey Nuttall's pamphlet on the Quaker, James Naylor, but at any rate, he distinguishes more clearly and satisfactorily between Anglicans and the 'central' Puritans, though theologically the distinction is not always easy to draw; and the publishers have allowed ample room for adequate accounts of the divines under review.

The subject matter is skilfully organized to demonstrate that what is distinctively Anglican is not a theology but a theological method. This is based on the belief in an ordered universe, which must be reflected in an ordered church, but the affirmation that a cosmic principle governs the whole creation implies that there is reason at the heart of things and therefore to oppose reason to faith, or reason to Scripture is wrong. So, beginning with Hooker and the group of friends which met under the aegis of Lord Falkland at Great Tew in the decade before the Civil Wars, Dr McAdoo shows how the Anglican method in Andrewes, Sanderson and Taylor confronted Calvinism,

how the Cambridge Platonists and the Latitudinarians illustrate one direction of its development, how it made a congenial climate for the Royal Society, and yet never pulled up its roots in the ancient Catholic past. He claims that Gore and the *Lux Mundi* school, rather than Pusey and Liddon are in its true succession.

This is certainly a book which all who wish to understand the genius of *Ecclesia Anglicana* should read. For all these theologians Holy Scripture is of supreme authority, but they are aware of the questions which it does not answer and the directions which it does not give and for these they look to reason and to ancient Church custom. To take an instance which is not spelled out in these pages—it is sometimes said by evangelical Christians and indeed Free Church liberals that there is little warrant in Scripture for the place which the Catholic tradition accords to the Eucharist. The Last Supper narrative is brief; it is not found in the Fourth Gospel or in the epistles other than I Corinthians, and the command 'Do this in remembrance of me' is absent from Mark and important manuscripts of Luke. Therefore to regard the Eucharist as the 'central act of Christian worship' is unjustifiable.

To this, as I understand it, the theologian of an Anglican spirit would reply, 'Yes, but you must look beyond the letter of Scripture. There is not only the Last Supper but the Feeding miracles, and, still more, the meals of the Risen Jesus with his disciples. There is "the breaking of bread" in Acts and the undoubted eucharistic presuppositions of John 6. There is the fact that the whole of the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament come alive within the context of the eucharistic celebration, and, not least, there is the evidence from the second century that this, though not perhaps in set forms, was the distinctive worship of Christians'.

The Anglican spirit is that of the genuine Christian agnostic, not secular doubt, or a desire to trim and pare Christianity to what the fashion of the age can comprehend, or a mere empiricism, but humility before the truth. McAdoo quotes Hales, 'It shall well befit our Christian modesty to participate somewhat of the sceptic . . . till . . . the remainder of our knowledge be supplied by Christ'. Jeremy Taylor shows the same temper as that of Hooker's sublime passage on the Eucharist.[3] 'He observes how all the central doctrinal questions, the Incarnation, the Trinity, the eucharistic presence, have been confused throughout history by those who have added explanations of what they do not understand. In this way, that "which in its own dark simplicity was indeed mysterious, and not to be comprehended by our dark and less instructed reason, but yet was not impossible to be believed, is made impossible to be understood by the appendages".'

The tragedy is that this noble and Christian frame should be so warped by the vengeful young hotheads of the Cavalier Parliament, and that alongside it there should be an element of stiffness and rigidity, which, as Baxter, who was in many ways a liberal too, said to Bramhall is liable to unchurch others. 'Let it not offend any that I have made Christianity an inn to receive all, rather than a private house to receive some few.' Those are fine words of Hales against the Calvinists. They were not always the spirit of Anglicanism,

and McAdoo's indispensable book needs to be supplemented by the essays in Nuttall and Chadwick *From Uniformity to Unity* (S.P.C.K., 1962), which give the political background of this magnificent theology.

There is just a suspicion that Anglicanism triumphed not by its intrinsic virtues and the winsomeness of its divines but by political ascendancy and the secular arm. Yet it seems indisputable that this is what most Englishmen had come to want after the upheavals of the wars and the Commonwealth. Dr Bosher's verdict is endorsed by Dr McAdoo: 'To some who had once fretted under the Laudian discipline, the days of prelacy now suggested a newly valued uniformity and order in religion.'[4] Could any other system have made possible a settlement, though this was so harshly and so arrogantly enforced?

At the same time, neither Christianity nor the Church of England is exhaustively described in terms of the Anglican spirit. McAdoo calls Anthony Tuckney 'a fair-minded and perceptive Calvinist' and quotes his critique of the Cambridge Platonists, which includes the words 'This is not Paul's manner of preaching'. McAdoo regards this as a dubious stricture, and, indeed there is that in the Pauline corpus susceptible of Platonic interpretation. But it is not difficult to perceive Tuckney's meaning, and Calvinism, with all its excess of logic, is trying to interpret a dimension of spiritual struggle which Paul knew and Luther and the English reformers and John Donne, but which is not typical of many Anglicans. Yet in any comprehensive Church it must be reckoned with. It is perhaps the antithesis in the dialectic of Christian unity. It challenges the assumption that given law, order and right reason we shall be saved.

The Spirit of Anglicanism raises a question which I am not competent to answer. Which form of Christianity is most congenial to science? Dr McAdoo has no difficulty in showing how good liberal Anglicans were the midwives of the Royal Society, but would the supposed chill of frosty, rigid Calvinism have blighted the young vigorous life of science? We must not be insular in our judgement. What has been the rise and history of science in Calvinist countries? I opine that Professor Torrance would want to argue that it is the Reformed system, which deals in pure theology and eschews natural, which, in fact, is most sympathetic to pure science and leaves it less fettered than either the dogmatic tutelage of Rome or the gentle guidance of philosophic Anglicanism. The debate is important, though McAdoo's evidence is strong, and no one who has revered the embodiment of the Anglican spirit in Charles Raven of blessed memory, can be without *parti pris*.

Again and again the book emphasises the importance of liturgy in the Anglican scheme. 'The constant recitation of creeds and the large amount of Scriptural material in the structure of the services linked the theological and the liturgical in an intimate way'. Anglican theological method depends upon ordered worship, and one reason why Anglicanism prevailed from 1660 was because the Prayer Book Services became more satisfying to more people than any of the alternatives. And this not only takes us back to the quotation from Professor Ratcliff with which we began, it introduces some consideration of the work of the latest successors of Cranmer and of 1662, who have

recently published their two series of *Alternative Services* (S.P.C.K., 12*s.* 6*d.* each). As we do so, we may glance from time to time at *Towards a Modern Prayer Book*—the new services examined (edited by R. T. Beckwith, Marcham Manor Press, 5*s.*), in which the successors within the Church of England of the seventeenth century Calvinists scrutinize the work of the Bishops and of the Liturgical Commission.

The *First Series* need not detain us long. It consists of 'variants from the Book of Common Prayer which are already used in many Churches' and has presumably been issued in an attempt to regularize what has hitherto been technically outside Church law. Mr Beckwith and his friends feel that this will but confuse the Convocations who are hereby given two new series to consider instead of one.

It will be a pity if the *First Series* does obscure the *Second*, which from every point of view is much the more interesting. It consists of Morning and Evening Prayer, Intercessions and Thanksgivings, Thanksgiving after Childbirth, The Burial of the Dead, and A Draft Order for Holy Communion.

The revision of the Daily Offices is very cautious indeed, and with this conservativism, I for one am in entire sympathy. Clean and restore the dome of St Paul's by all means, but do not pull it down and erect a Hilton Hotel in its place. It may be good to devise simpler offices for private use and to comprehend traditions other than the Anglican. A revised Psalter with a three-monthly instead of a monthly course, such as has been suggested in the Joint Liturgical Group, could be a valued reform. But to destroy the Prayer Book heritage would be an act of vandalism, which would be as evangelically useless as aesthetically wicked.

The Commission has in fact shortened and rewritten the penitential introduction omitted the first Lord's Prayer and last four verses of the Venite, transposed the *Te Deum* and the *Benedictus*, altered the response to *Give peace in our time O Lord* to *For it is thou, Lord, only that makest us dwell in safety*, and, in common with the *First Series*, ended the offices at the Third Collect, implying that the main intercessions are extra-official. This may accord with medieval standards, but as E. C. Whitaker has said 'the provisions of the Prayer Book do not support it'.[5]

The great argument in the Church of England over the Liturgical Commission's report will be on two fronts—traditionalist versus radical, and 1552 Prayer Book versus antiquity. In the latter controversy Dr McAdoo's 'spirit of Anglicanism' would support the Commission in its attempt to recover the worship of the early Church, to go behind Cranmer to primitive traditions of which he may not have had full knowledge; Mr Beckwith's team, not surprisingly, is fearful lest the resolutely reformed doctrine of Cranmer's second book be lost. It is not going to be easy to produce new services which will keep the Church of England together as the *Book of Common Prayer* has done (albeit with some elasticity of interpretation).

Herein lies the significance of the title *Alternative Services*. Like the King James Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer*, in its 1662 revision of 1552-59, will remain. It can no longer be called on any grounds an 'incomparable liturgy', yet the best way to use it is in fact to avoid comparisons, to let it

stand in its own light and appreciate its artistry and its teaching. Cranmer's penitential introduction to the offices is not in the language in which twentieth century man may best acknowledge his sins, but it is 'searching' and anti-pelagian, and should not be completely abandoned. His second Communion Service has been charged with a grievous mutilation of the canon. But, as Professor Ratcliff says, in the article mentioned above, 'The accusation is irrelevant. Cranmer's purpose . . . was to give an exact liturgical expression to the fulfilment of the command "Do this in remembrance of me". The liturgical action of the Lord's Supper, according to Cranmer's later conception of it, consists in the eating of bread and the drinking of wine in thankful remembrance of Christ's death. It is possible to reject this conception as inadequate or mistaken; but rejection neither requires nor justifies refusal to acknowledge the skill and felicity with which the rite embodying the conception is constructed. The several parts of the rite succeed each other in a logically inevitable order which deserves the admiration of all students of liturgy'[6]. The 1552 position of the *Prayer of Humble Access* has provoked the scorn of liturgists, yet the sudden transition, from the rapture of praise, in company with the angelic hosts and the redeemed in glory, to the acknowledgement of our unworthiness and entire dependence upon God's mercy, is as psychologically discerning as it is evangelically true. Cranmer must stay somewhere in the memory of the Church both out of respect to conservative consciences and for the sake of his doctrine. We need sometimes to be warned against the jaunty exuberance of radiant Christianity, which may be as complacent in its ritualism as superficial in its *bonhommie*.

Yet the eucharistic element in Cranmer's second rite is very subdued, and the fullness of Christ's whole work is not adequately celebrated. The revisers seek to repair the omission and their strain is more joyful. In order to make the Eucharist easy to follow, they have divided their draft service into nine main sections: Introduction: The Ministry of the Word: Intercession: The Preparation of the People: The Preparation of the Bread and Wine: The Thanksgiving: The Breaking of the Bread: The Sharing of the Bread and Wine: Conclusion.

It will be noticed how ecclesiastical jargon has been avoided—the Offertory becomes the Preparation of the Bread and Wine, the Fraction, the Breaking of the Bread. Some will feel that the Service could have been shortened still more; the Introduction could have included penitence (though it can be argued that this is best as response to the Word), and some of the material which Anglicans have grown to love under Tractarian influence, such as *Benedictus qui venit*, and *Agnus Dei* could have been omitted, though these are found in Reformed liturgies, too, and are for optional use only. The fourfold Comfortable words are retained (pace Harry Williams!).

The rite emphasises no one solemn moment of consecration. There is in the great prayer of thanksgiving the equivalent of *unde et memores*, but what is offered is, as in Irenaeus and Hippolytus, 'this bread and this cup', a compromise, not wholly intelligible. Indeed the whole rite, with rubrics reduced to a minimum and ample room for experiment is a masterpiece of comprehensiveness. It does not please the contributors to *Towards a Modern Prayer*

Book, though they praise its flexibility and opportunities for greater participation by the people. But they fear that it fails to stress the finality of Christ's work and is hospitable to the extent of harbouring falsehoods.

The Reverend J. W. Charley, who provides the relevant chapter of the critique, rightly deplores the omission of a more specific reference to the *Parousia*. The phrase 'looking for the coming of His kingdom' is not wholly adequate; and it is ugly. There is no epiclesis, and the Prayer of Oblation is appointed *after* communion. One appreciates the reasons. To sing at appropriate seasons Charles Wesley's hymns 'Come Holy Ghost Thine influence shed' or 'Come Thou everlasting Spirit' is legitimate[7]; to write an invocation of the Holy Spirit into an invariable great prayer could imprison us in a particular theory and moment of consecration. As for the dedication of the worshippers—it should not enter to confuse us when our hearts are fixed on the One Sacrifice of Christ.

A further criticism of conservative evangelicals concerns the commemoration of the departed both in the Eucharist and the Order for the Burial of the Dead. In the latter a requiem communion is now provided; in the former there is a special intercession: —

> Remember those who have died in faith, and sleep in the peace of Christ, and grant them a share in the eternal kingdom.

The commissioners are surely right in their contention that if the eucharist is thought of as a thankful remembrance of Christ, it is entirely appropriate to offer it at times of bereavement both to affirm the Christian hope and to see the life and death of the departed in the context of the saving life and death of Jesus. There need be no heretical notion of earning merit to aid a soul through purgatory. As for prayers for the departed, though especial care should be used lest we seem to deny our faith in Christ, it is virtually impossible to think as Christians of departed friends without prayer, which, put with almost naïve simplicity, is our conversation with Our Lord about our loved ones.

It is clear that there is still the seventeenth century struggle within the English Church, as much as between it and other bodies, about the proper place for precision in the common life of the people of God. Disorder is not inevitably creative; it may betoken cantankerous individualism run riot, or a lack of faith in any purpose or order in the universe at all. Clearly there must be agreement on fundamentals, about what is essential Christianity and what is not. We ought not to be afraid of the word 'heresy', though we dare not treat the heretic as an outcast from God's mercy or our friendship. Probably the Church in its official formularies should affirm more than it demands of its individual members. There is something to be said for the 'We believe . . .' of the old creeds. Worship certainly must not give expression simply to the lowest common denominator of belief. It must unite the present congregation of the faithful (often struggling with their sins and doubts) to the whole Catholic Church *in via* and *in patria*. But within the wide limits of Catholic faith there must be liberty of interpretation and discovery, and within a basic uniformity of ordered worship (Word and Sacrament indissolubly joined)there must be varieties of

form and ceremonial. 'The spirit of Anglicanism', though as yet imperfectly realized in visible institutions and requiring the tension of evangelical 'brokenness', could yet point the way to the peace and unity of God's Jerusalem. And the *Alternative Services* (Second Series) are, all in all, an enheartening manifestation of it.

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[1] *Thomas Cranmer 1489-1556:* Three Commemorative Lectures delivered in Lambeth Palace 1956 (Westminster, 1956) p. 44.
[2] See the critique in Thomas Wood, *English Casuistical Divinity* (London, 1952) pp. xvi-xxii.
[3] See Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity* v. 67.
[4] R. S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement* (London, 1952) p. 48.
[5] E. C. Whitaker, *The Intercessions of the Prayer Book* (London, 1956) p. 25.
[6] *The Liturgical Work of Archbishop Cranmer* in *Thomas Cranmer* p. 41.
[7] It is often said that these hymns, and indeed any epiclesis, link their author with the Greek Liturgies, but see Ratcliff op. cit. p. 39f. for a corrective. There were Western medieval invocations of the Spirit too.

THEOLOGY AS EXPLORATION

Inaugural Lecture at Bristol University

Kenneth Grayston

MY title is an image which may suggest to you what I think theology should be. Those who undertake exploration, like those who undertake theology, must be persuaded that there is something worth exploring —the territory has not been thoroughly mapped already, the resources are not yet fully exploited, genuine discoveries are to be made. However important that they should equip themselves with traditional skills and apparatus for the venture, it is the exploration that really counts. I propose to approach and, I hope, demonstrate these convictions through my own special field of biblical studies.

The Acts of the Apostles is largely made up of dramatic encounters joined in a continuous narrative by much simpler indications of time, place and travel. One of the most familiar of these encounters is Paul's experience at Athens (Acts 17: 16-34) where, you remember, he was irritated to discover the city so well supplied with religious statues and altars. He was not, however, deterred from teaching Jews in the synagogue and others in the agora, and so provoked the attention of some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, in part contemptuous, in part interested. So he was taken off to the Areopagus (usually regarded nowadays as the Council of the Areopagus[1]) and given leave to speak. This is how he began, according to the Authorized Version:

Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

That is the kind of thing to give Paul a bad name. It is aggressive and over-confident, typically barbarous manners. Of course, it sounds worse to us than it did to King James's men: to them the adverb 'ignorantly' must certainly have meant nothing more than 'without proper knowledge'. Miss Tucker suggests to me that it was possibly a word not much used—there appears to be no example of the adverb in Shakespeare—it may have been felt to be learned, with full consciousness of its Latin meaning. But 'superstitious' meant what we mean—'to stand in too peevish and servile fear of your gods', according to the note of the Geneva Bible.[2]
Listen now to the Revised Version of 1881:

Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you.

The Revisers modified the harshness of the Authorized Version and even gave 'religious' in the margin as a variant for 'superstitious'. The makers of the American Standard Version were bolder: they reversed text and margin, and made Paul charge the Athenians with being 'very religious'. The Revised Standard Version of 1946 follows this tradition and reads thus:

Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god'. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

The New English Bible goes further along the same road:

Men of Athens, I see that in everything that concerns religion you are uncommonly scrupulous. For as I was going round looking at the objects of your worship, I noticed among other things an altar bearing the inscription 'To an Unknown God'. What you worship but do not know—this is what I now proclaim.

Why are we now so much more polite to philosophers, or at least to Athenian ones? Was Paul being rude or ingratiating? The word 'superstitious' goes back through Tyndale to the Vulgate which has *quasi superstitiosiores*, and at this point Jerome was not the man to soften what he already found in the Old Latin. But long before Jerome it was known that another interpretation was possible; subsequent translators and commentators made suggestions, and a full debate about the word's meaning was initiated, somewhat dogmatically, by the great company of Victorian

classicists.[3] According to the writer of Acts, what Paul said was ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς Θεωρῶ, and the translation seemed to depend on a question of grammar and a question of vocabulary. What did the adjective δεισιδάιμων mean, especially in the comparative form? And does the prefixed ὡς diminish the force of the word or intensify it? The result of the debate is reflected in the cautious hesitation of the Revisers, who kept 'superstitious' in the text and put 'religious' in the margin; and the problem was not settled even in 1929 when two scholars, one in Germany and one in Holland, published independent studies of the word and showed that it was used in a good or a bad sense even as late as the Roman period.[4] What an author means by the word is determined therefore by his view of religion and of the gods, so the translator of the passage must either find an English word with a comparable range of meanings and emotional tones, or he must decide whether the original speaker or writer intended the good or the bad sense of the word.

Nothing pleased the older biblical translators so much as finding a comparably ambiguous word, and it is arguable that the English word 'religious' is a fair translation of the Greek in both senses. Long ago Karl Barth tried to make us believe that 'religion' was a very horrid thing; and more recently Bonhoeffer's strange advocacy of a Christianity without religion has persuaded some that he was right. When to this is added the now fashionable disapproval of religion, and the curiously English habit of saying 'Mind you, I'm not religious but I do believe in God', we are left with an adjective sufficiently uncertain to represent all the ambiguity of the Greek. But if you regard this as mere sophistry, you will want your translator to make up his mind and tell you whether Paul sounded courteous or scornful to Athenian ears.

How is your translator to decide? If you read discussions of this passage in Acts, you will find that the most popular procedure has been to apply a sort of psychological and historical criterion, on the assumption that we have before us a reasonably impartial account of the incident just as it happened. Knowing Paul as we do from his letters, what would he have said on such an occasion? Many have agreed with Philip Schaff, a German-American theologian of the last century, in his judgement that 'Paul was too much of a gentleman, and had too much good sense, to begin his address to the Athenian philosophers with an insult'. The argument is appealing, especially with its hint of a public school in Tarsus, but it is fragile. It is easy to reply that Paul was a Jew and, like Philo, could not have used the word in a good sense, that Athenian philosophers themselves would have little but scorn for popular religion, and that (according to Lucian *de gymnast*, xix) advocates before the Court of Areopagus were forbidden to conciliate the members by a flattering exordium. And so the debate may continue with little prospect of an agreed conclusion—so long as it begins from the assumption that we are reading an impartial report of what happened.

But this is not the only or the most natural assumption to make. What we have before us is not, after all, an abstract of evidence but a literary creation

of some sort. Even if a travel diary may be supposed to lie behind parts of the narrative of Acts, this is not one of them; and whatever historical evidence the writer possessed, he has certainly written it up in his own way. In my judgement this passage we are considering contains evidence of literary artifice—of a simple kind, it is true, but sufficient to mark it as a consciously wrought piece of narration. Let me give you the most obvious example. When the philosophers are made to express a lively interest in Paul's teaching, they say Ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι; This is surely echoed in Paul's opening remarks by the adjective δεισιδάιμων and the verb καταγγέλλω. The philosophers say: He seems to be *proclaiming* foreign *deities*; and Paul tells them that they are respectful of the *deities*, and so he *proclaims* to them what they do not know. This, of course, could be no more than an orator's trick if Paul's opening remarks followed immediately on the philosophers' comment—but they do not. A change of scene intervenes from agora to Areopagus; and the writer even inserts an aside to the reader on the Athenian love for foreign novelties. The word-play is surely a literary device, not a realistic report. And this impression is confirmed by studying the Athenian speech as a whole: it is the counterpart of Peter's address to the Jews in Jerusalem, and the complement of Paul's own address to expatriate Jews at Pisidian Antioch. These are all set-pieces, and we must first ask what impression the author intended them to create before asking what actually happened. I am not denying that something happened, but merely asserting that the author presented whatever it was in a form designed to communicate to his readers certain attitudes and convictions. He was telling what an earlier generation would have called improving stories, though not with the free invention of a Daniel Defoe or the unrelenting didactic intention of a Samuel Smiles. He belonged solidly to a primitive Christian tradition—most plainly shown in the first three Gospels—which conveyed truth by incidents and stories; and, having himself composed a Gospel, had the wit to see that the missionary experiences of Peter and Paul could be turned to good effect for the benefit of new Christian communities in a hostile environment. So, in the Athenian encounter, he writes for converts who have learnt from reading the Old Testament in its Greek translation to be zealously vexed by the presence and multiplicity of idols. But, he says, if you take a lesson from Paul, you can be sure of two things: *first*, that the open-mindedness of the Greeks to new ideas will give you a hearing for Jesus and the Resurrection—even if some are scornful, your propaganda will not be prohibited and you can expect some notable converts; and, *second*, that the Greek religious experience itself will provide you with an opening for what you must say—including the Old Testament polemic against idols, for philosophers and poets say no less—provided you examine the Greek experience with care and treat it with sufficient respect. So far my interpretation of the writer of Acts; and I hope to have shown you why I agree with the N.E.B. in translating δεισιδαίμων as uncommonly scrupulous in everything that concerns religion.

My lengthy discussion of one word and two verses is not more than a sketch of the translator's method and problems. His art requires him to

know grammar and lexicography, and to make historical and literary judgements. In my prejudiced way, I think it a fascinating and educative activity. It has long been the basis of all theological teaching and, for those who can become properly proficient, there is no discipline of equal merit or beauty. But how few become proficient! The old tradition of theological instruction presumed that students would already be thoroughly grounded in the classical languages and would make little ado about the naïveties of Hebrew. This is obviously untrue, and has been known to be untrue for a long time. Our students cannot rival the formidable linguistic equipment of so many continental students. When a British university preserves the old tradition, by teaching its theological students mainly biblical language and literature, it has to adopt expedients and admit some lowering of standards; and sometimes does no more than train its students to satisfy the examiners in skills which mean little to the students and are unlikely to be used by them.

This, of course, is not the inevitable result of the educational situation in which we must do our work. Proficiency, scholarship and originality are still possible; and even the student with poor linguistic ability may be liberated by the study of language, and given entrance to a whole world of knowledge and delight. But there are far more compelling reasons than these for modifying the groundwork of theological studies.

If you had become impatient while I was explaining my problem of translation you might well have wondered what could justify devoting to the matter so much academic time and skill. It is easy to reply that the Church has always thought it important to have an accurate understanding of the Biblical writings and to provide authentic versions for those who cannot read the original tongues. For Christian faith and morals are in some way founded upon the Bible. Yes, but in what way? Does Paul's speech at Athens, for example, place me under an obligation to think about God as he apparently did? Am I required to inform you that God now 'commands mankind, all men everywhere, to repent, because he has fixed the day on which he will have the world judged . . . by a man of his choosing'? Or is there another kind of translation that still needs to be done: the transposition of the essential things that Paul was saying from his day to ours? But then how do you know the essential things? If you cannot lay bare the essential meaning of a poem by stripping off the poetry, can you arrive at an essential theology by stripping off the Hellenistic Jew and the Athenian philosophers? These are merely sample questions raised by almost any passage of scripture and most acutely by the Gospels. I think I can make the drift of my argument plain if I draw a distinction between interpretation and hermeneutics. By *interpretation* I mean the effort to understand first of all the author's intention when he wrote, and the original significance of any actions or words which he reports. So in Acts, what did Luke intend by the Athenian encounter, and what did Paul mean by whatever he said? In the Gospel, what did Luke intend by rewriting a parable or the Last Supper, and what did Jesus mean by those words and actions? For this task of interpretation all the equipment of biblical

scholarship is required. By *hermeneutics* I mean the attempt to arrive at rules or principles for converting the statements of an ancient literature into a reasonably coherent system of thought that can be explained and justified today. I am not echoing a popular cry to bring Christian belief up-to-date, whatever that may mean; but speaking for the moment within the strictly confined limits of a particular problem. If you accept the view that the Bible is the basis of Christian belief, what are the possible ways of using it when you take serious account of three things: that these writings are subject to all the problems of language, literary form, and interpretation; that in the first instance they were written for people whose culture was different from ours and some of whose assumptions we no longer hold; and that they have no direct bearing on a great many matters with which we must be concerned? By asking these questions I am not even implying that the biblical writings should now be abandoned as the basis of Christian faith, but merely stating what is sufficiently obvious—that the principles and methods of their use ought to be disclosed and criticized. This is a necessary theological task. It is seldom discharged either by biblical theologians at one end of the scale or by systematic theologians at the other. It demands the historian's cooperation because the practical work of hermeneutics began at Pentecost and has continued ever since. Once you decide to examine the connexion between the Bible and Christian faith you are like an electrician investigating the wiring in an old house: everything must be exposed and traced back before he is satisfied that the system is sound and adequate. The history of Christian thought contains, either exposed on the surface or concealed below, a number of structural principles of hermeneutics and of the Christian faith itself. Moreover, if this history is studied in relation to social, political and cultural pressures, it discloses processes of adaptation which are still taking place and must form an integral part of any method for making the Bible the basis of Christian faith and morals.

