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The Baptist Quarterly.

Anglo-Catholicism: Its Strength and Weakness.

A Dissenting View.

IT would not be fitting that the article by the Rev. A. G. Peile, M.A., on "Anglo-Catholicism, its Strength and Weakness," published in the last issue of the BAPTIST QUARTERLY, should be allowed to pass without any indication on our side of attention and interest. All our readers will be at one in acknowledgment and warm appreciation of the true catholicity of spirit shown by Mr. Peile, first by consenting to write upon his faith in our journal, and then by discharging his undertaking in a manner at once so frank and courteous. But this very generosity of attitude renders comment difficult. The absence of anything like a controversial tone with regard to Evangelicalism makes it seem unchivalrous to criticise his positions; and the frankness with which he recognises weak points in his own system, if it does not quite disarm criticism, at least lays to rest for the time the critical instinct. We cannot but sincerely desire to meet him with a like courtesy, restraint and frankness. And yet it is difficult to make any sort of rejoinder without being tempted into controversial arguments in favour of one's own position and against that of our charitable friend. I can, however, try to keep his example before my eyes, and to confine myself, as far as possible, to indicating the measure of my agreement with him, and stating positively the points on which I am compelled to differ.

Mr. Peile modestly disclaims any such prominent position among Anglo-Catholics as would give him the right to speak authoritatively as their representative, but he suggests that, as a priest busily engaged in the practical work of an ordinary parish, he may be a better judge of the Anglo-Catholic movement than some arm-chair critics. Let me assure him that no exponent of the movement would appear to us better fitted to give a

representative statement of its real character. I am afraid that the views that I shall state cannot claim to be regarded as equally representative of Baptist opinions in general. They are my own, and probably diverge more or less in details from those held by my brethren. There is, indeed, no body of opinions necessarily held by Baptists in the same sense in which there are positions necessarily occupied by Anglo-Catholics. This will probably appear a grave weakness to Mr. Peile. We, on the contrary, regard it as really an advantage. We have a unity, true and precious, but it is rather inward, of the spirit and central faith, than outward, of the belief and observance. It is the unity that comes of common discipleship to the one Lord, and of souls inspired, nourished, and guided by study of the same Scriptures with the help of the same Holy Spirit of Christ. But this brings me at once to the first point to be considered here:

The Conception of the Church.

Mr. Peile claims that his movement is the continuation of the Oxford movement, which stood for "the demand that the Church of England was an integral part of the Catholic Church founded on the day of Pentecost." He is careful to explain that he uses the word Catholic in no small sense, but means thereby "the Holy Church throughout all the World," and that he holds its primary business to be that of saving souls. But he believes that "the Divine scheme for the salvation of souls" is the Catholic Church, "with all its historic continuity and sacramental means of grace." The mode and proof of this continuity he sees in the threefold orders of bishops, priests and deacons, administering the same sacraments. He holds that these orders have been in the Church from apostolic times, and that the church thus constituted has persisted down to the present time. Even the Reformation effected no breach in the continuity, but merely modified the historic church in certain points. And he claims that men find this continuity a very impressive spectacle. Other institutions—even nations—wane, or disappear: only the Church abides in strength, and this despite the most deadly persecution. This wonderful life wins to the Church multitudes who crave a secure support in this everchanging world.

We agree with Mr. Peile in insisting on the Church as the divinely instituted agency for the salvation of men, and in claiming our own place in it. And we, too, protest against narrow or illiberal definitions of the term Catholic. Indeed, we are so jealous for its full inclusiveness that we cannot draw the line where he draws it. We cannot consent to identify the Catholic Church with certain external forms of organisation, belief, or worship. We hold that you can have these forms

without a true church, and that you can have a true church without these particular forms. What is essential is the presence of a certain spirit, namely, the spirit of Christ, the evidence of which is love to God expressed in love of the brethren. This spirit is the birthright of the faithful disciple—of him who follows Jesus Christ, and renders to Him the thorough obedience that accompanies utter trust in Him. Those in every place who, having that Spirit, unite together in the service of God and pursuit of the eternal welfare of their fellow men, we deem a true part of the Catholic Church. Compared with the essential spirit, the external forms are secondary. Forms, of course, there must be: they are the body without which the spirit could neither survive nor operate effectively. But we believe them to be human, not divine, and neither fundamental nor unchangeable. Indeed, there may come times in the Church's history when the external forms *must* be changed if the essential spirit is to survive in health and vigour, e.g., when the forms become too narrow for the expanding life of the spirit, or when they even threaten altogether to usurp the place of the spirit. We recognise the possibility that the visible continuity may have to be ruptured in order that the true, i.e., the spiritual continuity, may be preserved. Luther may have to break with the mediaeval church in order that the spirit of Christ may not be stifled in it.

Here I must say what will perhaps seem to Mr. Peile almost unintelligible: the historic continuity which is with him a fundamental requirement, to us is a matter of comparatively small moment. It is enough for us if the presence of the spirit of Christ is continuous, and we rejoice to acknowledge His presence, not exclusively in this church or that, but in Christian men of all the churches—and in some of no recognised church.