But that at once prompts another question for the theologian to answer: why should the Bible be the basis for Christian faith and morals?—which leads into at least three areas of discussion. *First*, what justification can be given for limiting the fundamental, sacred writings to the present canon of scripture? How do they stand in relation to other Christian writings regarded in some sense as authoritative—creeds and confessions of faith, the decisions of councils, the writings of accepted theologians, the liturgies of the Church and even the less formal products of its constantly changing life? *Second*, if by Christian faith you mean accepting as true the salvation story and its implications, how does this stand in relation to our other knowledge? By the salvation story I refer to the tradition that is deeply imbedded in poetry and liturgy, of God's creation of the world and mankind, of man's fall, his consequently painful and disobedient existence, of the descent of the divine Redeemer, his atoning death and resurrection, and his final return to sum up all things. If it is proper to express Christian faith in such language—which some scholars, without evil intent but to the confusion of many, call mythological—what can we make of it when we

learn the results and feel the force of modern investigations in cosmology, pre-history and Religionsgeschichte? Or, if such language is thought to be important for its symbolic effect, and Christian faith is described as self-awareness, existential encounter, or ultimate concern, how does such an attitude stand in relation to quite different apprehensions of human existence, such as the Buddhist? or indeed to the view that an apprehension of human existence is an unnecessary encumbrance to a normally sensible person? *Third*, if Christian morals are also based on the Bible how do they stand in relation to the various types of moral theory, to other traditions of morality, to the Church's historical record of moral choices, to psychological studies of human motivation, and to the new possibilities of human activity disclosed by modern technology?

These are all questions to which the theologian must offer an answer, and they arise out of the very nature of the material with which traditionally he has to deal. They require studies extending well beyond the older pattern of theological instruction and in my view they ought to be sufficiently represented in the course for a first degree in theology. Since the field is already wide and a student's time and capacity are limited, a reasonable selection must be made; and this we have tried to do in the course which the Department of Theology has put forward for next session. What I have said may perhaps be regarded as some justification for requiring all students of theology to spend part of their time on the philosophy of religion and on moral philosophy, and for placing some emphasis in the course on theological thought and questionings of the past hundred and fifty years. It is no business of a Department of Theology in a secular university to demand religious belief on the part of its students, nor in these ecumenical days to commend one sort of belief to the discredit of another; yet theology, as an academic discipline, may properly present itself as a subject worthy of study requiring engagement and objectivity in the same way as any other subject. It starts from particular documents, shows how they are to be investigated, draws out the presuppositions of their use in the history of the Church to the present time, and looks at their relation to the wider world of which they form a part. If a student has been introduced to this, he has not yet entered upon the central business of theology, but he is then equipped to do so.

Thus at last I come to the theme announced in my title, namely a way of conceiving the central business of theology. I return just once more to the Athenian encounter with which I began. Paul seems to have said, in effect, 'What you don't know, I'm now telling you'. Whether he did say that, or in that tone, can be debated; but something like this impression has often been created by the claims of Christians and their theology. There was a time when the first part of the book of Genesis was regarded as a handbook of human origins, and it is well known that the Church defended this view of it long after fresh knowledge had made it indefensible. In the end, of course, the creation narratives of Genesis were given a new status, probably a great deal closer to their original intention, and they can now be read as an interpretation of human existence, an assessment of man's relation to

his environment. But the Bible—or at least the New Testament—is still regarded in some sense as a handbook of morals; and it is not so easy to give a different status to moral precepts if fresh knowledge seems to make them mistaken or irrelevant. Ought the Christian theologian to retreat once more, or is there some point at which he should stand and fight? Is there something he knows by revelation which others cannot know? Is there some well-defined part of human existence—if not human origins, then at least morals—where he is the authoritative discloser of the truth?

If the question must be put in those terms the answer is No—partly because this way of thinking mis-represents the Christian doctrine of revelation, and partly because it confines the theologian to a limited area of human existence. But I think the question can be put in a less objectionable form, perhaps like this: Does the theologian possess something distinctive which is given to him in revelation, and if he does what kind of thing is it in relation to human experience? I would answer that the distinctive thing he possesses by revelation is 'God's-action-in-Christ', and that this is a device for explaining or for exploring human experience. Explanation I think is Paul's view, exploration is mine.

The Pauline writings certainly use words that indicate exclusive knowledge, and they are mainly concentrated in three passages (1 Cor 2^{6-16}, Eph 3^{1-9}; Col 1^{26-7}) where the writer had adopted language from the hellenistic world. In one of them he says:

'I speak of God's hidden wisdom, his secret purpose framed from the very beginning to bring us to our full glory. The powers that rule the world have never known it; if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, in the words of Scripture "Things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining, all prepared by God for those who love him", these it is that God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the spirit explores everything, even the depths of God's own nature.'

Although the N.E.B. here introduces the word 'explore' into the New Testament, and I wish to use it, Paul's idea is that he possesses the key that will unlock the secrets imprisoned within human existence. At last he can give an explanation of what has been happening and what is about to happen. The desire for self-understanding expressed in the hellenistic religions and philosophies of *gnosis* can now be satisfied, emotionally and intellectually, if those who love God will begin from the Crucifixion as the one event that gives meaning to all others. This is God's action in Christ and when its significance is disclosed by the Spirit, it provides an explanation not only of the changing pattern of human life and the forces that mould it, but also of the transcendent mysteries of God's own nature. So much will Paul say about the need for explanation and self-understanding, but it is characteristic of him that he does not regard this need as ultimate. 'This "knowledge",' he says, 'breeds conceit; it is love that builds. If anyone fancies that he knows, he knows nothing yet, in the true sense of knowing. But if a man loves, he is acknowledged by God' (1 Cor 8^{1-3}). He recognized

very clearly the partial nature of his explanation, even though it was given him by revelation.

'Now we see only puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we shall see face to face. My knowledge now is partial; then it will be whole, like God's knowledge of me. In a word, there are three things that last for ever: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of them all is love.'

I take this to mean that you cannot properly understand anything at all unless to the task of explanation you contribute some quality of love and a steady awareness that your knowledge falls short of completeness. This is very near to what I mean by exploration; and there is this to be said for choosing it (as a description of theology's function) in preference to explanation, that it makes the openness of theological thinking far more explicit. There is another reason too. It was natural for Paul to think that he was offering an explanation of human experience because he shared a common view of the world with his contemporaries; and for another fifteen hundred years the situation in Europe was not substantially different. For a large part of this period the common world view and the Christian world view more or less coincided. But this harmony has long been crumbling and has now finally disappeared, leaving the old type of theology stuck in the mud of an antique world view which it still goes on explaining, though nobody is now much attached to it. In my judgement, therefore, it is to the advantage of theologians if they can see themselves no longer as giving an explanation but as undertaking an exploration. They are not like cartographers explaining a map of which they alone understand the key, but more like members of an expedition equipped to penetrate and investigate territory only partially familiar. The equipment which they are specialists in using is labelled 'God's-action-in-Christ', and consequently their method of exploring is closely related to the pre-suppositions of their faith. But the territory they explore is not decided by their faith and their discoveries are real discoveries. They are not like the so-called experiments used in teaching elementary physics and chemistry, the outcome of which of course is already known. The results of this theological exploration are not wholly different from the results of other kinds of exploration, and they are not prescribed beforehand by faith. It is indeed true that the theologian uses his equipment called 'God's-action-in-Christ' because he believes that it corresponds to what is there in the stuff of human existence, and is more adequate than other tools for exploring the depths of that existence; but he has no guarantee that what he discovers will be familiar or even agreeable. That after all is what faith means.

Of course, on the conventional understanding of theology, a theologian makes no discoveries at all. His business is the development of a self-consistent scheme of thought beginning from esoteric religious concepts. Here, for instance, are the opening sentences of a paragraph describing a university course in theology: 'The aim of Theology as a scientific discipline is the objective study of the idea of God, His being and His

relation to the world of which mankind is a part. In pursuance of this aim, the Department of Theology provides in the first instance an introduction to the sources of religious belief, its evolution and its expression in worship and practice'. I have no quarrel with that as a proper way of beginning the academic study of theology, but I would not accept it as a description of the central business of theology. It would be very easy to begin with some idea of God, or from biblical statements about God, and develop a whole formal apparatus of theology, a world of discourse which is beyond contradiction or disproof because within its own terms it is self-consistent. Those who professed it would, if necessary, view the external world from a position within the system and all new facts would be assimilated to it. Such closed religious systems undoubtedly exist: some of them claim to be Christian and those I can call to mind seem to be Christian heresies. Indeed, I think it would be possible to argue that a great many heresies have indeed arisen from the desire to present Christian theology as a closed, self-consistent body of thought. When however, the Church seriously claims to put forward a theology of incarnation, I take it to be repudiating all such attempts. If eschatology can be paraphrased as openness to the future, then I suppose incarnation can be translated as openness to the world. It is a theological vice, not a virtue, to be preoccupied with the interrelation of religious concepts; and when Christian Churches define exclusive systems of belief they are in danger of disclosing the large areas of their own unbelief.

It is always refreshing to turn from in-bred theology to the unsystematized richness and variety of the biblical literature. At this stage in my lecture I wish to do no more than draw attention to certain broad characteristics which give colour to the view of theology which I offer you. A very large part of the Bible consists of narrative. Some of its stories are factual, some imaginative, some imaginary. Many bear the marks of oral tradition and liturgical recitation. All of them were devised and recorded for practical reasons. It is characteristic of the religion of Jews and of Christians that a historical narrative stands at the centre of worship, the escape from Egypt for Jews and the death of Christ for Christians. If each were asked to name the part of scripture without which faith would be baseless, one would choose the Pentateuch, the other the Gospels. However much these writings contain of ritual and moral teaching, the quality that makes them what they are is their attachment to history—at least in the sense that it is incidents and stories, not propositions, that produce the religious response of faith. It is narrative that kindles the imagination and sets men looking for meaning and prompts them to rewrite the narratives in terms of their new understanding—as Exodus is rewritten in Deuteronomy, and the Gospel of Mark in Matthew. It is not too much to say that in the whole of the Bible, together with the intertestamental literature and the recently discovered Qumran documents, there is a continual exploration of historical narrative and its significance. The narrative itself records how a group of people, conscious of its own distinctive existence as a religious community, penetrates into the territory of neighbouring peoples, and so

in turn is influenced by their traditions and culture. This is true of Israel's penetration into Canaan, and of the primitive Church's movement from Jerusalem to Rome. In these biblical communities there was a double process of exploration—of their own historical traditions, and of the culture of their neighbours which in part they accepted, in part rejected. I think that Christian theology has an analogous double task, but I will come to that in a moment when I have mentioned the other classes of biblical literature.

These are conveniently indicated in mnemonic form by a verse in Jeremiah (18[18]):

> 'The torah shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet.'

Even more obviously than the historical narratives, these three types were essentially practical in their purpose. (1) The primary function of the priest was to be the guardian of Torah, which we by long tradition but misleadingly translate 'law'—it really means the right way to do things, the correct procedure for the ritual and social approach to God. In the Old Testament you will find this in Leviticus; in the New Testament the Pastoral Epistles provide the best example. (2) The prophet, like the priest, was originally associated with the sanctuary; and he seems to have been the clairvoyant from whom enquiry could be made when the will of God could not be known from Torah. At least from the time of Elijah's appearance, the prophets were not merely consulted but themselves gave oracles, initiated movements in the social and political life of the people, and tried not only to predict but also to mould the future. To do all this they had at their disposal only words—the rather simple resources of Hebrew language arranged in rhythmical patterns to create a tough, flexible poetry. They explored the power of images, singly or combined, to evoke deep responses; under the extreme stress of persecution they fashioned new violent images with their own strange laws of association, such as you will find in Daniel and the Revelation of John. These seers and prophets had no doubt that they were speaking their poetry under inspiration; this externally-controlled exploration of words and images was the chosen means of communication for the divine will.

(3) Even more interesting for my present purpose than the prophetic word is the counsel given to the wise. It is not by chance that wisdom was traditionally associated with Solomon, the king who introduced the oriental court to Israel and had close cultural and economic links with Egypt and Phoenicia; for Wisdom literature was international currency in the ancient Near East. This collection of sayings of the wise men and of speculations about wisdom itself brought Israel's intense religious awareness into the wider streams of ancient thought. It begins with the aphorisms of the Book of Proverbs—shrewd observations of human life and character, prudential moralizing, mildly cynical and rationally devout. Thereafter it developed in two directions under the divergent impulses to *question* or to *codify*. According to Jewish tradition it was 'Ezra the priest, the scribe

of the law of the God of heaven' (Ezra 7^{12}) who began the work of *codifying* the laws by which social life and the service of God were made possible. It is indeed plain that the scribal movement absorbed the original priestly functions so that in the end the priesthood was left with little real power. It also superseded the prophetic activity so that the prophet ceased to be a significant figure in Judaism in the period of Seleucid domination. This great scribal movement, thus containing within itself the whole heritage of Israel, was so reinvigorated and purified by Pharisaism that it had strength to renew the life of Judaism after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the end of the Jewish state under Hadrian.

The scribal movement in itself was practical not speculative. It was a genuine development of the indigenous wisdom tradition, rooted in the needs of a clearly demarcated religious community. Its development received only small contributions from the other flourishing branch of the wisdom tradition which was a response to the *questioning* impulse. Here more clearly than elsewhere we detect the influence, not always direct, of Greek thought on semitic wisdom. In Proverbs 8 the Divine wisdom herself speaks, disclosing herself to be the mistress of kings and governors, the first-created being for whom all else was created. Here, in a form taken from the cultic patterns of the Near East, we have the beginnings of a theory about government, creation, and the bond between them. This interest, and related ones, are continued in the Wisdom of ben Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon, with increasing help from Hellenistic thought; and it is significant, though not surprising, that early Christianity did more than Judaism to preserve these writings, especially as they also took up fundamental questions of human existence and destiny already raised by Job and Ecclesiastes in the narrower Jewish canon of scripture. It was this body of literature that first provided the Church with a language in which fundamental questions could be stated and perhaps answered—and not only general questions about human existence but also particular questions about their own faith. Just as the hellenistic mission of the Church found that it could not make meaningful use of such Jewish titles as Messiah and Son of Man and therefore adopted the Greek cultic terms Lord and Son of God, so in explaining the nature and work of Jesus they used the language of wisdom and logos. St John's Gospel, in most ways the crowning theological achievement of the New Testament, is the greatest beneficiary of the hellenistic Jewish tradition of wisdom.

It is of course true that St John's way of exploring theological questions is quite his own. He combines the poetical techniques of the prophets with the discursive methods and language of hellenistic teachers, but this is no more than the transposition into a different key of what, according to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus himself did. He was neither theologian nor scribe, but teacher and apocalyptic prophet. What Jesus said and did *is* the material of theology. If his words and actions have anything like the universal significance that the Church believes, they raise questions that must be answered in the widest possible context. The business of theology, if we may learn from the primitive Church's use of the wisdom tradition, is

to accept the full resources of non-theological thought and knowledge as a means of self-understanding—in the hope that this theological activity will itself contribute a deeper understanding of what it is being accepted.

I have attempted to describe two impulses, the codifying and the questtioning, and the literature that results from them. Both are present in the New Testament. Indeed, in the New Testament letters Paul, Peter and John act sometimes as theologians, sometimes as scribes. The Church has never rejected one or the other, but the balance between these two impulses has greatly varied. It matters a good deal which you think exists for the benefit of the other. Do theologians plunder the non-theological world in order to find more persuasive reasons for maintaining what they already believe; or do they examine what they believe in order, thus equipped, to venture into the non-theological world and discover what they can?

I have already indicated my own view. I believe that theology has a double task of exploration. On the one hand there is the work of exploring what I indicate briefly by the phrase 'God's-action-in-Christ'. The theologian must decide how much this phrase contains and must explain what he thinks he is talking about when he uses it. But this is no more than a preparation for venturing out into the non-theological world, both to learn and to discover. A Christian believes that 'God's-action-in-Christ' takes place in the whole complex of human existence, that he can learn to recognize this activity, and is not scared to follow where it leads. I see no reason why theology should fall short of that conviction.

[1] W. M. Ramsey, *St Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen* (1903), 243ff.; Jackson-Lake, *Beginnings* IV (1933), 212f.; H. J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (1955), 51f.; B. Gärtner, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation* (1955), 52-65; N. B. Stonehouse, *Paul before the Areopagus* (1957), 8f.; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (1962), 351f. Of the contrary opinion: M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (1956), 80; E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (1956), 460; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (1963), 175.

[2] I am indebted for this to a private communication from Miss S. I. Tucker, Reader in English at the University of Bristol.

[3] E.g. E. H. Plumptre, 'more fearful of the gods than others'; H. Alford, 'carrying your religious reverence too far'; F. Field, 'somewhat superstitious'; E. Hatch, 'rather inclined to superstition'.

[4] H. Bolkestein, *Theophrastos Charakter der Deisidaimonia als religionsgeschichtliche Urkunde*; P. J. Koets, Δεισιδαιμονία, A Contribution to the Knowledge of Religious Terminology in Greek.

COURSES AT BRISTOL UNIVERSITY

THEOLOGY

The course is designed to introduce the modern study of biblical literature and thought; the historical development of Christian life and teaching with special emphasis on questions raised in the modern period; and the philosophical groundwork of theological ideas. All students are required to study part of the New Testament in Greek. A choice of special subjects provides an opportunity for students to spend more time on the biblical languages, or on historical or philosophical subjects.

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Students reading for this degree should have a pass at least at Ordinary level in Latin or Classical Greek and passes at Advanced level in two approved subjects.

COURSES OF STUDY

First Session

1. The biblical literature and its historical background.
2. Theological themes of the Bible.
3. Early Church history and doctrine to A.D. 451.
4. *Either* Medieval Theology from St Gregory the Great to St Thomas Aquinas,
   or The liturgical movement since 1830,
   or Christian social teaching from F. D. Maurice.
5. An historical introduction to the problems of philosophy.
6. An additional subject chosen, by agreement with the Head of the Department of Theology, from the following:
   Archaeology and Ancient History, Economics, English, French, German, Greek (Classical or Helenistic), Hebrew, History, Latin, Politics, Russian, Sociology, Spanish.

The additional subject will be examined at the end of the session.

Second Session

1. History of biblical interpretation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
2. Selected texts of the Old Testament in English—introduction and exegesis.
3. The four Gospels—introduction and exegesis. One Gospel will be studied in Greek, and a knowledge will be required of the interpretation and use of an apparatus criticus and of the principles on which a modern Greek text is constructed.
4. History and doctrine of the Reformation period (with some attention to patristic theology in the light of later development).
5. Modern theology (nineteenth century).
6. Philosophy of Religion.
7. Moral philosophy.
8. A special subject to be chosen, with the approval of the Head of the Department of Theology, from the following:
   (a) *Either* Hebrew grammar, composition and unseen translation; with translation of an Old Testament text in Hebrew (2 Samuel 7-12 and Isaiah 28-31 for examination in 1968);
   or translation and exegesis of selected texts of the Old Testament in Hebrew (2 Samuel 7-12, Isaiah 28-31, Psalms 90-100, and Job 3-14 for examination in 1968).
   (b) Selected texts of the New Testament in Greek—introduction, criticism (including textual), and exegesis. (Acts 1-12, Ephesians, and 1 Peter for examination in 1968.)
   (c) A medieval subject.
   (d) Some aspects of seventeenth-century English Dissent.
   (e) Eighteenth-century Methodism.
   (f) The liturgical movement since 1830 (if not chosen in the First Session).
   (g) Christian Social teaching from F. D. Maurice (if not chosen in the First Session).
   (h) A philosophical subject. (Religion and science with reference to Hume's

Dialogues concerning Natural Religion for examination in 1968.)

(i) The comparative study of religions.

(j) Other subjects by arrangement with the Head of the Department of Theology and with the approval of the Board of the Faculty of Arts.

Third Session

1. *Either* The Forms of Hebraic Thought,
   or Old Testament Theologies.
2. The Hellenistic Church (Acts to Revelation), one or more epistles will be studied in Greek, and a knowledge will be required of the interpretation and use of an apparatus criticus and of the principles on which a modern Greek text is constructed.
3. A biblical doctrine.
4. Modern Theology (twentieth century).
5. History of the Church since 1789.
6. Philosophy of religion.
7. Moral Philosophy.
8. A special subject (continued).

EXAMINATION

The Final examination will comprise ten papers and will be taken in two parts:

Part I, taken at the end of the Second Session, will comprise:

1. The Old Testament in English (Genesis 1-11, Isaiah 1-12, and Psalms 95-100 for examination in 1967).
2. The four Gospels, with St John in Greek (for examination in 1967).
3. History and doctrine of the Reformation period.

Part II will comprise:

4. Biblical interpretation and thought (with the biblical doctrine of man for examination in 1968).
5. The Hellenistic Church, with the Epistle to the Romans in Greek (for examination in 1968).
6. History of the Church since 1789.
7. Modern Theology (nineteenth and twentieth centuries).
8. Philosophy of Religion.
9. Moral Philosophy.
10. Special subject.

THEOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

In order to study the Christian religion as a social and historical phenomenon, this course brings together an introduction to the history and theology of the modern Church; a grounding in the theory and practice of sociology; and a study of the Church in encounter with other religious and non-religious systems. Sociology can offer to Theology assistance in distinguishing essential elements in Christian teaching from the patterns conventional to European culture; and students of Theology can look to Sociology for guidance about social forms and changes. It will also be possible to explore the kind of contribution that Theology can make to an understanding of the individual and the community.

The curriculum in Sociology starts the student upon the scientific study of society by analysing quantitative data on British life, and by examining the structures and organisation of less familiar societies. When the fundamental skills and knowledge essential to work in any branch of the subject have been acquired, students will be able to specialize in the sociology of religion.

The theological curriculum provides a study of the origins and forms of religion, with particular attention to the social and historical setting of biblical writings and religious beliefs. This provides the basis for an examination of the classical Christian doctrine of man, and for an analysis of the development of Christian social teaching. The student is encouraged to examine these subjects in the modern history and theology of the Church; and a study of the Christian Church in a non-European context further illuminates the interrelations of religion and society.

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Students reading for this degree are required to have a pass at least at Ordinary level in Mathematics; a pass at least at Ordinary level in a Classical language and passes at Advanced level in two approved subjects.

COURSES OF STUDY

First Session

1. Biblical Studies
2. The Christian Doctrine of Man
3. The Origins and Forms of Religion
4. Comparative Social Institutions
5. Social Structure of Modern Britain
6. Elementary Social Anthropology

Second Session

1. Biblical Studies
2. Christian Social Teaching from 1800
3. Sociological Theory
4. Problems and Methods of Sociological Research
5. Social Stratification
6. The Family

Third Session

1. The Social History of the Church since 1789
2. Theology of the Twentieth Century
3. The Church in encounter with other religions (in a specified geographical area)
4. Four special subjects from among the
   (a) Urban sociology; (b) Race relations; (c) Micro-sociology; (d) Sociology of development; (e) Industrial sociology; (f) Educational sociology; (g) Sociology of religion
   A student's choice of special subjects will require the approval of the Head of the Department of Sociology who will expect all students in this school to take Sociology of Religion.

EXAMINATION

The Final examination will comprise ten papers and will be taken in two parts:
Part I, taken at the end of the Second Session, will comprise:

1. Social Statistics
2. Biblical Studies
3. The Doctrine of Man and Christian Social Teaching

Part II, taken at the end of the Third Session, will comprise:

4. Social History of the Church since 1789
5. Theology of the Twentieth Century

6. Christianity and other Religions
7. Sociological Theory
8. Social Institutions

9 and 10. Special subjects in Sociology

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

The purpose of the Joint Honours School of Philosophy and Theology is to introduce the students to the development of philosophy throughout history until recent times and to philosophical method; and to provide him with a training in basic philosophical disciplines. He will also be introduced to modern theology, both dogmatic and biblical, and to the special philosophical problems arising therefrom. He will thus be able to relate the two disciplines and to see the influence of philosophy on theology.

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Students reading for this degree are required to have a pass at least at Ordinary level in Latin or Classical Greek and passes at Advanced level in two approved subjects.

COURSES OF STUDY

First Session

1. Introduction to some problems in Ethics and Theory of Knowledge
2. Introduction to Logic
3. History of Ancient Philosophy
4. Theological themes of the Bible
5. *Either* Theories of Religious Behaviour
   or Christian Ethics

Second Session

1. Ethics
2. Theory of Knowledge
3. Philosophical Logic
4. Special Subject:
   either Political Theory; *or* Hume; *or* Kant
5. History of Modern Biblical Interpretation
6. Nineteenth-century Theology
7. Philosophy of Religion
8. Special Subject
   (i) *either* The Liturgical Movement since 1830
   (ii) *or* Christian Social Teaching from F. D. Maurice
   (iii) *or* Religion and Science (with special reference to Hume's Dialogues on Natural Religion)

Third Session

1. Ethics
2. Theory of Knowledge
3. Philosophy of Mind
4. Modern Theologies of the New Testament
5. Twentieth-century Theology
6. Philosophy of Religion

EXAMINATION

The Final examination will be taken in two parts:

Part I. taken at the end of the Second Session, will comprise:

1. Special subject (philosophical)
2. Special subject (theological)

Part II will comprise:

3. Ethics
4. Theory of Knowledge
5. Philosophical Logic and Philosophy of Mind
6. Essay Paper
7. Biblical Interpretation and Doctrine
8. Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Theology
9. Philosophy of Religion.

JOHN WESLEY PRESIDES

Geoffrey F. Nuttall

A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain. Edited by Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp. Volume I. Pp. xl + 332. Epworth Press, 1965 63*s.*

In the present decade the writing of denominational histories is at the flood. Dr R. Tudur Jones has followed his monumental *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962* with a history of the Independents in Wales, *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru.* The Rev. Ian Mallard is writing a history of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. A number of Unitarian scholars are at work on a history of English Presbyterianism; and a number of Welsh scholars on a history of Calvinistic Methodism. Now, neck and neck with this last work, which, like it, is to be in four volumes, comes the work under review: the first volume of a *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain.*

The Calvinistic Methodism of Wales, which there has always prevailed and which is the *sister* of English Methodism, as Professor R. T. Jenkins puts it, not its daughter, is here almost wholly ignored. 'In Great Britain' may thus be thought a trifle pompous. (True, Calvinistic Methodists have never called themselves 'the Methodist Church'; but till 1932 Arminian Methodists also observed John Wesley's warning 'against calling our Society "the Church" '.) There is no reference to the forthcoming history of Calvinistic Methodism. Whether by intention or through ignorance, this

is a curious comment on 'ecumenical perspectives'. The opportunity, in this first volume, at last to give Wesleyanism its proper place, a position of grandeur, within the Evangelical Revival as a whole, is not taken. Instead, we have another 'denominational' history: limited largely to Wesley and what remained within Wesley's own purpose and control, and within these limits intensely interesting.

Professor Gordon Rupp, one of the two editors, contributes an 'introductory essay' written with his usual brilliancy of style and wide-ranging freshness of approach. What he says of Wesley's *Journal* may be said of his own writings, including this essay, namely that no one can read him 'without marvelling at the breadth of his human interests, his care to read the most important works of history, travel, biography'. Inspired by a perhaps dubious rendering of Dante, he here imaginatively compares the Wesleys with St Francis and St Dominic. Professor Herbert Butterfield follows with an unannotated essay in the grand manner on 'England in the Eighteenth Century'. This paints in the background he knows so well, with special attention to economics, politics and social life. Perhaps he assumed that someone else would describe the religious background; originally the late Dean of Winchester was to have written on 'The Church of England'. 'The degradation and bestialities were such that it was easy to picture this submerged populace as not human at all—not even humanizable'; yet Wesley, Professor Butterfield observes, could write, 'The very mob of Newcastle, in the height of their rudeness, have commonly some humanity left'. How characteristic here is the 'commonly' as well as the magnanimity! The magnanimity reappears in the chapter on 'John Wesley' by Dr Maldwyn Edwards, who quotes Charles Wesley's tribute to his brother, 'I never yet heard him speak one unkind word of Mr Hill or Mr Toplady', and Southey's remark that 'wherever he went, John Wesley's presence made a festival among his friends'. Dr Edwards also stresses Wesley's importance as a social reformer: 'no one of national importance had denounced the slave trade and argued for its abolition until John Wesley published his *Thoughts on Slavery* (1774)'.

In place of 'the Church of England', we next have 'The Theological Originality of John Wesley and Continental Spirituality', by M. Jean Orcibal, of the Sorbonne. This, as M. Orcibal states, is 'mainly composed of material' published fifteen years ago in the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, and as a specialist article on the influence on Wesley of certain Scottish and Continental writers it is first-class. In the present volume its appropriateness seems open to question. It upsets the balance, and was bound to do so, unless accompanied by an equally careful account of the influence on Wesley of English Puritan writers, such as is adumbrated in Dr John Newton's *Methodism and the Puritans*. Furthermore, Wesley here appears more remarkable in his reading of Archbishop Leighton, Henry Scougal and the French Catholics than the facts warrant. In his original article M. Orcibal observed that Leighton and Scougal were among the

authors commended to Wesley by Philip Doddridge, Leighton as *omni laude major*; but here Doddridge is not mentioned. M. Orcibal has worked on Wesley's library at Richmond College. In the library of New College, London, we have Doddridge's copy of Leighton in Latin; the copy of Doddridge's translation of Leighton given by the Countess of Huntingdon to Doddridge's Academy at Northampton; the Academy's copies of Pascal and Fénelon; and Isaac Watts' copy of Poiret's edition of Armelle Nicolas. The influence of these writers, as of the German pietists (and Franck translated Molinos), was in fact *general* within the Evangelical Revival. Despite this caveat, it is good to have the results of M. Orcibal's researches made available in English. Wesley's 'originality' in the matter he understands as 'ability to select and assimilate rather than to create'. His discussion of the way Wesley does this makes his essay a most striking contribution.

The next chapter, on Charles Wesley, by the late Dr W. F. Lofthouse, opens to those who did not know Lofthouse something of 'the rich treasure of the mind and memory of the greatest of Oxford's Methodist sons' to which tribute was paid in this QUARTERLY earlier in the year. The 'utter devotion to the Saviour (this was his most frequent name for Jesus)' and the 'delight in the Communion of the Saints' there mentioned are both here; in Lofthouse, and in Lofthouse partly *because* in Charles Wesley. He draws attention to Wesley's way of

> 'ending his hymns, whatever their burden, in the courts of heaven. Into the earthly songs of praise breaks the music of the archangels. The mourner convinced of sin is pointed to the Saviour at God's right hand.... All things run out, not into a mystery but into the sure unerring light of the Saviour....
>
> He was far too conscious to the end that he had been redeemed from sin and death, to overlook for a moment the difference between the sinner and his Saviour.... To speak about the Church as an extension of the Incarnation would have been as impossible for Charles Wesley as to speak about himself as another Christ, or as Christ himself.'

For comparison and daring contrast the poets triumphant rise in bright array.

> 'But to travel to Calvary is to leave behind Dunsinane and Gaza and the windy plains of Troy, and to look into the eyes of pity and terror there is not only to look into the misery of the world's broken heart, it is to be aware of the approach of God; of man as God's creature; of man's estrangement from God; and of God who rises as the sun with healing in his wings.'

After this, anything would seem dull! We pass to four chapters on 'The People called Methodists'. These do not deal with the increase and geographical spread of early Methodism or with its place in the religious life of its time, but continue the 'denominational' approach. The Rev. Rupert Davies, the other editor of the volume, considers 'Our Doctrine'; the Rev.

John Lawson 'Our Discipline'; Dr Frank Baker 'Polity'; and the Rev. A. Raymond George 'The Means of Grace'. The variety in form also continues. In sharp contrast with Professor Butterfield's chapter, much of Mr Lawson's chapter consists of references, sometimes twenty or more in a single footnote. Dr Baker's chapter runs to forty-two pages and elucidates the society, the class and the band, the stewards and trustees, the helpers and assistants, the local preachers and travelling preachers, the circuit, the quarterly meeting and the conference, and much else besides. Mr George's chapter, a model of precise scholarship with its own cross-references, runs to only fourteen pages and is restricted to a single subject, namely an examination of Wesley's 'Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America' and the points in which this differs from the Book of Common Prayer. Mr George adds a few lines on the Love-Feast, the Watch-night and the Covenant Service as liturgical institutions characteristic of, though not originating in, Methodism.

The concluding chapter, 'Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century', by Dr John Walsh, of Jesus College, Oxford, is highly distinguished. Writing with verve as well as exactness, Dr Walsh first considers the 'three main problems, all connected', which faced Methodism at Wesley's death ('leadership; the relations of preachers and people; the relation of Methodism with the Church of England') and the sharpening differences between 'Church Methodists' and Methodist 'Dissenters'. This will lead on into the next volume. Dr Walsh also shows himself enviably familiar with the complex material of the Revival as a whole, alike in the Establishment as 'separate and distinct from Methodism' and among the Independents and Baptists, which by 1791 were 'vigorous and expanding churches'. The volume would have benefited greatly from an earlier, additional chapter by Dr Walsh on the Revival's origins and evolution.[1]

Inevitably, John Wesley presides over these pages. We see him as autocrat. 'The only serious charge which has been laid against him', Dr Maldwyn Edwards writes, 'is his love of power'. 'As long as any preacher joins with me he is to be directed by me in his work': to this Dr Walsh points as Methodism's 'fundamental rule'. Wesley would have preferred a single leader as his successor. This perhaps explains why, though Mr Lawson says 'Methodist ministerial order is presbyteral, its polity and discipline virtually episcopal', outsiders still sometimes think of Methodism as papal. We see Wesley as the inspired improviser. Dr Walsh writes of his 'cheerful experimentalism', his 'blend of opportunism and conservatism, that genius for watchful procrastination which marks the great statesman', and describes the 'Plan of Pacification' after his death as 'a triumph of the Wesleyan spirit in its pragmatism, its compromise, and its acceptance of the unavoidable'. M. Orcibal likewise calls attention to Wesley's 'contradictory attitudes' (in his original article he goes so far as to speak of Wesley's *volte-face* over Antoinette Bourignon), and Mr Lawson to what he calls the 'interesting ambiguity' of early Methodist membership. 'An Eel, no hold of him' is

how Lady Huntingdon once described Wesley to Howel Harris! We see Wesley as 'Little Primitive Christianity', in Church Order as well as in his personal life and devotion: 'the plea for the divine right of episcopacy', he wrote, 'was never heard of in the primitive Church'. This appeal to 'the old glorious, beautiful face of Christianity' (a yearning phrase of John Owen's) was common among the early Puritans. *Primitive Christianity Revived* was the title of a book published by William Penn in 1696. A few years before Wesley received the sobriquet, an early Arian, William Whiston, also published a book with this title. There is a constant with variants here which merits investigation.

Whether or not these unrelated studies will eventually together make a 'history' will not be clear till the later volumes appear, but such distinguished work deserved more careful editing. Dates are wrong, on one page even the date of Wesley's death and on another the date of publication of his *Standard Sermons*. His father's dying words 'The inward witness, son, the inward witness . . .' and his own 'You have nothing to do but to save souls' and 'Go always not to those that want you, but to those that want you most' are all cited in more than one form, as is G. C. Cell's description of Wesley's teaching as 'the necessary synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace and the Catholic ethic of holiness'. The index also is uncertain, especially for M. Orcibal's chapter, and is otherwise faulty: Jonathan Edwards was not the same man as Wesley's preacher John Edwards, nor was George Whitefield, the revivalist, the Methodist Book Steward with this name; Isaac Watts was not Watt of the steam engine, nor was John Owen the Owen who wrote *Methodism Unmasked*! These things are of small importance, but they do not look well in a work of which the final volume is to consist of documents and primary sources.

[1] This has in fact been contributed to G. V. Bennett and J. D. Walsh (ed.) *Essays in Church History in Memory of Norman Sykes* (1966).

FRANCIS ASBURY: 1745-1816

John T. Wilkinson

IN the American city of Washington, D.C., stands an equestrian statue. It depicts a rider in a long cloak and broad-brimmed hat, with book in hand and saddlebags by his side; the horse is tired and weary and is licking its knee. This is the statue of Francis Asbury—'the prophet of the long road'. A similar statue stands on the campus of Drew University. Today we commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his death, and in the parish where he was born.[1] It is his story that now we seek to unfold.

I

To recognize the background of Asbury's labours is important. Before he arrived in 1771 Methodism had already reached America. It is usual to regard the date of its beginning in the New World as 1766. The work of Wesley in his brief sojourn in Georgia in the 1730's, prior to his Aldersgate experience, and also the preaching of Whitefield were but preparatory, and had resulted in no lasting organization. At the beginning of 1776 a Methodist society was formed in New York by one Philip Embury, an Irish carpenter, who began to hold meetings in his own house; and 'about the same time' Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher, also from Ireland, settled in the State of Maryland, and, preaching there, formed societies. Soon afterwards they were joined by Captain Webb, a soldier who had been wounded in the Battle of Quebec, had heard Wesley preach in Bristol, and in 1765 had begun to preach. In 1768 the first Methodist Chapel, John Street, New York was built. It was in the same year that a letter from America reached Wesley requesting an English preacher. In response to this 'pressing call' two preachers were sent by the Leeds Conference of 1769; Richard Boardman went to New York and Joseph Pilmoor to Philadelphia. The call for further help continued, and in 1771, at the Bristol Conference, two were chosen—one Richard Wright (who three years later returned to England) and the other, Francis Asbury. Both reached Philadelphia on October 27, 1771. So began Asbury's supreme life-work; he left these shores never to return.

II

In his *Journal* Asbury writes:

> I was born in old England near the foot of Hampsted Bridge, in the parish of Handsworth . . . on 20th or 21st day of August, in the year of our Lord, 1745.

The site of his birth-place is known, though the old cottage no longer exists. Whilst he was still young his parents removed to Newtown Road, in the parish of Great Barr, two miles further away from Birmingham, and the house of his childhood is now a place of pilgrimage. His parents were 'people in common life . . . remarkable for their honesty and industry'.

Asbury owed a great deal to his mother, who, following the death of her other child, a daughter, in infancy, entered into a profound religious experience. Sent early to school by his father, he 'began to read the Bible between six and seven years of age, and greatly delighted in the historical part of it'. Even as a child Asbury 'had serious thoughts and a particular sense of the being of a God, and greatly feared both an oath and a lie'. On account of the harsh treatment from his schoolmaster, the father reluctantly removed him from school, and for a few months he lived 'as a servant in one of the wealthiest and most ungodly families we had in the parish', and his religious tendencies became stifled. When about thirteen and a half, he became apprenticed to a Mr Foxall, a Methodist from Monmouthshire, who had become foreman-blacksmith at the puddling-forge, about a mile from home. In this occupation Asbury remained about six-and-a-half years; 'during this time I enjoyed great liberty, and in the family was well-treated more like a son or an equal than an apprentice'. Here he experienced a deepening of his religious faith and also gained development of his physical frame.

The Asbury home was a centre for religious gatherings, and a newcomer to the neighbourhood, not a Methodist, gave a further impetus to young Asbury's religious experience:

> By his conversation and prayers I was awakened before I was fourteen years of age. . . . I began to pray morning and evening, being drawn by the cords of love.

His parents went to Great Barr parish church, but young Asbury forsook the ministrations of 'the dark priest' there, for the parish church of West Bromwich, where the Reverend Edward Stillingfleet and his curate preached with Methodist enthusiasm and plainness. Asbury writes: 'I became very serious, reading a great deal'—particularly the sermons of Whitefield and Cennick. He sought to learn about Methodism. His mother advised him to go over to Wednesbury, where the enthusiasm, both in prayer and preaching, deeply impressed him and he became a regular visitor. In the summer of 1760, when he was about fifteen, Alexander Mather came to the circuit, and under his passionate preaching Asbury experienced a new sense of divine forgiveness:

> Young as I was the Word of God soon made deep impressions on my heart, which brought me to Jesus Christ . . . who showed me the excellency and necessity of holiness.

His newly-discovered faith now found expression. With a true understanding of his gifts, his mother took her son with her to her own fellowship meeting, where he read the Scriptures, gave out the hymns and eventually expounded scripture-passages. In his father's house he began to hold meetings for prayer and bible-study. Alexander Mather was so impressed by young Asbury that, although only seventeen, he was appointed a class-leader of a small group of his own age—the members of which would walk over on Sundays to Wednesbury for the five A.M. services; then on to West Bromwich for morning and afternoon services, and back again at Wednesbury

for the evening service—loyal churchmen and loyal Methodists indeed!

At the age of eighteen Asbury became a local preacher and delivered his first sermon while standing behind a chair in a cottage—Manwood's Cottage at West Bromwich, a quarter of a mile south of Forge Mill Lane. Three, four and even five times a week he became accustomed to preach in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, whilst carrying on his daily work and for three happy years he thus continued.

In 1776 he was called out by Wesley to take the place of an itinerant preacher who had broken down in the Staffordshire and Gloucestershire area, and this work led to his being admitted on trial for the itinerancy the following year, and his appointment to the Bedford Circuit. Fully admitted in 1768, he was sent to Colchester. In 1769 he was back in Bedfordshire and in 1770 in Wiltshire. During these years he gained an insight into the normal work of a Methodist preacher, and disciplined himself in self-improvement. He is said to have gained the elements of Hebrew, Latin and Greek—and certainly Wesley noted his ability.

To the Bristol Conference in 1771 came the call from America and Asbury answered the call.

I had felt for half a year strong intimations in my mind that I should visit America, which I laid before the Lord, being unwilling to do my own will or to run before I was sent. During this time my trials were very great.—*Journal*, 1, p. 3.

Within a month Asbury was preaching his last sermon on English soil. His greatest trial on departure was his farewell to his parents:

Though it was grievous to flesh and blood, they consented to let me go. My mother is one of the tenderest parents in the world; but I believe she was blessed . . . with Divine assistance to part with me.—*Journal*, 1, p. 4.

He was never to see his parents again, and his affectionate letters and his sacrificial remittances of money sent to his parents indicate something of the cost of his parting from them.

Towards the end of August he was in Bristol. 'When I came I had not one penny of money: but the Lord soon opened the hearts of friends, who supplied me with clothes and ten pounds'. At sea, on September 12 he writes significantly:

I will set down a few things that lie on my mind. Whither am I going? To the New World. What to do? To gain honours? No! I am going to live to God and to bring others so to do. . . . If God does not acknowledge me in America, I will soon return to England.—*Journal*, 1, p. 4.

Asbury landed in Philadelphia on October 27th, 1771, and wrote in his *Journal*:

When I came near the American shore my very heart melted within me to think from whence I came, whither I was going and what I was going about.—p. 7.

Such was the young man of twenty-six years who thus closed the chapter of his English life, for he never returned to the land of his birth. He had entered the New World.

III

At this point we may pause to observe the condition of this New World into which Asbury had now come. The population of the thirteen American colonies was less than a million-and-a-half: Boston was the chief town with a population of less than 30,000: New York about 20,000. Apart from a few towns in the eastern region near the coast the interior was sparsely populated, and the middle and western regions remained virtually unexplored. Politically and socially the colonies were restless and irritated under George III's reign. Sooner or later revolt was bound to arise, and, centring particularly in the New England states, the outbreak of hostilities occurred two years after Asbury's arrival. This formed the immediate setting of his work.

Shortly after his coming Asbury declared his conviction that the Methodist principle of itinerancy was not being fulfilled. He writes—Tuesday, 20th November, 1771:

> I have not yet the thing which I seek—a circulation of preachers to avoid partiality and popularity. However I am fixed to the Methodist plan and do what I do faithfully as to God.—*Journal*, 1, p. 10.

Two days later he expresses the same concern—in a passage which may well be regarded as his *apologia pro vita sua*:

> At present I am disappointed. My brethren are unwilling to leave the cities.... I am in trouble, and more trouble is at hand for I am determined to make a stand against all partiality. I have nothing to seek but the glory of God, nothing to fear but his displeasure. I came over with an upright intention, and through the grace of God I will make it appear, and I am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches, nor will I ever fear the face of man.... Whomsoever I please or displease I will be faithful to God, to the people and to my own soul.—*Journal*, 1, p. 10.

Asbury felt that Boardman and Pilmoor had forsaken the itinerant system. Asbury was soon to begin preaching on tour, establishing appointments for 'a preacher's round'.

So began Asbury's great itinerating ministry which continued for forty-five years with unflagging zeal. In these apostolic journeyings, Asbury rode through America some 275,000 miles, mostly on horseback—an average of over a hundred miles a week, often through wild and dangerous countryside and with many hazards. Not even Wesley himself laboured as vastly in his own amazing itinerant ministry. Asbury exceeded him in mileage and above all in the perils of his journeyings. Thirty, forty or even fifty miles a day is a frequent record in his *Journal*—and often without food or rest, and not seldom under pressing illness. We may well pause in illustration of his experiences as recorded in his Journal:

Tuesday, 11 May, 1790. In Kentucky. I was strangely overdone for want of sleep, having been deprived of it in my journey through the wilderness.... Our way is over mountains, steep hills, deep rivers and muddy creeks; a thick growth of weeds for miles together, and no inhabitants but wild beasts and savage men.
Thursday, March 20, 1794. In North Carolina. We came to Howes Ford ... where we could neither get a canoe or guide. We entered the water in an improper place and were soon among the rocks and in the whirlpools: my head swam and my horse was affrighted: the water was to my knees and it was with difficulty we retreated to the same shore.
December 19, 1796. North Carolina. We had to ride early; my horse trots stiff: and no wonder for I have ridden him, upon an average 5,000 miles a year for five years successively.

Asbury and his preachers rode the Eastern seaboard far and wide until the words 'Methodist Circuit Rider' became part of the American vocabulary. Such means of transport proved suitable for the conditions of colonial life. Rightly has Asbury been named 'The Prophet of the Long Road'.

During the winter of 1771-2 Asbury began the riding of his first circuit in America. As he went on he found much that was impressive: the large number of circuits, preaching-places and members, and a distinct interest in Methodism. But he was concerned because of the lack of discipline in the societies; the normal structure of Methodism was wanting. On October 10th, 1772, Asbury received a letter from Wesley urging him to secure strict discipline, and also appointing him 'assistant' or superintendent of the American societies, thus succeeding Boardman in authority. Though he was only 27 years old he took charge of all the churches and appointments subject to Wesley himself.

In the spring of 1773 Asbury made his way back to Philadelphia in order to greet the newest arrivals from England—Thomas Rankin and George Shadford, accompanied by Captain Webb who had gone to England to urge Wesley to send over more preachers to the New World. Rankin came now as General Superintendent of the American work. So for a time he superseded Asbury.

On July 14th, 1773, the First Conference met in Philadelphia—there were ten preachers and in all 1,160 class members were recorded. Two things were emphasised. The Methodist preachers and people of America were placed under the definite authority of Wesley himself; further, the preachers were forbidden to administer the sacraments—a ruling which was particularly aimed at Strawbridge who did so minister already. The British preachers at the Conference, loyal to the Church of England, asserted that Methodists should attend the parish church for sacramental administrations —despite the fewness of Anglican parishes. Eventually, as we shall see, Wesley himself solved the matter by ordination.

Although Rankin and Asbury were both concerned for men's souls and for Methodist discipline, they were wide apart in their views of the American situation and in regard to the manner in which the discipline should be administered. With great sagacity and far-sightedness, young Asbury perceived what must be the outcome of the Revolution which was emerging.

The year 1773 was a fateful one both for America and for Asbury himself. On February 19th the first shot of the American War of Independence was fired at Lexington—and the war thus begun wore on wearily until the Treaty of Peace on September 8th, 1783. In this crisis it was a profound grief to Asbury and the Methodists in America when Wesley's toryism got the better of him and, with a change of view, he wrote his 'Calm Address to the American Colonies."[11] Asbury was compelled to act with caution for he was known to be one of Wesley's preachers, and as such was suspect. He withdrew from public activity for a time and managed to escape personal injury. In the end his loyalty to the fundamental rightness of the American position gained him an overwhelming authority and influence. Twenty years later, when under urge to return to England to see his parents he wrote:

If I were to leave America I should break my heart: and if I stay I shall perhaps break my constitution; but here I must die. May you find a safe passage from England and I from America to glory!—*Letters*: Nov 20th, 1797, p. 166.

The action of the colonists scattered both the Anglican clergy and the Methodist preachers. All the latter went back to England, save Asbury, who stood alone, at great risk to himself, and for a while hidden for safety by friends, yet all the time continuing his apostolic ministry. Although under pressure to return to England with the rest, he stood firm and unyielding. In his *Journal* (7th August, 1775) he writes:

I can by no means agree to leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America. It would be an eternal dishonour to the Methodists that we should all leave three thousand souls, who desire to commit themselves to our care; neither is it part of a good Shepherd to leave his flock in time of danger: therefore I am determined by the grace of God not to leave them let the consequence be what it may. Our friends here appeared to be distressed above measure at the thought of being forsaken by the preachers.

During these war years Asbury clung to his task of winning men to Christ, gathering them into societies and laying the foundation of that organization which grew into the Methodist Episcopal Church. There was phenomenal advance, and by 1783 when the war ended, the membership of the church had reached 13,740. For Asbury these had been days of intense personal discipline.

IV

The year 1784 was to be of momentous importance for Asbury's experience. There are the same toils and hardships to endure, the same stern determination to extend the cause of Christ, the same rough riding, climbing mountains, crossing rivers, wading through swamps, 'worming the way through scratching woods'; much hunger and hard fare, sleeping on floors of rough cabins or out in the open—and withal the same spells of sickness —but there is the sense of a deep privilege and the honour of a great trust. 'I am always on the wing, but it is for God'. It is the same commitment (February 15th, 1784):

My soul thirsteth for holiness in myself and others. I found my heart led out in prayer for those I cannot preach to. The Lord is my witness that if my whole body, yea, every hair of my head, could labour and suffer they should be freely given up for God and souls.—*Journal*, 1, p. 456.

For a long time Asbury's thoughts had reached out westwards to new horizons, and on July 1st he began the ascent of the long range of the Alleghany mountains, which he was to cross more than sixty times before his life work was done. It was the opening up of a new land.

1784 was also the year in which Wesley made the momentous decision in regard to his preachers. He was aware of the unsatisfactory position of both the preachers and the people in America—aware of the vast number who had been deprived of the sacraments for many years and some who had never received them. He had attempted to solve the problem by an appeal in 1780 to the Bishop of London to ordain Methodist preachers for the work in America, but his request was refused. It was then that Wesley took the matter into his own hands—having as far back as 1746 become convinced that 'bishops and presbyters are the same order and consequently have the same right to ordain'. It was early in September, 1784, that Wesley ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, together with Dr Thomas Coke, who should undertake the superintendency of the American work. On September 18th these three set sail for America. Asbury was to be colleague to Coke, with equal powers; others were also to be ordained by these preachers, thus conferring power to administer the sacraments. It was on November 14th, 1784, that Asbury himself and Coke met in Barrett's Chapel, Maryland, and on this occasion the design of organizing the Methodists into an independent episcopal church was opened up to the preachers present. It was agreed to call a General Conference to meet at Baltimore the ensuing Christmas (*Journal*, I, p. 471-2). Of this Conference Asbury's *Journal* makes a significant entry:

It was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church and to have superintendents, elders and deacons.... Dr Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the superintendency of the Church, and my ordination followed, after being previously ordained deacon and elder.—*Journal*, 1, p. 474.

On June 1st Coke returned to England. Four days later Asbury rode to Abingdon to preach the foundation-sermon of the new educational institution which was the result of deliberation between Coke and Asbury and was intended to serve the same purpose as Kingswood School, founded by Wesley, in England. It was called Cokesbury College—and Coke had chosen the word 'college' instead of 'school'. Both these things gave Wesley offence. He wrote to Asbury:

In one point, my dear brother, I was a little afraid both the Doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great; I creep, you strut along; I found a school, you a college—nay and call it after your own names. O beware, do not seek to be something!—20 Sept., 1788.[3]

In 1786, the Form of Discipline for the new church was being prepared under Asbury's direction, and his *Journal* indicates 'gracious times' at love-feasts and at sacraments now being administered under the new order. There was some discontent because the preachers and people were not willing to accept orders from England now that the colonies had become independent, and before long the American Methodists decided to call Asbury, as the General Superintendent, by the title of 'Bishop'—a further thing which drew from Wesley a rather sharp reproof—as the letter just quoted above reveals:

> One instance of this your greatness has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called 'Bishop'? I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men call me knave or a fool, a rascal or a scoundrel and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me 'Bishop'. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this!—viii. 9.[4]

With typical self-restraint Asbury summed up the letter as 'containing a few unpleasant expressions'.

In the years that followed we see Asbury throughout the States, North and South, as hitherto, taking immense journeys, through extraordinary difficulties and dangers, yet constantly preaching on his tours in labouring for souls—and withal exercising discipline in the societies, and also further building up in his mind the structure of the Church so recently born. Following the organization set forth in 1784, the preachers met in Conference, but as the Church grew this arrangement was found difficult, and so between 1789 and 1792 Asbury tried a 'Council', consisting of bishops and presiding elders, who should frame policy and do the business of the Church. This did not prove successful, however, and so in 1792 the First General Conference was held—all the preachers being eligible to attend—and this to meet every four years.

It is interesting to record that, by decision of this Conference in New York on June 1st, 1789, Coke and Asbury together presented a loyal address to General Washington on behalf of the newly-formed Methodist Episcopal Church, congratulating him on his recent inauguration as the first President of the United States—an act which by some preachers in England was interpreted as an act of disloyalty to George III.—*Journal*, I, p. 597; *Letters*, p. 70.

The pressure of the situation upon Asbury at this time may be gleaned from the two following extracts from his *Journal*. At the end of 1790 he writes:

> My soul has been kept in great peace and almost constant prayer. I wish to feel so placid as not to have any acid in my temper, nor a frown or wrinkle on my brow; to bear all things, do all things, suffer all things from the ignorance or weakness of the children of God.—*Journal*, 1, p. 658.

He begins the following year with this entry:

My fare is sometimes poor; my rides are long, my horse is lame; yet whilst Christ is mine, I feel nothing like murmuring or discontent.—*Journal*, 1, p. 664.

V

On 1st November, 1792 came the General Conference at Baltimore. Dr Coke was present but Asbury did not attend. Important debate was to take place concerning the exclusive right to station preachers and he thought it wiser to be excused from assisting to make laws by which he himself was to be governed. For some time there had been a demand for more democratic expression in the organization of the Church. Some desired that laymen should be included in the Conference; some objected to the right of the bishop to station preachers. On these grounds in the early 1790's two divisions within the Church occurred; one in South Carolina led by William Hammett, a preacher brought over by Coke; the other by one, James O'Kelly, in Virginia. Largely owing to these movements, these immediate years showed no advance in membership of the Church. *Journal*, II, p. 706.

With this General Conference the Methodist Episcopal Church entered upon a new era. Discipline had been established and the episcopal character of the Church secured. The work of itinerant oversight and that of administration committed to Coke and Asbury could not now be challenged. The mind and spirit of Asbury was relieved and the road for advance opened up. The work of the Church had spread from New England to Georgia and had advanced westward across the Alleghanies. At the time of this General Conference in 1792 there were nearly 6,000 members west of the mountains. The 'Christmas Conference' of 1784 had reported just under 15,000 members in all with 83 preachers; in 1792 the numbers were 65,980 members with 266 preachers. The movement of population across the barrier of the Alleghanies, entering into the Indian-inhabited areas with vast stretches of rich fertile land, was met by a growing band of daring and devoted preachers who were men of great power. Multitudes were converted in a wave of spirital energy. In all this Asbury continued his journeyings—preaching, raising subscriptions for chapels and schools, and dealing with matters of administration. So great is the pressure upon him that on April 13th, 1793, he writes: 'I am led to wish the Conference would elect another Bishop, which might afford some help' (I, p. 756). At this time Cokesbury College was a weighty financial burden. During the months of 1793 Asbury was ill with fever and in great pain: he lets blood, uses flax-seed and betony-tea, and now and again powerful emetics; yet on he goes still preaching, ordaining and riding—as for example, on January 13, 1794, travelling forty-six miles without food for man or beast (*Journal*, II, p. 4). For a time the work seemed overwhelming. He declines to face the western regions during 1794 and writes (January 20th):

The American Alps, the deep snows and great rains, swimming the creeks and rivers, riding in the night, sleeping on earthen floors, more or less of which I experience if I go to the Western country, might at this time cost me my life. I have only been able to preach four times in three weeks.—*Journal*, II, p. 4.

Weariness and weakness continued to attend him in the years immediately afterwards, yet, notwithstanding a serious lung condition and despite medical advice, with any return of strength, he rides again. Here is an entry in his *Journal*, Oct. 26th, 1779 (II, p. 210).

I tremble and faint under my burden: having to ride about six thousand miles annually; to preach from three to five hundred sermons a year; to write and read so many letters—all this or more besides the stationing of 300 preachers; reading many hundred pages and spending many hours in conversation by day and by night, with preachers and people of various characters, among whom are many distressing cases.

At the Baltimore Conference on May 18th, 1800, Richard Whatcoat was ordained Bishop, and so provision was made for sharing Asbury's burden, Dr Coke being frequently in England. Now there were six Conferences of the Church. This division of labour brought some restoration of Asbury's health. A movement of religious revival sprang up, though not in all regions. In Kentucky and Tennessee he records that he travelled six hundred miles and had only six appointments.

It was on October 19th, 1800, that Asbury came to Nashville and there met the great camp-meeting movement. His description of the scene is a vivid one:

The stand was in the open-air, embosomed in a wood of lofty beech trees. The ministers of God, Methodist and Presbyterian, united their labours and mingled with the simplicity of primitive times, Fires blazing here and there dispelled the darkness, and the shouts of the redeemed captives and the cries of precious souls struggling into life broke the silence of midnight.—*Journal*, II, p. 257.

VI

In the *Journal* towards the end of 1801 comes a significant entry. Writing in South Carolina on Thursday, 17th December, 1801:

I have ridden eighty sandhill miles.... I feel my old age and infirmities; my eyes and feet are feeble; but the glory to God, I have strong faith for myself and for the prosperity of Zion.—*Journal*, II, p. 318.

His most recent tour had covered about 1,700 miles and he writes for December 26th, 1801:

I had close communion with God, and enlargement in preaching the word of life to saints, seekers and sinners.—*Journal*, II, p. 319.

Early in the month of April at the Baltimore Conference the news reached him of the death of his mother—at 88 years of age—his father had died about four years earlier. He writes a moving tribute:

For fifty years her hands, her home, her heart were open to receive the people of God and ministers of Christ. I am now drawn out in thankfulness to God, who hath saved a mother of mine and I trust a father also, who are already in glory,

where I hope to meet them both, after time and cares and sorrows shall have ceased with me: and when glory shall not only beam but open on my soul for ever—April 5th, 1802. *Journal*, II, p. 333.

So was broken the last link that bound Asbury to England. From now on he goes forward to the completion of his labours, lonely, eager yet disciplined, and utterly indifferent to any influence that might deflect him from his great purpose—and all this despite recurring sickness, bringing him 'dumb sabbaths' when he could not preach. A blow came when on July 5th, 1806, Bishop Whatcoat, his faithful friend for forty years, died. It left Asbury a much broken man to continue the charge alone for the next two years. But the spirit of the man knows inner satisfaction:

Sunday, June 22, 1806 . . . What is the toil of beating over rocks, hills, mountains and deserts, five thousand miles a year! Nothing—when we reflect it is done for God, for Christ, for the Holy Spirit, for the Church of God, the souls of poor sinners, the preachers of the Gospel in seven Conferences, one hundred and thirty thousand members and one or two millions who congregated with us in solemn worship of God. O! it is nothing!—*Journal*, II, pp. 509-10.

He goes on his long trail once more—facing the hazards of the way—at one time in acute danger through a mountain landslide which brought his carriage overhanging a precipice of fifty feet with the river below (*Journal* II. p. 538); at another, so troubled with swollen feet that he has to walk on crutches (*Journal*, II, p. 542).

At the General Conference at Baltimore on May 18th, William McKendree was chosen as Bishop in succession to Whatcoat—the first native Bishop and a great leader in missionary enterprise. Asbury, now sixty-two, writes: 'The burden is now borne by two pairs of shoulders instead of one; the care is cast upon two hearts and heads' (*Journal*, II, p. 570). It is interesting to record McKendree's reflections concerning Asbury, in a letter to Dr Coke at this time:

The old soldier travels sometimes on horseback, and part of his time on crutches; he preaches standing, sitting, on his knees as the necessity of the case requires. He seems determined to labour more than any of us—*Methodist Magazine* November 1809.

At this time Asbury refers several times to the possibility of his reaching out as far as the Mississippi, but this he was never able to accomplish. He writes—September 11th, 1808:

To pant for breath and unable to walk, kneel or stand up straight to preach, makes public speaking serious work for me.—*Journal*, II, p. 578.

Again—January 20th, 1811—in North Carolina:

I am happy and my heart is pure and my eye is single—but I am sick and weak and in heaviness by reason of suffering and labour. Sometimes I am ready to cry out: Lord, take me home to rest! Courage my soul!—*Journal*, II, p. 662.

Yet, in July, with amazing resilience, he is crossing the St Lawrence to Canada, and making nearly fifty miles a day over desperate roads (*Journal* II, p. 677): then follows a sentence which is greatly revealing: 'My strong affection for the people of the United States came with strange power upon me, whilst I was crossing the line'. He had verily become American. He had covered 1,600 miles in sixty days!

The General Conference of 1812 was held in New York, and it proved to be the last Asbury attended. How mightily the Gospel had prevailed in America since the First Conference in which he had shared is seen by the following: the membership was now 195,375 with 688 preachers and some 2,000 local preachers. Yet he still labours on: He writes from Ohio in September 13th, 1812: 'I shall have travelled 6,000 miles in eight months, and met nine Conferences and have been present at ten camp-meetings'—*Journal*, II, p. 708.

Nevertheless there were now premonitions of the end; asthma, spitting of blood tell their own tale. He writes on Oct. 22nd, 1815:

> My eyes fail . . . I will resign the stations to Bishop McKendree. I will take away my feet. It is my fifty-fifth year of my ministry and forty-fifth of labour in America. My mind enjoys great peace and divine consolation—*Journal*, II, p. 794.

Asbury's *Journal* stops abruptly at Thursday, December 7th, 1815. The final sentence save one reads: 'My consolations are great. I live in God from moment to moment—broken in pieces'. In the months that followed it is recorded that he appeared to be more like a walking skeleton than a living man; yet his great mind seemed to rise superior to his bodily weakness, and to bid defiance to the hastening approach of dissolution. In his journeyings he reached Richmond, Virginia, where he preached his last sermon on March 24th, 1816. Unable to stand or walk he was carried from his carriage to the pulpit and seated upon a table. The final picture has been drawn by Francis Hollingsworth, the last editor of Asbury's *Journal*:

> To behold a venerable old man, under the dignified character of an ecclesiastical patriarch, whose silver locks indicated that time had already numbered his years, and whose pallid countenance and trembling limbs presaged that his earthly race was nearly finished; to see . . . a soul beaming with immortality and a heart kindled with divine fire from the altar of God—to see such a man and to hear him address them in the name of the Lord of Hosts, on the grand concerns of time and eternity!—*Journal*, II, p. 802f.

A week later he died in his chair in the house of his old friend George Arnold at Spottsylvania, on March 31st, 1816, in the 71st year of his age. He had come to the end of the long road—right on to the end . . .

VII

In final estimate what, then, is the picture we have of Francis Asbury. His appearance has been described by his friend, Henry Boehm, in his *Reminiscences* (1865):

Five feet nine in height . . . he was erect in person and of very commanding appearance. His features were rugged but his countenance was intelligent, though time and care had furrowed it with deep wrinkles. . . . His eyes were of a bluish cast, and so keen that it seemed as if he could look right through a person. He had . . . beautiful white locks which hung above his brow and shoulders. and added to his venerable appearance. . . . He seemed born to sway others . . . His dress was a pattern of neatness and plainness . . . He wore grey clothes; a low-crowned broad-brimmed hat, a frock coat, which was generally buttoned up to the neck. He wore breeches with leggings . . . sometimes he wore buckled shoes.

Such is the figure of the man whose story we have told.

His *Journal* reveals a quality of mind, in particular, in his searching study of the Scriptures, rising early lest the opportunity should be missed. He was familiar with the original tongues, and the summaries of his preached sermons reveal the true exegete. He writes—July 28th, 1779:

Arose, as I commonly did before five o'clock to study the Bible. I find none like it; and find it of more consequence for a preacher to know his Bible well than all the books and languages in the world.

Yet the width of his reading is striking. His accomplishment becomes the more impressive when it is remembered that the roughness of his journeyings made reading impossible whilst he travelled along. He reads theology, history, biography, and a careful analysis shows that he was most frequently in the pages of John Wesley and Richard Baxter.

Asbury was a man of powerful spirit. Amidst countless frustrations he went forward without murmur: he was fearless in his stand for righteousness, deeply concerned, for example, in the matter of slave-owning and in the widespread evil of whisky-drinking; of great courage amidst threatening situations; of amazing endurance despite the pressures of repeated illness. He knew great moments of spiritual exaltation, revealing a mystical quality in his nature:

I have a glorious prospect of a boundless ocean of love and immense degrees of holiness opening to my view; and now renew my covenant with the Lord that I may glory in Him with my body and spirit which are his. . . . Though unworthy, utterly unworthy, I am blessed with the sweet gales of God's love. . . . My desire is that prayer should mix with every thought with every wish, with every word, with every action; that all may ascend as a holy, acceptable sacrifice to God —September 24th, 1778. *Journal* I, p. 281.

Here lies the secret of his greatness—his life was marked by unbroken commitment to and communion with God.

Asbury has sometimes been accused of exercising autocratic rule. This position needs to be understood. Again and again in his *Journal* he reveals his profound belief in the democratic principle, and at his ordination, the command of Wesley notwithstanding, he was unwilling to accept episcopal authority without its being first granted to him as a sacred trust by the deliberate vote of his ministerial brethren. It is clear that although he took

upon himself the authority to appoint his preachers, they trusted him and knew that he asked nothing of them that he did not impose upon himself. However great their hardships they knew that his own would be greater still. This control of the preachers and their appointments was the main factor in his success.

Finally, as we seek to put the story into the perspective of the intervening years, it would appear that in the Providence of God Asbury was sent to America at a most critical time in its spiritual history. We see that he stands forth as a great explorer of the American frontiers, bringing education and moral culture into thousands of homes within many communities, and above all bringing communication of spiritual power in a gospel of personal salvation. We see him as the builder of American Methodism—and as the supreme influence in the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which is his monument. His greatness and his achievements may well be summarized in the words of President Coolidge, who spoke at the unveiling of the statue in Washington, in 1924:

Who shall say where his influence on the immortal souls of men shall end? How many homes must have been hallowed? What a multitude of frontier mothers must have brought their children to him for blessing.... How many temples dot our landscape, how many institutions of learning all trace their existence to the sacrifice and service of this one circuit rider. He is entitled to rank as one of the builders of our nation.

[1] The Third W. F. Lofthouse Memorial Lecture delivered at Handsworth College, Birmingham. March 31st, 1966.

[2] The following passage from Wesley's 'A Calm Address to our American Colonies' (1775) (*Works* ed. 1861, vol. xi, pp. 81-88) is the important reference:

> Would the being independent of England make you more free? Far, very far from it. It would hardly be possible for you to steer clear between anarchy or tyranny. But suppose after numberless dangers and mischiefs, you should settle into one or more republics, would a republican government give you more liberty, either religious or civil? By no means. No governments under heaven are so despotic as the republican; no subjects are governed in so arbitrary a manner as those of a commonwealth... Republics show no mercy.... Let us put away our sins! the real ground of all our calamities; which never will or can be thoroughly removed till we fear God and honour the King!

In his *Journal* I, p. 181, Asbury comments:

> I received an affectionate letter from Mr Wesley, and am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America.... However, it discovers Mr Wesley's conscientious attachment to the government under which he lived... Some inconsiderate persons have taken occasion to censure the Methodists in America on account of Mr Wesley's political sentiments.

[3] *Letters of John Wesley* (Standard ed.), vol. viii. p. 9.

[4] ibid.

THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE AND THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

T. Glyn Thomas

I

JESUS CHRIST—*kainos or neos*? That is the question. And, if *kainos*, different in kind as the steam is different from the water before it has been brought to the boil?—an analogy often employed to 'explain' the distinction between Christ and those who preceded Him, but which always strikes the present writer as more in the nature of a subterfuge than an explanation.

This article is written out of the conviction that there is a contemporary emphasis on the unity of the Bible which tends to belittle the uniqueness of the Christ. Too long have our thoughts been enslaved by the oft-quoted dictum of St Augustine, *'Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet'*, forgetting that the second part of his dictum is true in a sense in which the first part is not.

Alan Richardson asserts that the liturgical use of the Bible in the Church is based upon the typological interpretation of the Bible, and he quotes these words from R. V. G. Tasker's *The Old Testament in the New Testament*: 'To them [the New Testament writers] the whole story of the people of Israel, their divine call, their redemption from Egypt, the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, the triumphant establishment of the worship of Jehovah in the Holy Land, the building of the temple, the tragedy of the Exile, and the subsequent resurrection and return of the remnant to Zion—are all foreshadowings of the greater and final salvation given in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, apart from which they have in themselves no abiding significance and are not fully comprehensible. And the same may be said with reference to the attitude of Jesus Himself.'[1] Richardson himself writes: 'If we think of prophecy as merely the discernment of the underlying purpose of contemporary events, which carries with it an insight into the pattern and goal of history, we shall understand that the fulfilment of prophecy means the corroboration by later historical happenings of the prophetic foreshadowings of the truth, the typological fulfilment, that is to say, of patterns that have been given in the earlier stages of Israel's history. It is this fulfilment of Israel's history, and therefore of the insights of the prophets, which the New Testament claims to have been accomplished in the coming of Jesus and His Church.'[2]

Christ, it is claimed, came not to annul the Law and the Prophets, nor only to supplement them; He came to fulfil them. But does the evidence not take us farther? Are we not forced to add, and not only to fulfil, but to supersede? Was it not this superseding that Judaism could not stomach? 'He [Christ] came to do something infinitely more difficult than to destroy the Law. His task was to fulfil it, but, be it noted, not in the letter but

in the spirit,' writes J. G. S. Thompson, adding that 'this insistence on a spiritual, not a literal, fulfilment of the Old Testament is noticeable even in His handling of Old Testament incidents when preaching.'[3] But was not that more than to fulfil, namely to supersede? Is there not here a difference that makes all the difference.

To what lengths those who wish to emphasize the unity of the Bible at the expense of the uniqueness of the Christ will go may be gathered from words which Thompson quotes from ex-Principal Curtis: 'To save mankind He [Christ] saved the Bible of Israel, raising it from the death of literalism, and quickening it with fresh vitality for the whole world. There can be no higher originality than this resurrection power, no revolution more profound.'[4] And from a passage from Wilhelm Vischer's *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments* (Vol. 1 of which appears in an English translation by A. B. Crabtree) where the author, after quoting Luther to the effect that 'the man' who wrestled with Jacob was Jesus Christ, goes on to claim that, fantastic though the interpretation may appear it is in fact conclusive, that it is the central miracle attested by all the stories and words of the Bible, that Jesus appeared as a man upon the earth to wrestle with men, and to be overcome of them. 'In Jesus, and only in Him, does the inconceivable happen, that the Almighty gives Himself into the power of men. However fiercely reason may revolt against this, this and nothing else is the message of Jesus the crucified.'

Underlying all such exposition as this is the assumption that the progression from the Old Testament to the New Testament is one of simple evolution. Whereas the advent of Jesus is an absolutely new and unparalleled event in history, in which the discontinuity with the past is as marked as the continuity. It is vitiated by the assumption that the prophecy of the advent of a new age was definitive of the outcome, whereas what came in Christ was intrinsically beyond the reach of prediction. 'The action of God in Christ assumed the aspect of something irruptive . . . . The bare fact of a new age might have been predicted but its contours, much more its life-giving spirit, came as things unprecedented, unpredicted and altogether original. And it is the experience of history at a God-given moment being utterly transformed that constitutes the most radical *Sitz im Leben* for the student of the New Testament.'[5]

To say, with the writer to the Hebrews, that 'God spoke to our forefathers . . . in fragmentary and varied fashion through the prophets' (N E B) is not to deny that when He came to speak in His Son He spoke a new word. And to say, with a recent writer, that Christ saw in His betrayal, in the world's opposition to Him, and in His death and resurrection the fulfilment of Old Testament Scripture is to say too little. I hope to show that He saw in them a great deal more.

Let us, first of all, consider the uniqueness of Christ's Person. We shall find that 'it mocks at all comparison'. If the Incarnation means anything, it means that Jesus Christ was a new fact in human history, initiating a new order of humanity, a new force inaugurating a new epoch in human development. If the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel asserts anything, it

asserts that in Christ we have a mode of divine activity unique and unprecedented, beginning a new order. All attempts to 'explain' Him are futile. We simply do not possess the categories to explain Him. 'The fundamental issue,' writes J. S. Bezzant, 'is this. If the Incarnation expresses anything factual, it is unique, and therefore cannot *ex hypothesi* be "explained" in terms derived from experience formed by leaving it out; since to explain means to relate satisfactorily to knowledge already possessed; and *thus* to "explain" the Incarnation would be to abolish its uniqueness. The affirmation that "God was in Christ" may be made on the basis of human experience, though even this, I think, is dependent upon the acceptance of some doctrine about Christ; but of the relation of the divine and human in Christ I cannot imagine that religious experience can have the smallest relevance.'[6]

To say that Jesus came into the world merely to fulfil the Scriptures and to be the fulfilment of prophecy is to make nonsense of the Incarnation. The unique individual is lost and turned into a puppet moved by strings. 'His acts are not merely acts of obedience but acts of creation, supremely His own.'[7]

Jesus in unique in all His relationships. First of all, in His relationship to God the Father. As a form of address to God the word *'Abba'* has no parallel, nor is there any parallel for His 'my Father' in place of 'our Father'. Similarly, His conception of God as One whose concern is with sinful men is without parallel.[8] There is nothing anywhere to put side by side with the confident intimacy of His experience of God. In the most important Christological verse in the New Testament—'Everything is entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son and those to whom the Son may choose to reveal him' (Mt 11^{27}; Lk 10^{22}, NEB)—'a bolt from the Johannine blue' as it has been described—Jesus claims that He alone knows God truly as Father. Only the Son has seen the Father and declared Him (Jn 1^{18}; 6^{46}), only the Son has descended from and ascended to heaven (Jn 3^{13}), the Son is the Holy One of God (Jn 6^{69}) who does what He sees the Father doing (Jn 5^{19}), whose words are God's words, who is from the world above, and so different from those of the world beneath (Jn $3^{13, 31}$), and who not only comes from above but has always existed (Jn 1^{1}, 8^{58}).

'The multiplication of examples yields ever the same result: if with the utmost zeal and conscientiousness, using the critical resources at our disposal, we occupy ourselves with the historical Jesus, the result is always the same: we find ourselves in the presence of God Himself. That is the unique fact to which the sources bear witness . . . This claim to divine authority is the origin of Christianity.'[9] Vincent Taylor maintains that 'a filial relationship to the Father, to which there is a parallel nowhere else, is the secret of the work and ministry of Jesus.'[10] And Diessmann insisted that the original Christianity is not theology or Christology (doctrine of God and Christ), but theology and Christolatry (worship of God and Christ). The Son stands in a unique relation to the Father; they

are no mystery to each other, and only to each other. Our experience of God depends upon His. 'If God in some measure lives and acts in us, it is because first, and without measure, He lived and acted in Christ.'[11]

II

We turn next to consider His relationship to God the Son, that is, to Himself. 'The Gospels tell the story of a human life; but humanity is not the last word about it.'[12] The consideration of what preceded Him could not enable men to predict His character and action. For who could predict, for instance, the possible results of the prayers of a sinless man in perfect communion with his Father? And Jesus claims to be sinless—'Which of you convicts me of sin?' His relationship to other men is that of sinless to sinners, which places Him in a different category altogether. He did not develop from bad to good, nor even from good to better, but from perfection to perfection. As Forsyth (greatest of British theologians, says Brunner) maintained, 'He stands with the Creator facing the created, not with the created facing the Creator.'[13] He claims also to have 'done among them the works which none other did'. He assumes authority to improve upon the moral legislation of the past ('You have heard that it was said . . . but I say to you . . .') and the 'power on earth to forgive sins'. He claims for Himself the personal allegiance of men. There is no uncertainty or disharmony in Him, such as we find occasionally even in the prophets. His attitude to God and life differs from that of others in its wholeness, simplicity, and finality. 'We cannot think that He had any unresolved discords in His own soul. His unique moral perfection lends to His words a unique authority.'[14] He is unique also in that He combined within Himself a perfect balance of male and female characteristics, and so became the great innovator in the relationship of men and women.[15] 'Christ either deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or He was Himself deluded, or He was divine. There is no getting out of this trilemma.'[16]

Richardson maintains (despite St Paul's significant silence in regard to the matter, as well as the absence of any reference to it in Mark and John) that the Virgin Birth of Christ is an integral part of the theology of the New Testament. It is, he states, a unique event without parallel either in the Old Testament or in the pagan world. It does not fit into the pattern of the births of 'religious geniuses' or 'divine men.' It will not do to try to pass it off as the traditional miraculous birth conventionally ascribed to all outstanding men, such as Hercules, Pythagoras, Plato, etc. In the whole of Hellenistic religion and mythology there is no parallel to the story of the Virgin Birth of Christ. 'There is no instance of a *virgin* birth amongst them, since they fall into the class of legends of a woman's becoming pregnant through intercourse with a divine being—a notion utterly repellant to the biblical mind.' Nor was the story of the Virgin Birth invented to fulfil Old Testament prophecies or types. In all the stories of miraculous births in the Old Testament (Isaac, Samson, Samuel) there is a human father.[17]

Similarly with the Resurrection of Christ. Neither in the Pentateuch nor

in the rest of the Old Testament is there any parallel for it, despite the belief of the Apostolic Church that Christ was 'raised on the third day according to the Scriptures' (I Cor 15^4; cf Lk 24^{46}). Specific Old Testament passages which can be regarded as definite prophecies of Christ's Resurrection on the third day are hard to come by, the passages generally quoted being inadequate and unsatisfactory. There are no Old Testament precedents from which the Resurrection story could have been constructed.[18]

But once the miracle of Christ's Person is accepted, there can be no difficulty about accepting the miracles He wrought nor the greatest of all miracles, next to that of His Person, namely the miracle of His Resurrection. If He was a mere man, moving on the plane of our ordinary experience, His Resurrection is inexplicable and incredible; being who and what He was, the incredible thing would be not that he came from the grave but that He should have remained there.

III

When we come to consider the relationship of Christ to God the Holy Spirit, we are likewise impressed by its uniqueness. What others had in part, He had in full. There was nothing in His nature to obstruct the entry of the Spirit. In Him alone did the Holy Spirit find an adequate revelation in human personality, and a kinship of spirit and Spirit, which resulted in the Spirit acquiring new elements and the activity of the Spirit taking new forms. It is not too much to say that Christ, this new fact of history, created a new order of experience of the Holy Spirit, namely a personal relation to God through Him.[19] It is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of Christ in St Paul; Spirit-possessed and Christ-possessed are well-nigh synonymous. What is the 'breath of God' in the Old Testament has become the spiritual presence of Christ in the New Testament.

IV

This is an appropriate place to consider the relationship of Jesus Christ to Moses and the Prophets, and the attempt to solve the mystery of His Person by presenting Him as the Second Moses and the crown and completion of prophecy. Here, once again, our contention that He did much more than fulfil and complete is fully borne out. And nowhere more markedly than in the story of the Transfiguration. At first 'Moses my servant' and 'Elijah the prophet' appear with Jesus, and on the same level, so much so indeed that Peter proposes to make them a tabernacle each, supposing evidently that Jesus could be brought conveniently within the orbit of the old dispensation. But the climax of the narrative is reached when Jesus is found alone, our attention being fixed on Him not as the fulfiller of Law and Prophecy, but as a solitary and unique figure. The vision ends with the other two faded out and a voice declaring: 'This is my Son, my Beloved; listen to Him' (N E B).[20]

But precisely the same emphasis is found elsewhere in the New Testament. In the Letter to the Hebrews (3^{1-6}) Christ is as far above Moses as a son is above a servant, and in the Fourth Gospel (1^{17}) He

transcends Moses as grace and truth transcend law. Similarly in St Paul, it is the superiority of Christ to Moses that is emphasized, the new Moses being as superior to the old as the new Adam is to the old (Rom. 5). It is by what he failed to accomplish rather than by what he succeeded in accomplishing that Moses is a paradigm for Jesus. It was not to restore or to complete the religion of Moses that Jesus came, but to bring a new religion and to do a new thing. 'The new is opposed to the old as spirit to letter, as life to death, as righteousness to condemnation, as the unveiled face to the veiled, as an abiding glory to a transitory one.' Allen suggests that an original attempt to see in Jesus the new Moses, God's supreme Servant, and the final decisive Prophet, led, as the result of further reflection, to the repudiation of a Servant—and Prophet-Christology in the interest of a Son-Christology.[21]

V

It is no less inadequate and unsatisfactory to claim that Jesus came to fulfil the Messianic hopes of His nation. Otto Borchert goes so far as to say that Jesus contradicted all the prophecies and expectations concerning the Messiah. The Messiah, he asserts, was expected to come as a reaper, whereas Jesus came as a sower (cf Mt 3^{12}). It was this, Borchert thinks, that was the cause of the Baptist's disappointment and doubt. The kind of Messiah that He was could never have been put together out of the Scriptures. 'To seek to do so is to ignore the mystery of the germinating cell.'[22] There can be little doubt that the Messianic category was shaped by Jesus into 'something new and strange'. For He blended with the figure of the Messiah the idea of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, a combination which, as far as our evidence goes, had never previously been made by Jewish thought. 'We must regard it as the most original feature of His presentation of the grace of God.'[23] So startlingly original was this combination of sovereignty with service and sacrifice that Jesus's disciples were appalled by it, and St Paul's preaching of it was 'to the Jews a stumbling-block'.

Jesus's use of the phrase 'Son of Man' shows the same originality. For He uses it in a sense that is foreign to the phrase as it occurs originally in Daniel. 'In His use of the phrase He was claiming to be to the human race and to its hopes what no one else could be.'[24]

VI

We turn, finally, to consider the uniqueness of the Work of Christ. And, first of all, of His work as Teacher. 'His thoughts are excellent if only He had the right to utter them,' observed Emerson of Seneca. Now that was the very thing that men felt about Jesus. They felt that He had seen what He was talking about, that He embodied what He taught. And in Him there was, as it has been expressed, a 'commitment in love to the situation' such as we find in no one else. He speaks in His own name, a thing that no rabbi had dared to do (cf. Mt 7^{28}). Nor is there any contemporary analogy to His use of 'Amen' as an introduction to His utterances. 'It may be maintained that these two examples of Jesus's own utterances ('Abba' as a form of address to God, and 'Amen' as an introduction to

His own utterances) contain in a nutshell the message of Jesus and His consciousness of His authority,' says Jeremias.

It is often urged that it is in the freshness of His emphasis that the originality of Jesus as a teacher lies.[25] That is grossly to understate the matter. There is more than new emphases, namely, new teaching. As C. G. Montefiore, who harshly criticizes certain aspects of Jesus's teaching, is forced to admit, to teach, as He did, that God seeks out the sinner in order to redeem him, is something new in the religious history of Israel.[26] He did more than universalize what was already a part of Hebrew faith, He carried further the idea of God's forgiving love that seeks to save the lost. 'The conception of God which Jesus both reveals and realizes is that of One whose concern is with sinful men, and this idea, with its consequences, has no contemporary parallel.'[27] No analogies or parallels can be found to the message of Jesus that God is concerned with sinners not with the righteous, and that He has already given them a share in His Kingdom. Nor is there a parallel to Jesus's sitting down to meet with publicans and sinners.

Jesus did more than fulfil the Scriptures, by perfecting and developing them; He sat in judgement on them also, for He had independent sources of religious knowledge. He is Lord of the Scriptures as of the Sabbath.[28] Jeremias drives the point home with vigour: 'The primary importance of the study of ancient and also of modern Palestine does not lie in the fact that it has revealed to us how Jesus belonged to His own time; its main significance lies rather in the way in which it has helped us to realize afresh the sharpness of Jesus's opposition to the religiosity of His time. Here too lies the main importance of the recently discovered Dead Sea texts.'[29] The truth is that Jesus's message ran counter to all the religiosity of His time, and was virtually the end of Judaism.

VII

In His concept of holiness as in His teaching of God's seeking love of lost sinners, Jesus was irruptive and revolutionary. He came into conflict not only with His nation's holy things, but, what was more, with their very concept of holiness. To them the holy was the wholly other—the separate, the different, the untouchable. Sinners and sin must not be allowed to come into contact with it. If they did, they did at the peril of their lives, like those who dared to set foot on the holy Mount Sinai, or Uzzah, who forfeited his life for a touch of the holy ark. But to Jesus holiness meant not separation from sin but identification with sin. He was the Lamb of God 'who takes away the sin of the world'. But before He can bear it away, He must bear it. Behind this holy 'apartheid' of the Jews there lay a centuries-old tradition, for which they had suffered much at the hands of other nations. And now, behold, one of their own nation and religion was shattering their hallowed tradition. God is holy, He taught, so draw nigh to Him. The Sabbath is holy, so do good on it. 'The better the day, the better the deed.' And when, in the Upper Room, Simon Peter would not let Him wash his feet because He was too holy, his Master retorts, in effect; 'It is just because I am holy that I am doing

it.' They, the Jews, thought that because they were a holy people they could expect to be served: He, Jesus, taught them that because they were a holy people they should serve. To them the Messiah was one who would be free from suffering and death, to Him he was to suffer more than all others and die the most shameful of deaths. 'In place of the manufactured wonder of a man-made ecclesiastical holiness of separation from the sin of the world, Jesus demonstrated the authentic wonder of the divinely given holiness of identification with 'the sin of the world'. This was the revolution which proved too much for the upholders of the *status quo*, and so they contrived his crucifixion.'[30] But His death is the climax of His creative living. He was put to death—and in this lies the frightfulness of the Crucifixion—not *in spite of* the fact that He was holy, but *because of* it. The Jews sought to save their religion, their 'church' and their nation by crucifying the Christ—safeguarding holiness by killing the Holy one! To them salvation meant the continuance of existing concepts of holiness, to Him it meant the death of what was, that the true concept might come to be. In this lies the originality of the Cross. Here is a totally new concept of holiness.

When one examines the Epistles of St Paul, there can be no shadow of doubt that for him what had happened in the Christ-event was the breaking into history of the qualitatively new, τὰ ἔσχατα. That is the peculiar significance of the word καινός throughout the New Testament, when it refers to Christ's καινὴ διδαχή, His καινὴ ἐντολή, the καινὴ διαθήκη, the καινον ὄνομα of Christians, the καινὴ Ἱερουσαλημ, the καινὴ ᾠδή which is sung before the throne in heaven, and the καινοι οὐρανοι και καινὴ γῆ. To the Apostle, the work of Christ is supremely that of the creation of a new humanity, and this he regarded as something new in *kind* rather than in *time*, as is demonstrated by his constant use of καινός—καινὴ κτίσις—καινὸς ἄνθρωπος (cf Eph 24, Gal 15, etc.).

It would be strange indeed if the Author of so much that is new in *kind* were Himself merely new in *time*.

[1] *Christian Apologetics*, p. 188, note 2; p. 190, note 1.
[2] Ibid. p. 198.
[3] *Expository Times*, LXVII, 18ff.
[4] Ibid.
[5] H. P. Owen on 'New Testament Perspectives,' in the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, iv. 337ff.
[6] In a Review of *The Word Incarnate*, by W. N. Pittenger, in *Theology*, July 1960.
[7] Kenneth Barnes in *The Listener*, 8th December 1960.
[8] Vide H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, p 110 note 1, and J. Jeremias in *The Expository Times*, LXIX. 338.
[9] J. Jeremias, ibid.
[10] *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, p. 38; and vide A. M. Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus*, p. 84.
[11] D. M. Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, p. 128.
[12] William Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 123.
[13] P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, passim.
[14] C. H. Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*, p. 240.
[15] J. McCulloch, *We Have Our Orders*, p. 75, but previously suggested by Bishop Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, (2nd edn), p. 3.
[16] Quoted by Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus*, p. 90, after 'Rabbi' Duncan; cf. Anselm's *'aut Deus aut homo non bonus'*.
[17] Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 171ff.

[18] Vide Richardson, ibid. pp. 190ff, and refs there given.
[19] Robinson, op. cit. (note 8, *supsce*), pp. 121, 132.
[20] H. P. Owen, article cited: E. I. Allen on 'Jesus and Moses in the New Testament,' *Expository Times*, LXVII. 104ff.
[21] Allen, ibid.
[22] Otto Borchert, *The Original Jesus* (Trans: L. M. Stalker), passim.
[23] Robinson, op. cit. (note 8, *supsce*), pp. 111-12.
[24] Rev. H. Hutchison on 'Who Does He Think He Is?' in the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, XIV. 234.
[25] As, e.g., by J. C. Bennett, *Christian Realism*, p. 136.
[26] *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 57.
[27] Robinson, op. cit., p. 110, note 1.
[28] Borchert, op. cit. (note 21, *supsce*), pp. 233-4.
[29] Jeremias, *Expository Times*, LXIX. 337.
[30] J. E. Fison, *The Faith of the Bible* (Pelican), p. 147, and 115.
[31] See Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 242-5.

THE FLETCHER-TOPLADY CONTROVERSY

J. Maycock

THE thoughts of men move in circles; possibly in ascending spirals. It may be that some of the old battles in theology, as well as in other spheres of life and thought, will some day be fought all over again.'

With these prophetic words Dr A. W. Harrison ends his book on Arminianism. That they are prophetic words is evidenced by the fact that at the time of writing this article letters are appearing in the correspondence columns of the *Scotsman* discussing the meaning and significance of Calvin's term 'decretum horribile'. Nor are these the only columns devoted to a re-appraisal of doctrines which have agitated the religious world for over three hundred years. Whether Christ died for all, or whether he atoned only for the sins of the elect, whether some are predestined to eternal bliss or torment, are burning questions still in parts of the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland.

The pamphlet war in which Fletcher and Toplady among others were strenuously engaged stems from two quite unrelated events (1) Wesley's *Minutes* of 1770 and (2) the publication of Hill's *Pietas Oxoniensis*.

Six students at Oxford met in a private house where they sang hymns and united in prayer; for this they were summoned before the University dignitaries and subsequently expelled. This expulsion prompted Hill's treatise which appeared in 1768. Dr Nowell, Principal of St Mary's College, replied to Hill and was promptly answered by Sir Richard's 'Goliath Slain' and Toplady's 'The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism'. Both of these were published the year before Wesley's *Minutes* troubled the waters, and prompted the first of Fletcher's famous Checks. This first was an expansion of the *apologia* Fletcher wrote before relinquishing his post as President of Trevecca College. Lady Huntingdon

who had founded the college after the expulsion of the Oxford students was greatly distressed by the copy of the *Minutes* of 1770 and commanded the students to write their views on the doctrine of salvation by works, the merit of works, etc. In a letter to Wesley dated March 18th, 1771, Fletcher commented:

> I wrote amongst the rest and shewed the absurdity of inferring from these Minutes that you had renounced the Protestant doctrine of the atonement. I defended your sentiments, by explaining them as I heard you do, and only blamed the unguarded and not sufficiently explicit manner in which they were worded.

The following year the Rev. Walter Shirley headed a self-appointed deputation and invaded the Conference of 1771. Wesley faced his inquisitors and, according to his *Journal* for that year, was able to assure them that he and his preachers 'were not so dreadful heretics as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith'. Shirley confessed himself satisfied with the declaration of the Conference, even going so far as to admit that he had mistaken the meaning of the *Minutes*. On this happy note the controversy might have ended had it not been that Fletcher had already written his First Check to Antinomianism. The manuscript had been read and approved by Wesley who sent it to his printers. Fletcher urged that it be withdrawn from the press, offering to 'defray, by selling to my last shirt, the expense of the printing'. Wesley, however, after consideration decided that publication had best continue. It may be that if the First Check had been supressed the second 'pamphlet war' would have been avoided. But it is very doubtful. Hill's tracts published almost three years before had prompted charge and counter charge and thus battle was joined—though from a different source. Toplady had entered the fray by publishing his reply to Dr Nowell and although he says 'on such a theme 'twere impious to be calm' he, nevertheless, conducts his case with considerable dialectic skill and in excellent temper. Although this treatise is a clear presentation of the Articles of the Church of England it is, nevertheless, an argument *a priori*, as Walter Sellon made clear in his reply *The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Absolute Predestination*. Toplady made mock of Sellon and his work, but Fletcher regarded the reply as giving the Calvinists 'a hard nut to crack'. In the same year as Sellon published his Reply, Toplady completed his translation of the Latin of Jerome Zanchius, which he titled *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted: with a Preliminary discourse on the Divine Attributes*. This work Wesley abridged and appended a paragraph of his own over the initials of A.T. This unfortunate act roused Toplady to fury and resulted in his publishing his first letter to Wesley—a masterpiece of vituperation and invective. No one can justify Wesley's use of Toplady's initials (though it seemed to be a practice indulged in by both sides, for a farrago of nonsense concocted by the brothers Hill appeared over the initials of J.W., J.F., W.S.) yet the paragraph with which he concluded his summary is a true epitome of the Calvinist—Arminian controversy of the 18th century. 'The elect shall be saved do what they will: The reprobate shall be damned do what they can.' It is

not too much to say that the entire controversy concerning predestination turns on this sentence. But predestination was not the only point in dispute. The doctrine of Christian Perfection as taught by Fletcher antagonized Toplady just as much as the denial of his necessitarianism.

Fletcher's Checks occupied his leisure for seven years. Like Wesley he had no taste for controversy, which he dubbed his 'scribblings in the mornings' and confessed that it 'weighed heavily upon him'.

Viewed in retrospect, the wonder grows that so much time and energy should have been spent in argument and counter-argument when it is realized that on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith the contestants did not differ 'so much as a hair's breadth'. Fletcher came to the very edge of Calvinism, but he also regarded Calvinism as a deadly foe of Methodism: and in this there was no inconsistency. As both Fletcher and Toplady were ministers of the Established Church both had given their assent to the Thirty-nine Articles, and as both were literal interpretationists it is not surprising that the bulk of their teaching was identical. It was solely on the doctrine of grace that they differed. Toplady described his own theology as 'stubborn orthodoxy' and branded the Methodists as heretics, but most of his brickbats fell wide of the mark. To assert, as he did, that Fletcher denied original sin, the depravity of man, and justification by faith alone is the veriest nonsense. It is fundamental to the theology of the controversy that Fletcher emphasised 'works' as evidence of grace, but at no time did he admit the merit of 'works' or suggest that they had any power to save. His concern for holiness is inseparably linked with the Reformation truth that salvation is by grace through faith. Yet, unhesitatingly, he affirmed that faith must issue in works. He is at one with John Calvin in his emphasis on the promise and power of grace, and he is equally at one with Thomas à Kempis and all who have made holiness the quest of life. It can fairly be maintained that it is just here that the eclectic genius of Fletcher is best seen. The Divine causality of all that appertains to salvation is the bed-rock of his teaching; nevertheless he was too acute not to realize the perils attendant upon preaching justification by faith alone—hence his Checks to Antinomianism. And it is not too much to claim that Fletcher's concern for the holiness of God was even greater than his fear of antinomianism.

Toplady gave no place to the doctrine of perfection. With the elegance of metaphor that marked his controversial writings he referred to it as a 'tenet raked from the dunghills of pelagianism and ranterism'. He maintained that it was a branch of Manichaism and flatly contrary to the Scripture. Yet he did not attack Fletcher's doctrine of perfection with the same vehemence as he attacked the doctrine of self-determination. Rather does he tend to make mock of it and writes in a bantering ironical strain. Yet in fairness to Toplady it must be said that much of his opposition sprang from the fact that he did not understand a perfection that admitted of improvement. Roundly he asserted that 'perfection will admit of no degrees', while Fletcher was echoing Wesley's warning against setting 'perfection too high'.

In his book *The Spirit of Methodism* Dr Henry Bett stressed two kinds of perfection. 'Perfection may mean either "full-grown" or "flawless". Perhaps one might say that the one sense is actual and historical, and the other ideal and absolute. The one means the flower is perfect in the sense that its beauty is the full development of the plan; the other means that the flower is perfect in the sense that it could not be more beautiful than it is. The one sense is therefore dynamic and the other static.' In this he is supported by Professor H. A. Hodges who writes: ' "Perfect" need not mean faultless; it can mean full-grown. The oak may be stunted and mutilated, but yet, by the very fact of being an oak, it is perfect in a sense which the best of acorns is imperfect. So Christian perfection may be simply the maturity of the Christian life.' This in essence is Fletcher's position. By perfection he meant maturity, but he had to define and redefine his position so frequently that many besides Toplady were perplexed.

> We call 'Christian Perfection' the maturity of grace and holiness which established, adult believers attain to under the Christian dispensation.... Hence it appears that by 'Christian Perfection' we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character in the Church militant.

Yet this maturity was not sinless. Toplady feared that Fletcher's doctrine set the Methodists above the need of grace, for if they were already perfect what further need of grace had they? But in this he gave to 'perfection' a different connotation from that of Fletcher. Far from believing that the 'perfect' had no need of grace he exhorted:

> the strongest believers to grow up to Christ in all things; asserting that there is no holiness, and no happines in heaven, much less upon earth, which do not admit of growth, *except the holiness and happiness of God Himself; because in the very nature of things, a being absolutely perfect, and in every sense infinite, can never have anything added to him.*

The part underlined concedes everything that Toplady could ask. What Fletcher called 'absolute perfection' was what he called 'absolute perfection'. He, however, regarded the adjective 'absolute' as superfluous. Perfection, as he understood it, was absolute, and consequently did not permit of growth, nor could it be attained save in the moment of death. Moreover, Fletcher's insistence that Christian perfection could be attained in an instant makes his doctrine all the more difficult for those who thought of perfection as flawlessness. Still Toplady believed as ardently as Fletcher in the possibility of perfection—they differed as to the time. Fletcher believer that perfection could be attained here and now, but Toplady maintained it could only be enjoyed when 'the expiring saint' freed from the 'mortal part of his composition . . . kindles into more than an angel of light'. Fletcher seized on this and asked 'if perfection is reached in the moment of physical dissolution why cannot it be reached an hour before, a day before, or years before?' If perfection cannot be achieved save in *articulo mortis* then death is a purgatory: it accomplishes a spiritual renewal that no visitation of grace has been able to effect. Curious though it may seem Toplady's theology ought to contain the hope of perfection more surely than does that of Fletcher,

who taught a limited self-determination, whilst Toplady sang of an irresistible grace. By its very nature such grace ought to break every barrier down, yet it is the essence of Toplady's teaching concerning perfection that God in His inscrutable wisdom restrains His irresistible grace from its perfecting work until the moment of death.

Although Toplady set his face like a flint againt Fletcher's concept of the perfect Christian he could yet speak of 'saints'. He wrote in the Gospel Magazine for 1797 a Dialogue between himself and a Perfectionist, in which he observes: 'A person may be denominated a saint, not from his being *wholly sanctified*; but because the grace and Spirit of God are the governors of his heart and the sin that is in him is not permitted to have *habitual dominion over him.*' Fletcher would have held that such a saint was Scripturally perfect. Unhappily neither the early Methodists nor their Calvinist opponents realized that a defective conception of sin lay at the root of their controversy. To limit sin to voluntary transgression is to leave the true nature of sin undiscovered. Sin is not just 'doing something' or leaving 'something undone'. 'It is,' said Dr Newton Flew, 'because sin is the depravation of faculties and instincts which are good in themselves, that sin is so hard to fight.' Moreover it is a fundamental error to claim, as did Wesley, that original sin is eradicated. He taught that sin is destroyed, 'cut out', 'rooted out', or 'mortified', but Fletcher had doubts as to this. He challenged Wesley concerning the consequence of such a doctrine. He agrees with Wesley as to the time factor in Christian perfection, but whilst he maintains that indwelling sin can be eradicated in a moment, he challenges Wesley as to whether temptation is still possible to those from whom the 'original offence' had been erased. The second verse of Charles Wesley's hymn 'Love divine, all loves excelling' is now omitted from the Methodist Hymn Book, but for a time was a subject of controversy. Charles Wesley had written 'Take away the power of sinning' and concerning this Fletcher asked, 'Is not this expression too strong? Would it not be better to soften it as Mr Hill had done, by saying "Take away the love of" (or the bent to) "sinning"? Can God take away from us our "power of sinning" without taking away our power of free obedience?' It is true that when one has reached a state of moral inability to sin he has reached the highest form of moral freedom, but as Dr Galloway has put it, 'A fallacy seems to lurk in the ordinary assertion that action is necessarily determined by character, for in point of fact, man in his temporal history has never unified his character so completely as to exclude the possibility of a real alternative in conduct.' The possibility of sin must always remain if there is to be any possibility of virtue. As Sangster puts it in his *Path to Perfection*, 'If God granted such prayers (Confound, o'erpower me, by thy grace . . . Take away the power of sinning . . .) He would rob His children of every scrap of moral worth. He would get a "perfect world" overnight but not with free beings (only automata), not with persons (only puppets), not with men and women (merely marionettes).' Despite this challenge Fletcher does not face squarely the paradox his doctrine of instantaneous perfection creates. What more can the grace of God accomplish for one from whose heart the 'original offence' has been erased?

With the original offence must go the possibility of sin, and the possibility of virtue. Fletcher had no desire whatever to rob man of his moral freedom—indeed! the safeguarding of that freedom was the burden (in large measure) of his polemic against Toplady's doctrine of predestination. This doctrine was the kernel of Toplady's teaching, he made it both centre and circumference and developed it with a moral severity worthy of Stoicism. Calvin found his doctrine of predestination to rest in the doctrine of the Absolute Sovereignty of God: but Toplady did not arrive at predestination as the result of deduction, rather did he accept the doctrine as taught by the schools, and set out to establish it by arguments that Wesley said 'were worthy of Bedlam'. Certainly they sounded strange on the lips of a Christian Minister. The 'Reviewers' of November 1775 express the sentiments that must occur to any reader of Toplady's Philosophical Necessity. 'The old controversy concerning liberty and necessity has lately been renewed: Mr Toplady avows himself a strenuous and very positive champion on the side of necessity and revives those arguments which were long since urged by Spinoza, Hobbes, &c. It is somewhat singular in the history of this dispute that those who profess themselves the friends of revelation should so earnestly contend for a system which unbelievers have generally adopted and maintained. This appears the more strange when we consider that the present asserters of necessity manifest a very visible tendency to materialism. Fate and universal mechanism seem to be so nearly allied that they have usually been defended on the same ground and by the same advocates. Mr. Toplady, indeed admits that the two component principles of man, body and soul, "are not only distinct but essentially different from each other." But it appears in the sequel of his reasoning that he has no high opinion of the nature and powers of the latter... "The soul," he affirms, "is, in a very extensive degree, passive as matter itself." On his scheme, the limitation with which he guards this assertion is needless and futile... His moral doctrine is of a piece with the rest; the result of his reasoning on the subject is, in his own words, that "man, in every instant of his duration, is a passive instrument in the hands of necessity".' Toplady can fairly be described as a theistic fatalist, and as such he regarded St Augustine. Yet it is primarily as a theologian and not as a philosopher that Toplady writes. His philosophy is the outworking of his doctrine of the Absolute Sovereignty of God.

After the publication of Wesley's abridgement of Zanchius, Toplady wrote two letters to Wesley to which Wesley made reply in three brief works: *The Consequence Proved*, *Thoughts upon Necessity*, and *A Thought upon Necessity*, leaving more detailed rebuttal to his friends. These, each in his own way, centred attention upon the following four points:

1. The certainty of the salvation of the elect;
2. The certainty of the damnation of the reprobate;
3. The uselessness of attempting to avoid one's predestined end;
4. The impossibility, if not absurdity, of attributing either sin or virtue to necessitated beings.

Fletcher wrote: 'I side with Mr. Wesley for the consequence; guarding it against cavils by a clause, which his love for brevity made him think needless. And the guarded consequence which I undertake to defend runs thus: from the doctrine of absolute and unconditional predestination of some men to eternal life, and of all others to eternal death, it necessarily follows that some men shall be saved, do what they will, till the absolute and efficacious decree of election actually necessitate them to obey, and be saved; and the rest of mankind shall be damned do what they can, till the absolute and efficacious decree of reprobation necessitate them to sin and be damned.' By an illustration running to several pages Fletcher maintains this consequence. Like Toplady he had subscribed to Article XVII, but unlike Toplady he maintained that the Article did not contain any statement of limited atonement, in that the 'called' or the 'chosen' may not be a few, but 'whosoever will'. May it not be that God, whose love cannot fail or be defeated, has predestined every soul He has created to share his glory, even though eternity is needed to ensure their perfection? Whether this be true or not, one fact stands out clearly, the idea of a Shepherd seeking the one lost sheep 'until He find it', is more likely to secure acceptance by an enlightened conscience, than the infamous suggestion that a Holy all-wise, all-powerful Creator brought into existence countless thousands only to condemn them to endless woe, that thereby His own glory may be enhanced. Fletcher gave no place to the idea of universal restoration, but he could not tolerate the thought that God did not purpose to extend to all the gift of pardon. He believed in the sovereignty of God, but the God he put in the sovereign place bore no resemblance to the Being that Toplady was pleased to extol. It is this difference of opinion as to the nature of God that underlies the whole controversy. Toplady's emphasis is on the vindication of the divine will, Fletcher's on the revelation of the divine love. As the eternal decrees permit of no repeal the elect must be saved irrespective of their character, and the reprobated be lost despite all desire or effort to be saved. Toplady would not accept this as a consequence of his teaching and laboured hard to show that none would be lost who desired to be saved. He wrote: 'All who are chosen to salvation are no less unalterably destined to holiness and faith and in the meanwhile.... Hence they are expressly said to be elect unto obedience.' This Fletcher parodied as he had done most of the argument and replied: 'All who are reprobated to damnation are no less unalterably destined to wickedness and unbelief in the meanwhile.... Hence they are expressly said to be reprobated unto disobedience.' That Fletcher was not here seeking a mere dialectical advantage is obvious from Toplady's translation of Zanchius. Propositions nine and eleven read: 'Not one of the elect can perish, but they must all necessarily be saved.' 'The condemnation of the reprobate is necessary and inevitable.' Despite these categoric assertions Toplady protested against Fletcher's defence of Wesley's consequence in the name of the divine justice. He protested that none are doomed except for sin, and in the next breath asserted: 'The sole cause why some are saved and others perish proceeds from God's willing the salvation of the former and the perdition of the

latter.' Further to maintain some semblance of justice Toplady denied that the reprobate were of the family of God, and therefore were not entitled to justice. Moreover what complaint had the reprobate? They had no right to birth let alone the new-birth. Again, Toplady asked, would any accuse a wealthy man of injustice because he had given generously to a friend and had given nothing to his neighbour? That this argument is a completely false one is obvious. The analogy between the wealthy friend and God's unlimited resources breaks down.

Fletcher rested his case on 'no freedom—no morals'. He pressed Toplady's thesis to its conclusion—the denial of sin. He distinguished between 'absolute necessity', which denied all liberty and 'necessity of consequence'; whereby he upheld the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God and man's ability to 'see and choose his path.' God is Supreme and man is free, said Fletcher, and allowed neither truth to reduce the other to absurdity. Certainly he made short work of Toplady's materialist argument that 'a human spirit, incarcerated in the brain of a cat, would probably think and behave as that animal does.' Earlier Toplady had written: 'The soul of a monthly reviewer, if imprisoned within the same mud walls which are tenanted by the soul of Mr. John Wesley, would, similarly circumstanced, reason and act (I verily think) exactly like the bishop of Moorfields.' Fletcher went to the very core of Toplady's necessitarianism when he observed: 'From his capital doctrine, that human souls have no free will, and no inward principle of self determination; and from his avowed opinion, that the soul of one man placed in the body of another man, "would, similarly circumstanced, reason and act exactly like" the man in whose mud walls it is lodged; it evidently follows, That had the human soul of Christ been placed in the body and circumstances of Nero, it would have been exactly as wicked and atrocious as the soul of that bloody monster was.' It is small wonder that Tyerman questioned whether Toplady was a Christian. And yet Toplady was unquestionably a Christian. Only a man imbued with a sense of the majesty of God and the dread awfulness of sin could have written 'Rock of Ages'. If Toplady had his weaknesses he also had his virtues. He was truly devout. He counted no labour too strenuous so long as he could glorify God. Judging his days to be few he felt keenly the importunate nature of his mission. As a victim of tuberculosis his strength must have been severely taxed: yet almost to the end he toiled indomitably beneath his great Taskmaster's eye. His diary—which he called his correspondence with God—reveals all that is good in Calvinistic piety. As a singer of the Christian way he deservedly ranks alongside of Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts. The polemist is best forgotten for the author of 'Rock of Ages' is immortal.

Fletcher too is immortal, if only by reason of his saintliness. The dust lies thick upon his works, nevertheless they remain a classic of courteous controversy. His Checks to Antinomianism were born of the apprehension that redemptive love controls all God's relations, and that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. This is, as suggested earlier, even more important to Fletcher than the correlative conviction that absolute predestination is conducive to antinomianism. Pregnant with this danger

though it may be, it could be maintained that Fletcher's dread of antinomianism was born of concern to be faithful to the doctrine of the holiness of God.

It might be questioned whether Fletcher was as truly balanced in his judgement of antinomianism as he was of other things. Observation should have convinced him that antinomianism was not the inevitable result of believing in predestination. In fact he admitted that such belief often manifested itself in a very vigorous moral character. Yet if one's spiritual destiny be fixed even before one's conception it would seem that neither moral effort nor moral laxity were of any account. That antinomianism did not always follow upon belief in the eternal decrees only serves to show that life is larger than logic.

Fletcher's health did not permit his sharing the itinerant ministry of Wesley, but from his vicarage at Madeley he made a valuable contribution to the theology of Methodism. 'He was the earliest and fullest expositor in English of the Remonstrant Theology of Arminius; and his works remain the storehouse of its treasures and the armoury for its defence.' Those who read these works will have no difficulty in agreeing with Wesley's judgement of them. 'One knows not which to admire the most—the purity of the language, the strength and clearness of the argument, or the mildness and sweetness of the spirit which breathes through the whole.' By reason of his scholarship and saintliness Fletcher was both the St Paul and the St John of the Evangelical Revival.

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF LAPSED MEMBERSHIP

John R. Butler

I. INTRODUCTION

THE STUDY of religious behaviour has for long been a concern of social scientists, yet unlike many of the specialities of modern sociology it has largely remained an academic field. The balance between social research and its application to social problems is often precariously achieved, as in any emerging science; but, from the pioneer studies of Booth and Rowntree onwards, a link has frequently been maintained between sociological research and analysis and the implementation of social policy. Thus, the theoretical work of the criminologist on the aetiology of criminal behaviour and the function of punishment is—in part—applied in policies towards the prevention and treatment of crime: the findings of the urban sociologist are—sometimes—taken into account in town planning: and the examples could be multiplied. Moreover, it seems likely that the link will be strengthened in the future. 'Administration', as Professor Gould points out, 'will come to depend more on specialist research and less on inspired hunches or guesswork.'[1]

Thus it is that sociology is currently enjoying a boom of popularity, and those concerned with the implementation of policy, whether nationally or regionally, are feeling increasingly that sociologists can provide a realistic basis for decision-making. An exception seems to be in the field of religious administration: the Churches may well be aware of what psychologists and sociologists are discovering about, for example, motivation, but too rarely do they use these discoveries in planning and implementing 'Church policy'. There is no obvious reason why this should be so: it may be argued that the social scientist is seldom a committed Christian, and this may be true, but probably fewer criminologists have done a stretch in the nick. Sociology is at an exciting stage of development. A common technical language is evolving, concepts are becoming more precisely defined, and statisticians are developing increasingly sophisticated techniques of research and analysis. The Churches seem to me to have largely missed out on this revolution, and to be still playing their inspired hunches, at least at the local if not at the national level.

It is against this background that this paper describes a modest attempt to apply locally the techniques of social investigation and analysis to an important contemporary problem in Methodism—that of declining membership. The growth or decline in the membership of any organization depends upon the relationship between recruitment and drop-out, and a declining membership may principally reflect a dearth of new recruits rather than an unusually high fall-out rate. Even if the decline *can* be attributed to a high fall-out rate it may be, in the case of Methodism for example, that

death or transfer to another denomination accounts for a large proportion. If, however, the truth is that the present situation is brought about principally because of the number of people who leave the Church of their volition, and who do not become members of other communions, then it is clearly important in formulating a policy to deal with this problem that we should know who these people are, and what the motivation is for their behaviour. Ultimately we might be able to order this knowledge to enable us to predict who are the potential lapsed members in any Society, in the way that it is now possible to predict, with considerable accuracy, the future recidivists among a Borstal population.[2]

The background to the study can be summarized briefly. In March 1964 the Church Membership Committee of the Nottingham and Derby District appointed a sub-committee to examine the possibility of initiating a study of lapsed members in the District, and, if the idea were feasible, to carry it out. The sub-committee, which consisted of one ordained and five lay members,[3] met at regular intervals throughout 1964, and the actual research took three summer months of that year. The project was written up by the end of the year and submitted to the May Synod. The best ways in which the findings can be translated into policy are currently being considered.

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of any social investigation is crucially important, and one may justifiably criticize results on the grounds of, for example, sampling deficiencies, biased interviewing, or less-than-honest analysis and presentation of data. The methodology of this study was far from perfect—though this was more the result of a lack of co-operation from some ministers in the District than of unfamiliarity with the correct basic techniques. It is, however, intended only as a pilot study, or an initial exploration of the field, and as such it can merely spotlight the particularly significant conclusions, and point the way to areas where further research seems to be indicated. At no point is it claimed that the data presented in this paper are a microcosmic picture of the pattern of lapsed membership in the wider community.

It was agreed from the beginning that the design would take the form of two surveys, one among a total or random sample of people in the District who had been recorded as 'ceased to meet' during a specified period of time, and the other among a sample of currently active members who would act as a control group. For strict comparability the same interview schedule was used for both groups. A letter was first sent to all the ministers in the District explaining the nature and purpose of the survey, and asking them to submit the names and addresses of all members who had been recorded as ceased to meet during the preceding twelve months. The response was disappointing, though understandable, and yielded details of 194 of the 621 ex-members in the District (31·2%). This number was subsequently reduced to 154 through the elimination of second and third members in any one household. It must be noted, therefore, that the experimental group was neither a total population nor a randomly drawn sample, and it is not

difficult to imagine a number of possible biases which might have entered into the selection of it.

A similar criticism of bias can be levelled against the selection of the control group of active members. Having once met with a poor response from District ministers it did not seem worthwhile to approach them again; but, as with the lapsed members, there was no central sampling frame available. The problem was solved, imperfectly, by taking as the control group all the 96 lay representatives to the 1963 District Synod who were elected by the Quarterly Meetings. Again, therefore, this sample was not representative of the population from which it was drawn, being heavily over-represented in favour of the very active members; but since the study compares lapsed with active members it is at least a bias in the right direction that it should contain very active members.

The problems of time and expense involved in face-to-face interviews with some 300 respondents spread over five counties necessitated an early decision that the surveys should be conducted through the mail. The postal survey is a frequently neglected tool of social research, mainly, one would imagine, because of the known difficulties in obtaining satisfactory response rates, although it is also true that there are some technical deficiencies involved.[4] It is, however, a quick and cheap method of interviewing, and is in my opinion too much under-rated as a research tool. The response rates achieved in this study varied between the two groups: 85 of the 96 active members replied (88·5%), and 82 of the 154 lapsed members (53·2%). This rate is sufficiently low to contribute substantially to the sampling error, but sufficiently high to justify further experimentation with the post in similar studies. It is necessary to add that the covering letters sent with the schedules created the impression of a sponsorship entirely unconnected with Methodism: the mailings were seen to come from a University research worker, and the respondents were not aware that it was known that they were, or had been, members of any Church. The ethical objections to such a procedure are clear, and were fully discussed by the committee: whether justified or not it almost certainly increased the response rates by several percentage points.

III. RESULTS

As a result of the analysis of the completed schedules,[5] some 200 tables and cross-tabulations were produced. There has, therefore, been a substantial process of selection in the results discussed in this paper, and only the more significant findings have been singled out. This part of the paper is thus a simple factual account of some of the material obtained from the survey.

In terms of basic characteristics a number of differences emerged between the active and the lapsed respondents. Almost two-thirds of the former (64%) were men; almost two-thirds of the latter (62%) were women. Although this difference is statistically very significant ($p < 0.001$),[6] it is probable that the lapsed respondents more accurately reflect the sex distribution in the total church membership, and that sex is therefore insignificant in the pattern of lapsing. The age distributions were also significantly dif-

ferent ($p < 0{\cdot}05$), with the active group having a higher mean age. Only 2% of these respondents, for example, were under 25, compared with 21% in the lapsed sample, whilst of the over 60's the relative proportions were 23% and 15%. For both groups the age distribution was bi-modal, the two peaks for the lapsed respondents being the early twenties and the late fifties, and since these people had all been recorded as ceased to meet within the previous twelve months the distribution is representative of a bi-modality in the age of this occurrence among the sample.

No difference emerged in marital status: about a quarter in each group were single, almost three-quarters were married, and the remainder were widowed. An analysis of social class based on occupation, however, produced some strikingly significant contrasts ($p < 0{\cdot}001$). Using the Registrar General's socio-economic groupings of occupations,[7] five categories were identified: professional and managerial, other non-manual, skilled manual, semi- and un-skilled manual, and the remainder.[8] The distributions are shown in Table I.

Socio-economic status	ACTIVE GROUP		LAPSED GROUP	
Professional and managerial	27	(32%)	5	(6%)
Other non-manual	36	(42%)	30	(36%)
Skilled manual	5	(6%)	17	(21%)
Semi- and un-skilled manual	4	(5%)	13	(16%)
Remainder	5	(6%)	3	(3%)
No answer	8	(9%)	14	(18%)
TOTAL	85	(100%)	82	(100%)

Table I. Socio-economic status of active and lapsed groups.

Part of the preponderance of high status occupations among the active group is explained by the observed phenomenon of middle class leadership, but even allowing for this it seems that here is to be found the core of a strong motivational pattern in the process of lapsing. Space does not permit an elaboration, but time and again the replies of the lapsed respondents indicated an awareness of a tension that was difficult to tolerate and impossible to break.

'I disliked the fact that a certain amount of class distinction existed, and that most of the officers of the church use it as part of their social climb.' (Man, 55).

'I felt as though I was not accepted by the other members of the church. It was a closed shop.' (Woman, 22).

If you dislike being a round peg in a square hole you have two alternatives: either to become square yourself, or, more practicable, to get out of the hole.

Three questions were asked about the early 'church going' experience of the two samples, from which it was hoped to test the hypotheses that the lapsed respondents would be less likely to come from homes in which church attendance and membership had been accepted as a behavioural

norm, would be less likely to have been to Sunday School as children, and would become church members at a later age. The first of these three hypotheses was refuted substantially ($p > 0{\cdot}30$). Table II shows the proportions in the two samples having both, one or neither parents who had ever been church members.

Parents as church members	ACTIVE GROUP		LAPSED GROUP	
Both	68	(80%)	62	(76%)
One	4	(5%)	11	(13%)
Neither	13	(15%)	9	(11%)
TOTAL	85	(100%)	82	(100%)

Table II. Parental church membership of active and lapsed groups.

A marginally greater proportion of the active sample had both parents who were (or had been) members, but the figure in both groups is high. Of those with neither parents as members, proportionately more were in the active sample; but there is nothing in these figures which might lead one to single out this aspect of family life as a possible factor in the aetiology of lapsing.

The second hypothesis was likewise refuted ($p > 0{\cdot}50$). Respondents were asked whether for any substantial period during their childhood they had attended a Sunday School regularly, and 'regularly' was defined as 'at least one Sunday in four'. Ninety-five per cent of the active and 91% of the lapsed members answered this question in the affirmative, figures which are scarcely surprising in view of the previous data on parental membership. Of the 8 individuals who had *not* attended a Sunday School regularly, 5 came from homes where neither parent had been a church member, and 3 from homes where both parents had been.

The third hypothesis, about age of membership, must remain open. Although not statistically significant ($p > 0{\cdot}75$), there was a marked difference between the samples at the younger ages. For example, whereas 56% of the active group were members by the age of 16, only 39% of the lapsed group were. Within the next age range (17-21) the proportions in each sample are identical—33%. By tabulating the age of membership of the lapsed respondents by their present age it was possible to get a picture of the length of time they had been church members before lapsing. Many had been members for a considerable length of time. Of the 9 respondents in this group who were over 60, for example, 8 had been members for *at least* 40 years; and of the 23 between 41 and 60, 15 had been members for *at least* 20 years. The reasons why a person should lapse after such a long membership are complex, but it was clear that they had to be substantial to compensate for the disruption of what was often a life-long pattern of behaviour.

The religious role is in practice functionally subservient to the essential roles of working and earning a living, and it therefore seemed worth

exploring the possibility that for many people their behaviour as church attenders had become overlaid by the demands made upon them as workers. Respondents were therefore asked whether Sunday was the only day of the week that they had free for their leisure. Of the control group, 85% replied that they had at least one other day free, but only 50% of the experimental group answered in this way. The difference is clearly significant ($p < 0{\cdot}01$), and it remained significant even when the distribution was standardized for social class to allow for the fact that there were fewer manual workers among the active respondents. It is likely that some of the lapsed members had used the pressure of work as a rationalization for their non-attendance, but for many it was doubtless a genuine prohibiting circumstance. When asked what activities they indulged in regularly on Sundays, the lapsed respondents were shown to do quantitatively more things, and a greater variety of things, than the active respondents, with the exception of going to church. It seems, therefore, that when only one day of the week (Sunday) is free people generally prefer to spend it in recreative activities than in going to church. The choice rarely confronts the active member: he has Saturday for gardening and picnicking.

Some data were collected on the extent of current church-oriented behaviour, and it is a little startling to find that no less than a fifth of the experimental group (21%) described themselves as regular attenders. Of these 17 respondents, 6 were attending Anglican churches, 5 Methodist, 3 Baptist, 2 Christian Science and 1 Congregational. Fifteen per cent of the lapsed members had thus become regular worshippers in another communion, and 6% had remained within the Methodist church. If these proportions are representative of Methodism generally they give some cause for hope and some for anxiety: hope, that the overall problem is only four-fifths as bad as it now seems, and anxiety, that hundreds of regular worshippers are being struck off annually from membership of the church.[9] In order to provide some validation of the self-assessed attendance figures, respondents were asked when they had last been present at a service other than a Christening, wedding or funeral. The results are shown in Table III.

Last church attendance	ACTIVE GROUP		LAPSED GROUP	
Within last 7 days	67	(79%)	10	(12%)
Within last month	6	(7%)	12	(15%)
Within last 3 months	1	(1%)	11	(13%)
Within last 6 months	—		5	(6%)
Within last year	—		12	(15%)
Within last 2 years	—		3	(4%)
Over 2 years ago	—		18	(22%)
No answer	11	(13%)	11	(13%)
TOTAL	85	(100%)	82	(100%)

Table III. Last church attendance of active and lapsed groups.

No less than 40% of the lapsed sample had attended a service within the

previous three months, and a further 21% between three months and a year. These figures are considerably higher than had been expected, and if they are reliable they demonstrate that many people at least maintain contact with a church even after being recorded as ceased to meet. This in turn suggests that it may be inaccurate to talk of lapsing as though it were a single, once-and-for-all and irrevocable act, but this is a point I shall return to in the last part of the paper.

The religious behaviour of the spouses and children of the respondents was also examined as a further possible link with a church community. Of the 62 active respondents who were married, 55 had spouses who were themselves regular attenders, but of the 52 lapsed married respondents only 9 had spouses who attended regularly ($p < 0{\cdot}001$), and of these 9, five had already described themselves as regular attenders. The marital relationship does not therefore seem to be a major channel through which a link could be renewed or maintained; but the position of the children in a family presents a rather different picture. Of the lapsed members, 20 had children of Sunday School age, and of these, 19 sent them regularly to Sunday School. This represents 23·2% of the total group, but in only 13 cases did a child attend a Sunday School when neither of its parents went to church regularly. Although this does not represent a particularly high proportion of the total lapsed group, it covers a substantial majority of those with children of Sunday School age.

The question of leadership within the church seemed to be important. According to the traditional theories of group dynamics, status within any group (conferred by leadership) is highly correlated with conformity with the norms of that group. Thus, deviant behaviour is confined mostly to the low status members (the non-leaders), and the ultimate act of deviancy, leaving the group, seldom occurs among high status members. It is from this general principle that the belief springs that one way of curbing the rebel element in a group is to give the rebels positions of responsibility and leadership. From this theoretical analysis it seemed probable that the lapsed respondents would be shown to have seldom held any positions of leadership within the church, and if this were demonstrated, it might suggest some ways in which this particular act of deviancy could be controlled. Table IV shows the total number of positions of leadership ever held by the two groups.

Positions of leadership	ACTIVE GROUP		LAPSED GROUP	
None	—		26	(32%)
One	7	(8%)	29	(35%)
Two	16	(19%)	16	(20%)
Three +	62	(73%)	5	(6%)
No answer	—		6	(7%)
TOTAL	85	(100%)	82	(100%)

Table IV. Leadership positions held by active and lapsed groups.

The difference is expected and significant ($p<0.001$).[10] There was a qualitative difference also, for the active group held a proportionately greater number of the more important positions: class leader, local preacher, circuit and society steward, trustee. It might be argued that these figures merely reflect the differences in the social class structures of the two groups, but even when standardized to control this variable the differences remained. It seems that here is a possible and highly practicable point to begin to reverse the drift,[11] but it must be remembered that what appears to be a chain of cause and effect may in fact turn out to be one of effect and cause. For whereas people might lapse in part because they have never been given positions of responsibility, it may also be that they have never accepted nomination because they have always been on the fringe of things in any case.

IV. THE PROCESS OF LAPSING

In evaluating all the data obtained from the survey, the impression is formed that the decisions involved in becoming what is termed a 'lapsed member' are rarely clear and precise decisions. The replies suggest that there is seldom a particular moment in time when a person makes a conscious and rational decision to cease attending church, and that furthermore there is seldom a single, sequential and identifiable cause underlying the decision. Indeed, it is almost meaningless to talk about decisions at all: rather, the act of lapsing, (insofar as it can be called an act), is the outcome of a process over time during which the person drifts towards peripheral participation in the life of the church, and, ultimately, into a position that logically crystallizes into that of 'having lapsed'. It is true that particular and individual experiences may hasten the process, but such experiences cannot be said to constitute total 'reasons' which cause the 'decision'.

The process of social centrifuge—that is, movement outwards and away from the centre of the society, is shaped by a series of forces, which individually may not be teleologically related to the phenomenon of lapsing, but which cumulatively result in just such a long-term movement. It seems that an individual makes a series of decisions, but does not consciously connect or associate any of them with the fact of lapsing. He does not say to himself: 'If I do this thing it will mean that I begin to lapse'; and indeed it is unlikely that any single decision would have this effect, whether or not the individual realized it. Each decision, therefore, is not a teleological variant with lapsing, but cumulatively they move the individual increasingly away from the centre of things, until he realizes—sometimes with a shock—that he is labelled 'lapsed member'.

All of this is by way of hypothesizing, but hypotheses must be made if an understanding is to be reached of the way in which individuals relate to the formal system that is the church. The next step is to examine how well the hypothesis holds among a larger and more representative sample, but this means more studies. It is important, too, that one should never become so absorbed in the sheer mechanics of research that one loses sight of the ultimate objective, namely, the implementation of church policy, and the

individual mission of loving and caring that can bind all people together in the Body of Christ.

[1] *Penguin Survey of the Social Sciences* (1965), ed. J. Gould.
[2] It is, of course, impossible to make accurate predictions about single individuals, but it is possible to say with what degree of certainty a given proportion of people, whose characteristics are known, will revert to the specified behaviour.
[3] The Committee was composed of the author and: Rev D. G. Rodgers, Mr G. H. Gibson, Mr K. Skellern, Mr G. I. Cushing and Mrs G. M. Butler.
[4] The most complete account of the methodology of postal surveys is given by C. Scott in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* (Part A), 1961, Vol 24.
[5] All the replies were coded and punched on to I.C.T. 80-column cards, which were sorted automatically on a Hollerith counter-sorter.
[6] All tests of statistical significance employ the chi-squared (χ^2) distribution. The lower limit of confidence is taken as the 0·05 level.
[7] General Register Office, Classification of Occupations, H.M.S.O., 1960.
[8] Married women who are not themselves working take the class of their husband's occupation. Retired people take the class of their usual occupation when working.
[9] It is, of course, realized that attendance at worship is not the sole criterion of membership, but one would think that a Leader's Meeting should deliberate very carefully before striking a regular worshipper from the membership lists.
[10] The active respondents were, by definition, leaders, and this, to some extent artificially, intensifies the difference.
[11] It would, for example, be interesting to do a study of how people are elected or appointed to positions of leadership.

SHORTER SURVEY

John T. Wilkinson

THE present century has seen a growing interest in Richard Baxter (1615-1691), and this increased recognition is due, in a considerable measure, to the labours of the late Dr F. J. Powicke, whose scholarly and critical two-volume *Life* appeared in 1924-7. A shorter biography, equally scholarly and impressive, now comes from the pen of Dr G. F. Nuttall, of New College, London. *Richard Baxter* is published in the series of 'Leaders of Religion' (Nelson, 35*s*.). Baxter's posthumous autobiography—the *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696)—together with the considerable manuscript correspondence preserved in Dr Williams's Library, and the innumerable references to his life and times scattered throughout Baxter's published works form the source-material for any biography of this outstanding figure. All this material has been classified and examined by Dr Nuttall with meticulous care. The framework of the book goes far to providing a clear outline of Baxter's life and work, for in six chapters the various facets of this fascinating personality are revealed with great clearness. We see Baxter as 'the Salopian' the chaplain in the Army, the Puritan pastor, the 'meer catholicke', the nonconformist and finally, in his writing, 'a pen in God's hand'. An appendix provides a complete list of Baxter's writings, numbering some one hundred and forty items. This fully documented work reveals Dr Nuttall's mastery of the vast amount of material involved, and by ample quotation skilfully interwoven, the picture in these pages is drawn with completeness. One interesting point may be noted. Baxter never mentions that he received any further episcopal ordination than that of deacon.

Powicke firmly declared that 'the known facts preclude the possibility of his having proceeded to the priesthood', and thus it would appear that the defect in his ordination escaped notice. Dr Nuttall argues strongly for the contrary view, and, it would seem, decisively. Faultlessly written, this book is an excellent study, and all workers in the field of the seventeenth century should be grateful to Dr Nuttall for having written it.

In his *Acts and Monuments*, first published in English in 1563, John Foxe concludes that the true Christian is 'not the ceremonial man after the Church of Rome, but the spiritual man with his faith and other fruits of piety following the same'. This principle found embodiment in a group of preachers in the latter half of the sixteenth century in the Church of England, and this movement is effectively described by Dr Irvonwy Morgan, in his recent book, *The Godly Preachers of the Elizabethan Church* (Epworth Press, 30*s*.). Indicating the similarity between the movement and the early monks and friars, Dr Morgan shows how these preachers believed it was their first duty to preach the gospel with a view to the conversion of souls and the training of these in sanctity of life. He proceeds to trace the rise of a system of 'lecturers', whose only function in the church was to preach. Demand for such preaching became focused in the market towns, and brotherhoods of preachers developed e.g. in the neighbourhood of Braintree and Dedham in East Anglia. The occasions of these preachings were known as 'prophesyings', in which by exposition of the Scriptures, the gospel of salvation was proclaimed, discipline was exercised and preachers were trained. The 'prophesyings' found powerful support from Archbishop Grindal—the only Elizabethan Archbishop who had real insight into the need for evangelical preaching in the Church—who declared that 'the public and continual preaching of God's Word is the only means and instrument for the salvation of mankind'. He sought to bring these 'prophesyings' under the sympathetic control of the bishops but in 1576 the Queen herself personally ordered their suppression. In consequence some preachers became separatists. In a valuable chapter on 'The Mysterie of Godliness' Dr Morgan analyses some of the sermons and devotional manuals of these preachers—Paul Baynes, Henry Smith, Richard Rogers, William Perkins—and in a further chapter shows their concern for discipline in holiness, and indicates their affinity with the monastic ideal of prayer and self-denial. The final chapter deals with the efforts of some of the preachers —Thomas Cartwright and Walter Travers—to press for a presbyterian form of church-government, but they were attacked by Whitgift and Bancroft. The influence of the preachers was not destroyed, however, with the suppression of the presbyterian pressure-groups; there is evidence that a godly discipline accepted by individuals and families sustained the Puritan ethos into the century that followed. Dr Morgan's book is a useful and fully-documented study of the subject.

In *The History of Methodism in Cambridge* (Epworth Press, 35*s*.) Mr Frank Tice has produced a valuable record, for which he has made careful use of sources, including pamphlets and local newspapers as well as church

minute-books. He has discovered that there were 'young men at Cambridge called Methodists' as early as 1739, but they were reviled 'as enthusiasts' and suffered persecution. Under the leadership of Rowland Hill of St John's, and encouraged by Berridge, Vicar of Everton, in the 1760's amongst the undergraduates there was a 'Holy Club' similar to that at Oxford, but following Hill's departure it was almost thirty years before Methodist preachers were again heard in Cambridge. The first Wesleyan preachers came in 1798, and the work began in a hired room. Primitive Methodism reached Cambridge in 1821, but its missionary suffered ill-treatment. In the years that followed the work of both groups continued and expanded, though with occasional friction. The last portion of the book gives an account of 'academic Methodism', and outlines the history of the Leys School (founded in 1872) and that of Wesley House (founded in 1920). There are also short biographical sketches of five members of the Cambridge circuits who became Presidents of Conference. This is a valuable local history, interestingly written. (We note that on p. 51 '1831' should read '1821' in two places.)

From Charles Scribner's Sons, N.Y., comes *Religion in America* ($3.95) by Winthrop S. Hudson, of Colgate Rochester Divinity School. A comprehensive survey of the subject, it is divided into the following sections: I. The Formative Years (1607-1789); II. The New Nation (1789-1860); III. Years of Mid-passage, (1860-1914); Modern America (1914-). The work fulfils the author's desire 'to depict the unity American life exhibits as well as its particularities'. It holds an excellent balance between the several epochs of the story of religion in America, and this leaves the impression of completeness. This valuable survey reaches to the 1960's. Useful material for further reading is provided by extensive footnotes. The book is well planned and well written.

An important addition to the 'Library of Protestant Thought' (published by the Oxford University Press) is *Reformed Dogmatics*, edited by John W. Beardsless III (52*s.* 6*d.*). It contains translations of three important treatises from the theologians of that period when Protestant thought was becoming crystallized. These are Johannes Wollebius (1586-1629) whose *Compendium Theologiae Christianae* is a summary of the teachings of the Reformed faith; Gisbert Voetius, of Utrecht (1589-1687), a precursor of pietism, whose *Selectae Disputationes Theologicae* reveals the Reformed view of the Christian life in terms of cases of conscience; Francis Turretin (1623-1687), whose *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* explicates 'the decrees of God'. This book, for which the Editor writes a useful Introduction and in which some of the material appears in English for the first time, should prove of great usefulness to those interested in Continental theology.

The Adventure of Living, by Paul Tournier (S.C.M., 25*s.*) is the work of a Swiss physician and psychiatrist, described by Profesesor William Barclay as 'a man skilled in medicine and wise towards God'. The theme of the book is that the remedy for the dissatisfied life in which man fails to fulfil himself is the preservation of, or perhaps the awakening of, the spirit of

adventure as its dynamic. The secret of happiness is to recognize that only through a knowledge of God can the self find fulfilment. Written in an easy style, this book falls into three stages—The Adventure, The Risk, The Choice—and contains much autobiographical reference in addition to the record of innumerable experiences of many folk, not seldom those who were the writer's own patients. The infectious eagerness of the writer reveals his own secret, and makes for fascinating reading.

One of the results of the publication of the controversial writings of the Bishop of Woolwich (*Honest to God*) and of Dr van Buren (*The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*) is an important critique from the pen of Dr E. L. Mascall, of the University of London, who devotes more than half his book, *The Secularisation of Christianity* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 32*s.*), to these two writers. It is the first book to deal analytically and minutely with these works, and Dr Mascall's criticism is ruthless, though with undoubted fairness. A third writing that comes under his criticism is John Knox's *The Church and the Reality of Christ*, which declares that we know little or nothing of the historical Jesus, and that the ground of conviction must be the Church's interpretation of Christ. The following sentence makes plain Dr Mascall's position in regard to these exponents of 'reductionist theology'.

> The impoverished secularised versions of Christianity which are being urged upon us for our acceptance today rest not upon the rigid application of the methods of scientific scholarship, nor upon a serious intuitive appreciation of the Gospels as a whole in their natural context, but upon a radical distaste for the supernatural (p. 282).

Finally he urges that there is 'no valid ground for the failure of nerve which has stampeded many contemporary theologians into a total capitulation to their secular environment'.

A new series of booklets, under the general title 'Makers of Contemporary Theology', designed for the intelligent reader who is not a specialist is produced by the Carey Kingsgate Press. Each gives a short biography of the theologian concerned and this is followed by a summary of his thought and present significance. The first in the series is by Dr J. Heywood Thomas, Reader in Divinity in the University of Durham, who writes lucidly on *Paul Tillich*; in the second Dr Ian Henderson, Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Glasgow writes on *Rudolf Bultmann*. Published at 5*s.* these studies form most useful introductions to modern theological trends.

In the University of Berlin in 1932-3 Dietrich Bonhoeffer delivered a course of lectures, which were translated into English in 1959 under the title *Creation and Fall*; another series, delivered in a seminary at Finkewalde in 1937, was translated in 1955 under the title *Temptation*. These two works have now been issued together in one volume by S.C.M. (10*s.* 6*d.*) under the combined title *Creation and Temptation*.

Deliverance to the Captives (S.C.M., 8*s.* 6*d.*), by Karl Barth consists of eighteen sermons, most of which were preached to inmates of the Swiss prison at Basel—surely a test for any man's theology! In the words of Dr John Marsh (who writes the Introduction), these sermons 'above all exalt

Christ and show Him as the One who in all our sorrow, tragedy and sin is the only hope and the indubitable assurance that in the end what God has designed for us will not be in vain'. As rich as the sermons themselves are the prayers at the opening and closing of each discourse.

From the Banner of Truth Trust, in the series 'Puritan Paper-backs' comes *The Plague of Plagues* (6*s*.) by Ralph Venning (1621-1673), a popular City preacher whose treatise, first published in 1669, takes its title from the Great Plague which devastated the City of London in 1665. The pestilence of which Venner writes is human sin.

In *The Triumph of Job* (S.C.M., 9*s*. 6*d*.) Professor Edgar Jones, of the Northern Congregational College, Manchester, strikes a new line in the interpretation of this Hebrew masterpiece. The problem of the suffering of the innocent is usually regarded as the main theme of the poem. Professor Jones holds that this problem of pain is used in the poem 'as a supremely relevant example to examine the deeper and profounder issue of the whole relationship between God and man'. So the *Book of Job* is about 'the reality or otherwise of religious faith'. The dominant notes of the book are the necessity of suffering and the reality of religion; it contains the affirmation that suffering may indeed be an integral part of God's purpose. Here is a foregleam of the fact that the way God chose to save the world was that of Calvary. This is an interesting study with new insights.

In the Jewish legend *golem* is an embryo Adam, 'shapeless and not fully created, hence an automaton'. This is the key to the curious title of a book by Dr Norbert Wiener, concerning machines, with artificial brains, the story of their control and powers of communication being known as 'cybernetics'. In his *God and Golem Inc.* (Chapman & Hall, 18*s*.) he examines the philosophical and religious implications of this study. The challenge arises because machines exist which are able to learn (a computer playing a game of draughts seems to improve its game by its own experience); because of machines which reproduce themselves—'machine genetics'; and because of the co-ordination of machines and man. 'Render unto man the things which are man's and unto computers the things which are the computers'. This would seem the intelligent policy to adopt when we employ men and computers together in common undertakings' (p. 77). Such is Dr Wiener's counsel in this book.

Professor John Cohen, of Manchester University describes his book on *Human Robots in Myth and Science* (Allen & Unwin, 35*s*.) as 'an essay in the history of ideas' and adds: 'I have tried to make Automaton my captive'. Beginning with myth and legend, the author traces the idea of the robot from antiquity to the present day, indicating man's constant urge to make objects behaving in man-like fashion. The theory of the robot emerges systematically in the seventeenth century under Descartes, who believed that the problem of mankind would yield to the science of mathematics. 'Such faith was an indispensible first stage in the development of the modern computer in particular and of automata in general' (p. 76). In conclusion Professor Cohen is prepared to assert:

The logical system which is embodied in a computer is a *tool* which is and by itself utterly useless. It requires for its logical completeness someone who is able to use it in a fashion and for a purpose not fully predetermined by the tool' (p. 139). This is a stimulating book and is fully documented.

Two books from the Epworth Press centre around the hymns of Charles Wesley. The first, entitled *The Christian Year with Charles Wesley* (12*s.* 6*d.*) is intended for private devotion alongside the *Book of Common Prayer*, somewhat after the style of Keble's *The Christian Year* (1827). The compilation is the work of the Rev. John Lawson and a good deal of the less-known verse of Charles Wesley is in the selection. The second book comes from the pen of T. S. Gregory, who, as is well-known, after being in the Methodist ministry for fourteen years, seceded to the Church of Rome in 1935, as he says 'without ceasing to be a Methodist'. *According to your Faith* (6*s.* 6*d.*) is an essay on prayer and meditation based on the Wesley hymns, which, being freely quoted serve to help the reader in what is sometimes philosophically profound and requires to be re-read.

The Administration of the Sacraments, by Nicholas Haligan, O.P. (Mercier Press 21*s.*) a volume of some six hundred pages, is an immensely detailed guide in pastoral theology, intended for Roman Catholic priests and students in seminaries. It deals with canonical legislation and complex moral principles and cases involved in the administration of the seven sacraments. Its massive proportions and infinitesimal detail seem formidable to the non-catholic interested in moral theology, but it will give insight into the character of the training for the Roman Catholic priesthood and will shed light upon some of the problems raised by the new ecumenical situation.

From the same press comes *Is Celibacy Outdated?* (5*s.*) by Ida Friederike Görres. The book is well-written and by closely-knit argument sustained on a high level seeks to defend the celibacy of the priesthood at a time when the question of clerical marriage in the Roman Catholic Church is being debated.

'The liturgical and ecclesiastical renewal must now be climaxed by a biblical renewal that would deepen and clarify the very notion of God as the God of our belief and prayer'. So writes Père Yves Congar, O.P. in the 'Preface' to *That Man is You* (Mercier Press, 25*s.*), a book by Abbé Evely, a Belgian professor and spiritual director. It illustrates the new biblical emphasis in Roman Catholic devotion. It is a profound and sustained meditation on such issues as the reading of the Scripture, the love of one's neighbour, the practice of forgiveness and the life of faith—all these things in the light of the Gospels.

First published by Constable in 1962, *Objections to Roman Catholicism* contained seven critical but constructive essays set upon the background of the Vatican Council and Pope John's *aggiornamento*, or 'the bringing up to date' of the Catholic Church. It has now been reprinted as a Pelican book (4*s.* 6*d.*).

Any volume from the pen of Dr Nathaniel Micklem is always welcome and the collection of papers under the title *My Cherry Tree* (Geoffrey Bles,

18*s*.) is no exception. He desires that these writings shall be regarded 'as conversational pieces in a conversational style'. Standing as he does in the Platonic tradition of English thought, the first three chapters illustrate his religious and philosophical position. He writes: 'I hold with Dean Inge that "the goal of the Intellect is the One; the goal of the Will is the Good; the goal of the affections is the Beautiful" '. It is the last that Dr Micklem stresses. 'An awareness of God is meditated to us in many different ways through the sublime, the majestic, the beautiful, the good' (p. 13). Further essays in this book afford stimulating reading; there is a discussion of 'the theology of flying saucers'; an account of the author's attempt to interest a group of intellectuals in Czechoslovakia in philosophical theology; his views of political and economic problems—and an outstanding essay entitled 'Philosophical Reflections on Jurisprudence'. The final essay is on 'Pentecost in Legend and History'. These are fascinating papers to be read—and read again.

In the excellent series of the Calvin Commentaries published by Oliver & Boyd (30*s*.) there is now a further volume. *The Acts of the Apostles 14-28*, translated by J. W. Fraser, completes the commentary on this book of the Bible.

From the Oxford University Press comes *Carols of Today* (15*s*.) containing seventeen original settings for mixed voices. It contains no arrangements of traditional tunes; every carol is an original composition by a contemporary British composer, almost every prominent younger composer being represented.

RECENT LITERATURE

Edited by John T. Wilkinson

The Theology of the Resurrection, by Walter Künneth. (S.C.M., The Preacher's Library, 42*s*.)

The book is in three parts. The first gives a useful account, and criticism, of a number of ways in which the Resurrection of Jesus has been presented by theologians. In this edition there is 'special and detailed reference to Bultmann's approach'. This 'detailed reference' is good so far as it goes but, unfortunately, it does not extend to a consideration of Bultmann's approach to all the matters with which Künneth deals. There is criticism of Bultmann's demythologizing, but less than adequate recognition of Bultmann as a form critic. So Künneth assumes that there is no need to justify his statement that the historic Jesus had authority to forgive sins. But it is not only the failure to reckon wih Bultmann, Fuchs and others which is open to criticism in connection with the forgiveness of sins. One may doubt the advisability of connecting the authority to forgive with the

Messiahship of Jesus when it is far from certain that Messiahship carried this idea. In the second and third parts of the book, that is 'The Dogmatic Significance of the Resurrection' and 'The Resurrection and its Consummation' the author makes a notable attempt to show the importance and the consequences of the Lordship given to Christ in the Resurrection. It does not seem however that sufficient attention has been given to the Christological statements in Colossians 1.13-18. The author is never less than confident in his assertions, but some of his statements are open to serious criticism. The sentence 'God proves by his action in the resurrection that the man Jesus is the pre-existent man from the transcendent dimension' (p. 140) should, at the very least, be demythologized. The statement 'Death, in fact, even in the case of an animal is something other than the beginning of a physiological process of disintegration' would be more accurate if 'in my opinion' were substituted for 'in fact'. There are valuable sections in the book such as that on the hiddenness of the resurrection, and the references to the works of Althaus are particularly interesting. But it is indeed a sobering thought if, as stated on the dust cover, there is nothing on the Resurrection of Jesus by an English-speaking theologian comparable with this work.

VINCENT PARKIN

A Church between Colonial Powers: A Study of the Church in Togo, by Hans W. Debrunner. (Lutterworth, Paperback 27*s.* 6*d.*; Bound 35*s.*)

This study of the Evangelical Church in Togo, West Africa, is the third in a series sponsored by the World Council of Churches under the heading of 'Churches in the Missionary Situation: Studies in Growth and Response'. The series aims by means of particular studies of the Church's encounter with its environment to afford fresh insights for churches everywhere into the relevance of the Gospel to the everyday life of man. The heart of this study is sociological analysis, but the author places great importance upon the historical context of the situations which he investigates. He makes a detailed examination of the history of the tribes, of the slave trade, and of the missionary and colonial history of the area. Having assembled his material in Togo from October 1959 to April 1960 he presents it as completely as possible, but is cautious in his judgements upon the assembled facts and upon the conclusions to be drawn from them. The first section of this book relates the 'Growth of the Church in Togo', beginning with the first tribal migrations and ending in April 1960 with Independence. The second section on 'Characteristics of the Church in Togo' deals with the Christian in the life and society of the country, with chapters on Marriage customs, Home and School, Groups in the Congregation and Society; and also a discussion of the continuing pagan cults alongside Christian worship. This section concludes with a chapter on the Church's structure and organization with particular reference to the training and ministries of teachers, catechists and pastors. The final section on 'The Future of the Church in Togo' analyses the task of the Church and the means and structure at her disposal for this task. The author warns of the dangers inherent in the fact of having become a popular National Church, and of the danger of becoming superficial and worldly. The usefulness of this book is greatly enhanced by a section of maps and a bibliography of all the documents and books quoted in the study, and by a section of explanatory chapter notes. This book achieves its objective in that it brings the reader to a deeper understanding of the ways in which a church grows by creative response to the pressures which impinge upon it.

DOUGLAS H. PRESCOTT

Deeds and Rules in Christian Ethics, by Paul Ramsey. (Oliver & Boyd, 10*s.* 6*d.*)
A Commentary on Romans 12-13, by C. E. B. Cranfield. (Oliver & Boyd, 10*s.* 6*d.*)
The 'Unwritten' and 'Secret' Apostolic Traditions in the Theological Thought of St. Basil of Caesarea, by Emmanuel Amand de Mendieta. (Oliver & Boyd, 10*s.* 6*d.*)
These curiously assorted titles form the three latest numbers, 11, 12 and 13 respectively, in the distinguished *Occasional Papers* of the *Scottish Journal of Theology*. Paul Ramsey refers to the current fashion of 'doing' ethics. It revolts him but he accepts it as a means to discuss the methods of Christian ethics, using, moreover, Frankena's terminology of *act-agapism* and *rule-agapism* as the two possible views of how Christian love best exhibits itself in practice. In a brief introduction he argues that this analysis is apt to current debates and may help to clarify the church's proclamation in its relation to moral problems. The bulk of the book is given to application of the analysis to three major issues posited respectively by the Quaker view on sex, reactions to *Honest to God*, and the 'contextualism' of Paul Lehmann. Finally he returns to Frankena's further criticism of theologians for not saying clearly what they mean by Christian normative ethics, and uses his negatives to assist in the projection of an unfinished, but positive, agenda. All in all this may be, short as it is, one of the greater contributions to the subject in our time. The brief concluding paragraph is pure gold. Charles Cranfield is at work on a new I.C.C. on *Romans* (shades of Sanday and Headlam!). In view of the wide-spread uncertainty and confusion, in church and world, on ethical matters he has taken the chance to expound the two relevant chapters at greater length than will be possible in the commentary. A brief introduction recapitulates the teaching of *Romans* 1-11 that the life which is the destiny of the man who is righteous by faith is a life of obedience to God. The six-fold exposition which follows is immensely learned and gathers up comments from a long line of tradition. Those who follow Cranfield's guidance will surely share his assurance that 'there are few things which could make a more valuable contribution toward the clarification of Christian thinking in the sphere of ethics than would be a really serious and patient study of these two chapters'. The Editor of S.J.T. has shown great percipience in bringing together things new and old in these two contiguous volumes. To relate them, systematize, and apply will be a rewarding task for any who are concerned to 'do' the debt of love. We move to a very different and more specialized field with Dr de Mendieta's monograph on St Basil. It has its origin in reflection on R. P. C. Hanson's comments on what St Basil wrote about 'unwritten' traditions. Having cited the relevant portions of the treatise *On the Holy Spirit* de Mendieta attempts to interpret St Basil's conviction that these traditions did come from the Apostles and Fathers and were secretly handed over to the initiated. For all the careful argument and scholarly documentation we cannot acquit the author of special pleading and of conclusions hardly in line with the *communis sensus fidelium*. Yet he raises important issues for current considerations of the relation between scripture and tradition.

MARCUS WARD

Theology in Reconstruction, by T. F. Torrance. (*S.C.M.*, 45*s.*)
This collection of essays and lectures is prefaced by a paper on 'Theological Education today' which is based on four contemporary facts which compel attention to theological education. They are the dominant place of science, the

widespread attention to language, 'our ineluctable involvement in history', and the demands of 'sheer human need'. The book concludes with the paper on 'A New Reformation?' which was first published in these pages. These contemporary and forward-looking chapters serve to suggest that longer and more erudite sections of the book, looking back (as many of them do) to Calvin and Augustine as well as to Scripture, are by no means a rehash of older theologies. Not that one could imagine Dr Torrance offering such a dish. Although this is a collection of papers, the themes are clearly distributed between sections entitled 'the knowledge of God'; 'through the Jesus Christ' 'and in the Holy Spirit'. They range from a specially learned discussion of the Greek Fathers and the problem of theological statement today, through papers on Christology and justification to some essays about the Holy Spirit which would alone make this book valuable. It is unfortunate that some students of theology label Dr Torrance 'Barthian', and use this description as an excuse for not reading him. I hope it is not unkind to suggest that those who thus approach Torrance read as little of Barth himself. This book is neither 'Barthian' in the popular meaning of that word (which has little to do with Barth as he now writes), nor are they characterized by a partisan approach of any kind. Many of these pages make heavy demands even upon the experienced reader, but this is high doctrine fearlessly taught by one who is sure that it is the very aspect of the Gospel which makes it strange and difficult which 'really strikes home to the human heart and meets the desperate plight of man'.

FREDERIC GREEVES

Theology of the English Reformers, by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes. (Hodder & Stoughton, 30*s*.)

Dr Hughes has provided a generous conspectus of the teaching of the leading theologians of the Anglican Reformation. The Parker Society's nineteenth-century editions of the Reformers are his main source, and he draws copiously on the works of Tyndale, Bradford, Hooper, Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, Jewel, Sandys, Pilkington, and others, besides making full use of the Prayer Book, the Articles, and the Homilies. He arranges the material, with interpretative comment, under the heads of Holy Scripture, Justification, Sanctification, Preaching and Worship, Ministry, the Sacraments, and Church and State. Perhaps the predominant impression one draws from this compilation is that the theology of the early Reformers is a *theologia crucis*, much of it wrought out under the direct menace of persecution and death. It is, to use Wesley's terminology, 'for Believers fighting', and bears out Luther's claim that a man becomes a theologian not simply by reading and studying, but by being born, by suffering, and by dying. Here, of course, is its great strength. And yet, as controversial theology and passionately anti-Roman, it is always exposed to the dangers of one-sidedness and bigotry. It is good to read of the mutual respect of the great opponents Bellarmine and Whitaker, but their attitude stands out like a good deed in a naughty world. The key to the Reformers' theology lies in the doctrine of the supreme authority of Scripture. There is something touching in the confident optimism that the appeal to Scripture ('the plain words of the law of God', as Sandys puts it), would settle everything. Dr Hughes rightly protests against a dismissal of the Reformers' theology because of their 'pre-critical' approach to Scripture; but is it realistic or fair to write off all contemporary Christians who cannot accept *tout court* the Reformers' understanding of scriptural infallibility as, 'those sceptical souls who do not know (the) inward witness of the Spirit as a

truth of their own experience'? Perhaps the main criticism of Dr. Hughes' book is that it makes of the Reformers' theology a more monolithic structure than it in fact was. Significantly, the book contains only three references to Hooker, whose massive theological contribution surely deserves more adequate representation. Had it received it, we should have had a different view of the way in which believers come to acknowledge the divine authority of Scripture, a view giving greater weight both to the authority of the Church and to the testimony of reason. Nevertheless, Dr Hughes has given us a most useful, readable, and at times deeply moving compendium of the theology of the Reformers, and as important source-book for the current ecumenical debate.

JOHN A. NEWTON

The World of Mission, by Bergt Sundkler. (Lutterworth, 30*s*.)

Dr Sunkler is Professor of Church History and Missions at Uppsala University and was formerly Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. His book is divided into three sections. In the first, there is the Biblical and Theological background. The book begins and ends with a quotation from Genesis 12, verses 1-3. Abraham took the first decisive step. The line of salvation runs from the Tower (of Babel) through Tongues (Pentecost) to the Throne (Revelation) and the missionary task is to proclaim Christ as King and make Him known to the nations. Part Two—Church and Empire—deals with the historic development of missionary societies and the confrontation of mission and colonial politics. Politics and commerce are the stuff of which missionary history is made. Progress may come through mass movements or group movements or from individual decisions. Slavery and race problems and the growth of nationalism create difficulties, and reaction against all that the West stands for may set in. The third section—nearly half the book—concerns 'Church and Milieu'—the interaction of the Church in its environment, and the contribution to culture that is made through education, literature, medicine, agriculture and industry. To translate the message, missionaries need (1) the ABC, (2) First Aid, (3) the Plough. Chapters about tribal cultures and the great religions reveal sympathetic understanding and show the variety of problems involved. The encounter with Islam is the most difficult task and the Christian Church needs 'the patience of unanswered prayer'. In India, where philosophy has looked upon history as an inferior form of reality, the message of the Cross as the centre and goal of history is still the great stumbling-block, and encounter with Hinduism will be the supreme test of mission. In East Asia, there is a rich heritage of myth and ritual. The Chinese emphasis on fellowship and collective responsibility; the Japanese with a high level of literacy, and a church-life with 60-70% young people; the Korean Church with its love of the Bible and practice of tithing—hold the promise of good. In Africa, there are patterns, colours and rhythms of tribal culture, love of dramatic presentations, music and sacred song; the real problem is to translate the Gospel in African categories and symbols. The book has wide horizons and is full of valuable information, pertinent details, good illustrations, appreciative references to great missionaries, and the assurance that the Holy Spirit is at work. Thanks are due to Dr Eric Sharpe for the translation.

FRANK M. KELLEY

Witchcraft, European and African, by Geoffrey Parrinder. (Faber & Faber, 25*s.* and 8*s.* 6*d.*)

This book was first published in 1958 by Penguin Books. That it continues to meet a need for an informative book on witchcraft is evidenced by its re-issue, both in a clothbound edition and in a Faber paperback. The book is a comparative study of witchcraft, European and African. In an introductory chapter Dr Parrinder claims that the subject of witchcraft has been very much misunderstood, and that attempts to include sorcery, magic and spiritualism under witchcraft add undue complications. He is also highly critical of the theory that European witchcraft was the remains of ancient pagan cults. The superstitions and demonology of ancient Europe provided no more than a background to the development of witchcraft belief. In the first eight chapters Dr Parrinder gathers together the relevant information concerning European witchcraft. As one reads his account of the persecutions of witches, one echoes his conclusion that 'the belief in witchcraft is a tragic error, a false explanation of the ills of life, and one that has only led to cruel and baseless oppression in which countless innocent people have suffered'. In chapter nine Dr Parrinder discusses witchcraft in the Bible, and characterizes the attempt of Christians to base their belief in witchcraft on Biblical foundations as grossly mistaken. 'The plain fact is', he writes, 'that the Bible knows scarcely anything of true witchcraft.' The rest of the book (chapters 10-17), deals with witchcraft in present-day Africa. The almost universal fear and hate of witches is a factor with which Christian missionaries and enlightened governments have to contend. Dr Parrinder shows how the description of witchcraft in Africa has suffered from distortion, just as it had in Europe, and words such at witch, wizard, sorcerer, black magician, witch-doctor, medicine-man, juju-man and fetisher are bandied about freely with little attempt at fixing an approximate meaning for them. Many Europeans tended to regard the witch-doctor as the chief witch, and colonial governments even legislated against him. Whereas his task is to heal those who are thought to be bewitched, and far from being a witch, he is the chief enemy of witches. The whole story of witchcraft, both European and African, is a record of inhumanity born of ignorance and fear, and, as Dr Parrinder concludes, 'an enlightened religion, education, medicine, and better social and racial conditions will help to reduce "man's inhumanity to man".'

D. HOWARD SMITH

The Christian World of C. S. Lewis, by Clyde S. Kilby. (Marcham Manor Press, 24*s.*)

A book such as this is needed, and the publication so soon after C. S. Lewis's death is timely. For those who wonder where to begin in the 'World' of C. S. Lewis, and those who, having entered, have difficulty in finding their way, and those who doubt whether the effort of going further is worthwhile, and those who are not sure whether 'Christian' is the right adjective, Professor Kilby is a knowledgeable and sound guide. There are references to over forty books, in some cases synopses and interpretations, and always illuminating and appreciative but not uncritical comments. The chapters deal with the main themes: search for joy, hell and heaven, pain and love, myth and miracles, orthodoxy and children's fairy tales. In a valuable appendix, the author gives brief descriptions of five unpublished dissertations and five books about Lewis, and these show how varied are the interpretations of the man and his writings. The strongest element in Lewis is his emphasis upon the longing (*sehnsucht*) in the heart of

everyone for a return to the good way of life, for joy, for perfection. Lewis's greatness is in his capacity to be honest. He came to theism and Christianity only slowly. He was a reluctant convert, but after he had become convinced of the inadequacy of substitutes for Christ, he wanted to make theology paramount again. He was very critical of some aspects of contemporary life in aesthetics, education and theological modernism. He disliked the domination of the machine and 'scientism'—the popular unthinking assumption that there is no truth other than that revealed by the scientific method. He believed that sanctified imagination is a legitimate tool for a Christian apologist, and myth, when people are taken off their guard, may be the best means of embodying ultimate truths. He was both left of orthodoxy and right of it.

FRANK M. KELLEY

Mission in the New Testament, by Ferdinand Hahn. (Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 47, S.C.M., 21*s*.)

This is a translation of the German original published in 1963. After serving on the Theological faculty at Heidelberg, the author became Professor of New Testament in the University of Kiel in 1964. The study is offered in a series of six chapters, ranging from Old Testament prophetic background to post-Pauline tradition, taken in chronological sequence. After discussion of the attitude of Jesus to the Gentiles during His ministry, he takes up the post-Pentecostal period with the developing tension between the Palestinian Jewish Christians with headquarters in Jerusalem and the Hellenist Jewish Christians, including Gentile converts, centred in Antioch. This naturally leads to Paul and his conception of mission. The witness of the Synoptists (read as prescribed by Form Criticism) and Acts then follows, with a closing chapter on the post-Pauline tradition to which the author relegates Ephesians, Colossians, II Thessalonians and the whole Johannine literature. This is a scholarly study, based on original research and taking due note of his predecessors and contemporaries in the Biblical field, as the ample documentation shows: some two hundred scholars are referred to, British included (among whom are Kingsley Barrett, C. H. Dodd, R. H. Lightfoot, T. W. Manson, and Vincent Taylor). Three aspects of the Christian mission to the discussion are notable. On the question of the attitude of Jesus to a mission to the Gentile world, while critical of any reliance upon reported *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, the author concludes that while He deliberately centred upon Israel in His own ministry, yet it was never His intention, on principle, to be confined to it, and this known attitude was determinative of the earliest Christian mission after Pentecost, to which the existing eschatological outlook lent urgency. Paul's pre-eminent place in the Christian mission to the Gentile world is handsomely conceded, in terms reminiscent of von Harnack's appraisal in *Mission and Expansion*. 'He realized, as no one did before him, the all-embracing reality of the Christian message, and he understood that the gospel itself, with its universal claim, demands that the mission should be to all human beings, including the Greek and barbarian'. This conviction was not based on the exegesis of the Hebrew Prophets or on inherited command, but on his theology, derived in its turn from his own experience of the Risen Lord. In the post-Pauline period there appears the emerging tension between Mission and Church. With the success of the mission comes the Church: edification with all the attendant questions of church order, tends to supersede interest in evangelism—a situation that has a strong contemporary flavour. This important study deserves careful attention, though it is not a book for the general reader unversed in Biblical criticism.

C. P. GROVES

The Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History, by Max Warren. (S.C.M., 21*s*.)

This book emerged from lectures given in the University of Cambridge in 1964. The distinguished author, for twenty-one years General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society and now Sub-Dean of Westminster Abbey, ranks with Bishop Stephen Neill as an authoritative spokesman of the Anglican Communion on Christian Missions. He has always been noted for his vision and his ability to relate the Christian mission to contemporary world problems. Delving into the earlier history of his period, he covers familiar ground but with an eye on the criticisms of recent writers. As to missionary motivation, he rejects the facile contention of some that the missionary was enmeshed in imperialist manoeuvres, and makes clear the unselfregarding nature of their service, as (e.g.) for Africa, in the desire to make some restitution for the ravages of the overseas slave-trade. In general, it was a profound gratitude for the personal experience of salvation to which appeal was made in the early nineteenth century for the support of missions overseas. He designates as the Third British Empire the period from the Mutiny to Independence in India—the period in which peoples other than our own stock fell under our rule. The great majority of colonial administrators, in a high tradition of devoted service, were concerned not so much for the 'Empire' as for the welfare of their people, as the writer can testify from African experience. On the negative side would-be exploiters were normally held in leash by these men, while on the positive the welfare of native peoples was actively promoted. The tradition of personal submergence in 'the Service' forbad the publicity their behaviour merited. The impact of the West on Asian and African society, in the cultural clash inevitable between ruler and ruled, with consequent social upheaval, is given that balanced consideration which is characteristic of the whole book. Two chapters on 'Resurgent Religions' and 'Nationalism' respectively are especially noteworthy. Both deal with active current rivals to Christian Missions (he designates nationalism 'Man's Other Religion'), and manifest great wisdom in the treatment of matters with high emotional content for the peoples concerned. A chapter on the 'Ecumenical Movement' completes a valuable volume.

C. P. GROVES

Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy, by Justus Hartnack, tr. Maurice Cranston. (Methuen, 21*s*.)

Justus Hartnack, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Aarus, Denmark, claims that Wittgenstein holds the key to modern philosophical activity, and his work, originally published in 1962 and now translated by Maurice Cranston, does much to substantiate the claim. After a brief biographical introduction, Hartnack expounds Wittgenstein's two main works, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) and the *Philosophical Investigations* published posthumously. Wittgenstein's uniqueness, Hartnack claims, lies in his having produced two such philosophical works of genius which are entirely distinct. The *Tractatus* provides the background to logical positivism. Truth for the earlier Wittgenstein is 'what is the case' and truth statements can only be tested empirically. Propositions in logic on the other hand are merely tautologies. Although Wittgenstein was never a member of the *Vienna Circle* he profoundly influenced their thought. Moritz Schlick followed Wittgenstein's thought in defining science as 'the pursuit of truth' and philosophy as 'the pursuit of meaning'. The influence of the later Wittgenstein is seen in the realm of linguistic philosophy. In the *Philosophical Investi-*

gations Wittgenstein recognized some of his earlier extravagances, admitting that there are more varied uses of language. Language is seen as a tool with a rich variety of usage, or, as Wittgenstein put it, there are many different language games with their own particular rules. In a closing chapter Professor Hartnack traces the influence of Wittgenstein on some contemporary philosophers. The revival of interest in philosophical theology can be directly attributed to the reaction of religious thinkers to Wittgenstein and his contemporaries and linguistic study has helped theologians to understand more clearly the particular language game in which they indulge. Those who have read Wittgenstein will find this an interesting exposition; those who have not will find a comprehensible introduction to the thought of great philosopher, whose style is not always easy to follow.

BERNARD E. JONES

Jesus and the Kingdom: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism, by George Eldon Ladd. (S.P.C.K., 32*s.* 6*d.*)

In recent years there has been a growing consensus of opinion that the eschatological teaching of the New Testament describes something which has been partly fulfilled and which partly still lies in the future. Neither Consistent Eschatology nor Realized Eschatology in its extreme form does full justice to the evidence. But how much has been fulfilled? And what is it that still remains? Here views tend to diverge. Professor Ladd's solution is as follows: The Messianic salvation foretold by the prophets was fulfilled in the person and mission of Jesus; but there remains an eschatological consummation when the Messianic salvation will be perfectly accomplished in the age to come. This 'fulfilment without consummation' is a neat way of summing up the New Testament standpoint and in particular the message and work of Jesus as presented in the Synoptic Gospels. Dr Ladd gives a comprehensive survey of the conception of the Kingdom of God in Jewish thought, both in the Old Testament and in the intertestamental literature. He shows that in the Gospels the term implies both reign and realm, and he places most emphasis on the presence of the Kingdom as dynamic power. 'In Jesus' person, in his deeds, in his words, the Kingdom of God and its blessings are present and dynamically active among men'. Nine chapters are devoted to the idea of fulfilment, and one to 'the consummation'. The latter is inevitably too meagre to do justice to all the issues involved. But in the main part of the book, in an excellent exposition, the emphasis is placed where it belongs, on 'the Kingdom present as the new age of salvation'. Here is to be found 'the mystery' of Mark 4^{11}, the new truth that the Kingdom which is finally to come in manifest glory has already entered the world in the person and work of Jesus to work secretly within and among men. The author is well abreast of recent literature on this subject, and in his fully documented pages he gives a fair appraisal of varying view points. He has a refreshingly positive approach to the Gospel material. The book has been well printed and produced; the few misprints are all of a trifling kind, e.g. existence (p. 201) and apocalyptists (243) are misspelt; Luke 10^{10} should be 10^{18} (150); Sessemann should be Seesemann (207 and 363). There is some confusion on p. 341 between W. F. Lofthouse's article on Biblical Ethics in the *Companion to the Bible*, and C. H. Dodd's sub-section in the same volume on the Ethical Teaching of Jesus. Professor Ladd is at the Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and he has given us a valuable piece of work on this important subject.

T. FRANCIS GLASSON

The Old Testament—An Introduction, by Otto Eissfeldt, translated by Peter R. Ackroyd. (Blackwell, 70*s*.)

The publication in English of this massive and monumental work by one to whom Professor H. H. Rowley accords the title of 'the greatest living Old Testament scholar' must be hailed as something of an event in the field of biblical studies. The first German edition of Professor Eissfeldt's *Einleitung* appeared in 1934, but it was upon the greatly enlarged second edition of 1955 that the English translation was begun. Before the long task was completed, however, a further expanded German edition appeared in 1964, with which the translation offered in the present volume has been collated. As a result, we have here the author's most recent judgement on the many problems with which he deals. A brief review of a book which runs to over 850 pages can do little more than indicate its structure and content. Professor Eissfeldt sees 'the science of Old Testament Introduction' as 'the presentation of the history of the growth of the Old Testament from its first beginning to its definitive conclusion.' This 'presentation' is offered under five clearly defined sections: (i) The pre-literary stage, with an examination of the smallest units of saga, poetry, law, prophetic oracle etc.; (ii) Consideration of the literary units which lie behind the Old Testament books as we have them—pentateuchal 'sources', early collection of psalms, wisdom sayings, and other types of literature; (iii) An analysis of the books of the Old Testament as they have come down to us; (iv) The growth of these writings into one canonical whole, with the incidental examination of the *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*, including a survey of the Qumran literature; (v) Discussion of the text of the Old Testament and its history. On the first two sections, although the author gives detailed consideration of the smallest pre-literary prose and poetic units, and stresses the importance of their recognition, he is emphatic that we should not think of the books of the Old Testament simply as collections of such units. Between the latter and the biblical books lie the larger literary arrangements of these units, and the existence of such written 'sources' is to be assumed, not only behind the Pentateuch, but virtually the whole of the literature. On the Pentateuch itself, Professor Eissfeldt confirms the main lines of the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis, though he is careful to insist that any literary analysis *is* hypothetical. He would, however, distinguish within 'J' a separate narrative source which he regards as the earliest of all, and which he describes as the 'Lay' source (L), since its interest is centred in the nomadic ideal rather than the cult. In this he confirms his adherence to the theory he first advanced as long ago as 1922. Moving on to the Former Prophets, he maintains, as against the 'Fragment' theory supported by Martin Noth and others, that the pentateuchal sources can be discerned right through the Deuteronomic History from Joshua to Kings. This is not a book in which one should expect to find new or startling theories, but rather the considered judgement of one whose great erudition and experience offer the student a sure guide through the maze of diverse and often conflicting views regarding Old Testament literature. It may confidently be predicted that this will be the definitive work on the subject for many years, and one which no serious student of the Old Testament can afford to be without. 'Introduction' is not in general the most exciting of subjects, and the clarity and readability of the book is a tribute not only to the author's complete mastery of the complexities of his subject, but to the care and skill with which the translator, Professor Peter Ackroyd, has carried out his herculean task. It is particularly to be noted that the book offers a compre-

hensive classified and indexed bibliography relevant to canonical and extra-canonical Jewish literature to the end of the inter-testamental period, and this greatly enhances its value as a work of reference for both the research and general student. It is perhaps ungracious, in regard to a book on which so much careful labour has been expended, to point to a lack which would require still further heavy labour to supply. One cannot help feeling, however, that a book which will be used mainly as a work of reference, should have been provided with an index of subjects, as well as those included, which relate to literary references and authors. It should be said, however, that an extensive table of contents goes some way towards meeting this need, even though not quite fulfilling it. It remains only to congratulate the publishers on a volume which, bearing in mind both the quality and quantity of its contents, is offered at what must be regarded as a very modest price.

S. C. THEXTON

The Formation of the New Testament, by Robert M. Grant. (Hutchinson: University Library, 15*s*.)

Professor Van Unnik said that since the investigations of Zahn and Von Harnack the history of the formation of the Canon has practically been at a standstill. But discoveries such as those at Nag Hammadi have yielded new information about the second century which has led to some modification in views of the development of the Canon. In particular Marcion has been demoted. There is now a danger of underestimating Marcion. We may agree that it is probable that Marcion was not the first to regard as authoritative some of the works now accepted as canonical. It hardly needed the Gospel of Truth to make that point! But did anyone anticipate Marcion in declaring that other books were not authoritative? The exclusion of non-authoritative works is at least as important as the acceptance of authoritative ones in the development of the idea of canonicity. While recognizing the crucial importance of the second century Grant deals also with the earlier period. He shows the emergence of the idea of canonicity and states that the canon as we have it is the product of Alexandrian learning applied to the tradition. There is an interesting appendix to chapter 9 illustrating the freedom with which second century writers quoted from the gospels. It can hardly be claimed that we have at last an exciting book on the Canon of the New Testament but this one is undoubtedly informative.

VINCENT PARKIN

The Temptation and the Passion: The Marcan Soteriology, by Ernest Best. (Society of New Testament Studies: Monograph 2.) (Cambridge University Press, 32*s*. 6*d*.)

Best's book is, in a sense, an 'occasional' of *New Testament Studies*. Following closely on Gärtner's monograph it endorses the high promise of the new series. What does Mark hold to have been achieved by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ? The Markan *keryma* is the concern—not what Jesus himself thought. If this seems a strange quest, Dr Best reminds us that if we are to get to Jesus through the Gospels, we need to disentangle not only the influence of the early community on the material but also the distinctive contributions of the evangelists. The careful examination of the Temptation narrative shows a defeat of Satan in the desert so conclusive that later activities against demons were 'mopping-up operations'. Mark also does not see evil to be basically demonic. So why did Jesus live and die? From this negative beginning Best

turns to the positive assessment of the Ministry as conceived by Mark. Here use is made of the 'seams' whereby Mark joins together his material, the selection and order of the material, the passages therein where statements are made concerning Jesus' work, the titles used of him, and finally the kind of community envisaged by Mark as arising from the preaching recorded. Here we find reflected 'the primary concern of the Markan Gospel, a concern with the redemption of men from sin rather than with the cosmic defeat of Satan, and the greater achievement of Jesus is the former, not the latter'. This splendid exercise in biblical theology is presented with economy of words, clarity of expression, and with the sure touch of a scholar who knows exactly where he is going. In the course of the argument a number of heads roll, with all the courtesy in the world, and perhaps some of Dr Best's victims may congratulate themselves on having played a part, albeit negatively, in what may well prove to be a decisive step in the continuing Quest.

MARCUS WARD

God in the New Testament, by A. W. Argyle. (Hodder & Stoughton, 15*s*.)

'Knowing Christianity' is the general title of the new Hodder paperback library for thinking laymen, edited by William Neil. If Dr Argyle's contribution is typical, the grateful laymen may soon be joined by many of their ministerial brethren. The claim that the series is to be 'non-technical' seems a rather foolish perpetuation of old-fashioned criticism. You cannot talk sense about anything without using the words appropriate to the context and all the necessary words have been used by the author. What he has done is to show clearly what they mean and to set them in a sound pattern of trinitarian doctrine. Above all, he has used Scripture to explain Scripture as is evidenced by the comprehensive index of texts cited. While no one would claim, least of all the author, that this book breaks new ground, it is a fresh, balanced and informative statement of what the New Testament means by GOD. It reads smoothly, even with frequent recourse to the references, and makes telling but unpretentious use of present-day insights. No one who reads this with every degree of serious intention can remain ignorant of what the New Testament has to say. Committed Christians will be conformed in the faith: others may even come to believe.

MARCUS WARD

Old and New in Interpretation. A study of the Two Testaments, by James Barr. (S.C.M., 30*s*.)

A reading of James Barr's article on 'Revelation' in the revised edition of Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible (Grant and Rowley, 1963) is good preparatory work for the thesis of this book. His warning there—'The now common theological use of "revelation" for divine self-communication in general needs to be criticized wherever it has grown too far away from the Biblical usage'—is here extended to the whole field of interpretation. No word can be introduced into the interpretative task as if it may supply the one clue for the tracing of the right path in all problems; not 'historical', nor 'acts of God', nor 'Word', nor 'revelation'. Because of the multiplex nature of the Old Testament tradition, we cannot find one central motif to act as a key in the process of understanding. The tradition is related to Christ not so much by a continuous historical process, nor by a series of acts, but through a series of situations. This relationship with Christ is the fundamental theme of the book. Dr Barr puts it in this way: 'If we

study Christ as he seems to be when reference to the Old Testament is removed, and compare him with what we see when reference to the Old Testament is constantly made, what differences do we find and which concept is the more illuminating? In a sense, this present book can be regarded as an attempt to work out such a study in outline' (p. 141). In this attempt, the author returns to his attack upon the too-facile contrast between Hebrew and Greek thought, again affirming his view that it is dangerous for theologians to assume that distinction in cultural patterns draws in identical lines distinctions between revelation and non-revelation. Central in the book is a valuable study of the concepts of history and revelation, for both of which unitary concepts are rejected in favour of variable relations to the elements of the Biblical text. This is followed by a discussion of typology and allegory which is illuminating for our modern problem of how to state valid connections between the Old Testament and the New. And this in turn leads to a study of the relation of the two Testaments in the work of salvation, with the argument that the growth of the Old Testament tradition is 'soteriologically functional'—that 'it provides the matrix for the coming divine acts and the impulse for their very occurrence' (p. 156). The debate on ministerial training is always with us. The pressure of time in training urges that the long process of the careful assessment of Biblical evidence could be short-circuited by the presentation and learning of basic philosophical judgements together with a technique of exegesis. To acquire a set of presuppositions is an easier way to the Bible than the discipline of acquiring its languages preparatory to a detailed study of its text. Dr Barr is constantly aware of this problem and never loses sight of the practical relevance of his arguments; but his conclusions would allow no short cuts.

HERBERT J. COOK

BOOKS RECEIVED

ALLEN & UNWIN: J. N. Findlay, *The Disciple of the Cave* (Muirhead Library of Philosophy), pp. 227, 32*s*. Brian Smith, *Memory* (Muirhead Library of Philosophy), pp. 214, 40*s*. Swami Satprakashananda, *Methods of Knowledge*, pp. 366, 50*s*. Walter Crocker, *Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate*, pp. 186, 28*s*. John Cohen, *Human Robots in Myth and Science*, pp. 156 + plates, 35*s*. F. H. Hilliard, D. Lee, G. Rupp, W. R. Niblett, *Christianity in Education* (Hibbert Lectures, 1965), pp. III, 18*s*. E. M. Schur (ed.), *The Family and Sexual Revolution*, pp. vii + 427, 40*s*. E. Younghusband (ed.), *New Developments in Case Work* (vol. 2), pp. 183, 25*s*. R. B. Luce (ed.), *Fifty Years of The New Republic*, pp. 258, 35*s*. A. Fromme, *The Ability to Love*, pp. 358, 30*s*.

ASSOCIATION PRESS, N.Y.: W. Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity*, pp. 159, $3.

BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST: R. Venning, *The Plague of Plagues*, pp. 238, 6*s*.

BLES, GEOFFREY. N. Micklem, *My Cherry Tree*, pp. 179, 18*s*.

BURNS & OATES. Hans Kung, *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*, pp. xx + 355, 45*s*. Sven Stolpe, *Christiana of Sweden*, pp. x + 360 + plates. 50*s*.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS *et al.*: *The Revised Psalter: Pointed for use with Anglican Chants*, pp. 208. 8*s*. 6*d*.

CAREY KINGSGATE PRESS: I. Henderson, *Rudolf Bultmann* (Makers of Contemporary Theology), pp. 47, 5*s*. J. Heywood Thomas, *Paul Tillich* (Makers of Contemporary Theology), pp. 47, 5*s*. R. C. Johnson, *The Meaning of Christ* (Layman's Theological Library), pp. 97, 6*s*. W. Hamilton, *The Christian Man* (Layman's Theological Library), pp. 93, 6*s*.

EPWORTH PRESS: J. Lawson (ed.), *The Christian Year with Charles Wesley*, pp. 125, 12*s*. 6*d*. F. Tice, *The History of Methodism in Cambridge*, pp. 143, 35*s*. Irvonwy Morgan, *The Godly Preachers of the Elizabethan Church*, pp. 230, 30*s*. J. Kent, *The Age of Disunity*, pp. xii + 209, 30*s*. W. Barclay, *Fishers of Men*, pp. 148, 7*s*. 6*d*.

FABER & FABER: Erik H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implication of Psycho-analytic Insight*, pp. 256, 30*s*.

HODDER & STOUGHTON: M. Jones, *Two Ears of Corn: Oxfam in Action*, pp. 229 + plates, 21*s*.

MERCIER PRESS: N. Halligan, O.P. *The Administration of the Sacraments*, pp. 585, 21*s*. Louis Evely, *That Man is You*, pp. 300, 25*s*.

MARCHANT MANOR PRESS: R. T. Beckwith (ed.), *Towards a Modern Prayer Book*, pp. 96, 5*s*.

NELSON, THOMAS, & SONS: G. F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter* (Leader of Religion Series), pp. 142, 35*s*. Emil G. Leonard (ed. H. H. Rowley), *A History of Protestantism:* Vol. I, *The Reformation*, pp. xiv. + 462, 90*s*.

OLIVER & BOYD: J. Calvin, *The Acts of the Apostles 14-28* (Calvin Commentaries), pp. 329, 30*s*. G. von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays*, pp. xiii + 340, 47*s*. 6*d*.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: R. M. Brown, *The Spirit of Protestantism*, pp. xxi + 270, 12*s*. 6*d*. *Simone Weil, Seventy Letters*, pp. 207, 30*s*. *Religion and the Public Schools*, pp. 56, 16*s*. (for Harvard University Press), being 'The Legal Issue' as the Burton Lecture by Paul A. Freund and 'The Educational Issue' by Robert Ulrich as the Inglis Lecture. J. W. Beardslee III, *Reformed Dogmatics: J. Wollebius, G. Voetius, F. Turretin* (Library of Protestant Thought), pp. 471, 52*s*. 6*d*.

PENGUIN BOOKS: M. Goffin *et al.*, *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, pp. 192, 4*s*. 6*d*.

SCRIBENERS: W. S. Hudson, *Religion in America*, pp. 446, $3.95.

S.C.M. PRESS: K. Slack, *Is Sacrifice Outmoded?* pp. 92, 6*s*. E. Jones, *The Triumph of Job*, pp. 125, 9*s*. 6*d*. Karl Barth, *Deliverance to the Captives*, pp. 160, 8*s*. 6*d*. J. Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments*, pp. 215, 30*s*. D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Temptation*, pp. 128, 10*s*. 6*d*. J. Macquarrie, *Studies in Christian Existentialism*, pp. 278, 40*s*. P. Tournier, *The Adventure of Living*, pp. 280, 25*s*. A. R. C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and its Meaning* (New Testament Library), pp. 310, 50*s*. J. Jeremies, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New Testament Library), pp. 278, 40*s*. Max Warren, *Interpreting the Cross*, pp. 128, 9*s*. 6*d*.

S.P.C.K.: G. R. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom; The Eschatology of Biblical Realism*, pp. 367, 32*s*. 6*d*. In conjunction with ST ANDREWS PRESS: *The Anglican Presbyterian Conversations*, pp. 62, 6*s*.

NOTABLE ARTICLES FROM PERIODICALS

The Expository Times, December 1965
The Septuagint Today, by S. Jellicoe
Expounding the Parables: III. The Sower, by W. Neil.
First Aid in Counselling: II. Where a Marriage Breakdown is Threatened, by W. L. Carrington.
The Expository Times, January 1966
Faith and History in the Old Testament, by R. Davidson.
First Aid in Counselling: III. The Care of the Aged, by Anthony Bashford.
Computer Criticism: A Reply, by A. Q. Morton.
The Expository Times, February 1966
Expounding the Parables: III. The Parable of the Unjust Steward, by R. G. Lunt.
The Future of Christology: I, by N. H. G. Robinson.
Is There a Specifically Christian Social Ethic?, by C. S. Rodd.
The Expository Times, March 1966
First Aid in Counselling: IV. Men Under Attack, by M. H. Duke.
The Future of Christology: II, by N. H. G. Robinson.
Expounding the Parables: IV. The Parable of the Treasure and the Pearl, by J. G. Fenton.
Harvard Theological Review, January 1966
'Justitia Christi' and 'Justitia Dei': Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification, by H. A. Oberman.
The Barth-Feuerbach Confrontation, by M. H. Vogel.
Human Community as a Holy Rite: An Interpretation of Confucius' Analects, by H. Fingarette.
Oral and Written Transmissions: Some Considerations, by G. W. Anistrom.
Variorum in the Psalms Scroll (IIPQs[a]), by J. A. Sanders.
International Review of Missions, January 1966
A Survey of the Year, 1964-5.
Roman Catholic Missions, 1964-5, by T. F. Stransky, CSP.
Protestant Missions in Congo, 1960-5, by J. R. Crawford.
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