But even if we attached more importance to historic continuity than we do, we find it difficult to perceive the alleged continuity in the Catholic Church from apostolic times until now. We cannot admit that in apostolic times there were the three orders of the Catholic Church. We thought, inded, it was conceded by eminent scholars of the Church of England itself that originally bishop and priest were identical, and that even when subsequently the monarchical bishop emerged, he was simply the pastor of a local Christian community, and comparable much more to the parish priest than to the diocesan bishop of later ages. To this we might add that the continuity of the episcopal orders in later ages has not been always beyond question, and that in this sense it is possible to dispute whether after the Reformation it was 'the same historic church with its sacraments and ministry'; but we will not press this point.

The episcopate, however, if neither divine in origin nor

unimpeachable in continuity, might still be demanded on practical grounds, i.e., if it proved an effective instrument of church government and administration. But neither can we perceive its effectiveness. And in this failure we can find support in certain admissions made by Mr. Peile. He laments that the bishops are not at one in their policy—in the practices that they forbid or allow. I am afraid that the only effectual guarantee of the unity in policy thus desiderated is to be sought in an individual supreme head over the bishops. But let that pass. Mr. Peile wishes that at least each bishop would take counsel with his own clergy—that he would summon his Diocesan Synod and impartially allow the various parties to advocate their own views before him. Why, we wonder, do the bishops not adopt this course? They must have some weighty reason for abstaining. One of the parties to be heard would, of course, be what Mr. Peile calls the "extreme" party. This is one of the weaknesses that he admits in the Anglo-Catholic movement. He recognises "that they are a very real source of danger," and adds, "Unless they are content with what they can find in the Church of England, I for one devoutly wish they would join the Church of Rome." But notoriously, they are not content. Notoriously, they practise ceremonies not sanctioned by the Prayer Book, and there are instances in which the admonition of the bishop has been disregarded. If the bishop summons his synod, he must, thereafter, give decisions on the points in dispute, and if the "high" clergy in any considerable numbers should refuse obedience, what would follow? If, in face of the possible consequences, the bishop hesitates to call his synod or take decisive action, his hesitancy is at least intelligible. But whatever be its grounds, admittedly the bishops are not dealing adequately with a serious situation; in other words, the episcopal order is not proving an effective instrument of government and administration. We are told that we must accept episcopacy because without it there can be no security for unity in doctrine and practice in the church. But if episcopacy fails to secure this, why insist that we must accept the episcopal order?

Only while the Church abides in strength is its historic continuity likely to prove impressive. That its survival in the past is an impressive fact we have no wish whatever to deny, though we confess to being a little mystified by Mr. Peile's assertion that "the Church of Christ has all down the ages met with every kind of persecution that the mind of man could devise to oppose it. Theological, national, civil, legal, and military powers have done their best to kill Christianity." It has lately been shown by Professor Merrill, and conclusively, as we hold, that the persecutions endured by the early church were consider-

ably less formidable than they have usually been represented by church historians, and it appears to us that since Constantine's adoption of Christianity, the Church has suffered far more from the friendship than the enmity of the world. That theological and other powers have done their best to kill Christianity may be true, but that is not the same thing as persecuting the (Catholic) Church. But discounting some possible exaggeration, we will allow that the continuity of the Church is impressive to some—perhaps to many minds. It is, however, not less true that to many, and perhaps to an increasing number, of minds, this historic continuity is a stumbling-block rather than a recommendation. To such it appears to result in the Church carrying a good deal of useless, if not mischievous, lumber. Mere antiquity does not impress them. They apply the test of efficiency. Do certain beliefs square with the best modern thought? Do certain observances keep pace with the advancing enlightenment of conscience and of the aesthetic sense, and their inevitable reaction on our thought of God? We believe that to-day there is an increasing number of persons who reject the Catholic Church, but are ready to welcome a Christianity disencumbered of outworn features. Mr. Peile appeals to history in support of the use of vestments, and says, "We cling to these historical robes just as a 'Beefeater' at the Tower of London rejoices in his uniform." But is not this a rather unfortunate instance? Whether the Beefeater does rejoice in his uniform I cannot pretend to say. But to us it appears that the Beafeater's costume is a pure anachronism, having no justification in fitness or use, but only in sentiment. And the case of the vestments seems not dissimilar. We think that in so far as they belong to a bygone age, their use to-day tends to convey an air of unreality, and to suggest that antique costumes as such are well-pleasing to God. But we have come in sight of our second point.

The Question of Ceremonial.

Mr. Peile reckons that a reasonable and decent ceremonial is a source of strength. While a matter of only secondary importance, it proves in practice a help and incentive to worship, and of great teaching power. He does not enlarge on this last particular, but presumably he means that ceremonial teaches by setting forth religious truths under the forms of symbol. The point that he stresses is that ceremonial answers to and satisfies the sense of beauty that is implanted in us all. He holds, however, that it does not merely satisfy our aesthetic instinct, but is appropriate to the worship of the God who is the author not only of man's sense of the beautiful, but also of all the

surrounding world of beauty that calls the sense into activity. Clearly, beauty has a positive value for God, reflects something in His own being, and hence He should be worshipped in the beauty of holiness. Churches should be beautiful and services artistic. Our native instinct for beauty should not remain in isolation from religion, but should be Christianised by being introduced into and harmonised with religion.

With the principle involved in this contention we shall heartily agree. We acknowledge that our worship should be beautiful, as truly beautiful as we can make it. And most of us, at least, would be ready to acknowledge frankly that in this matter we have had much to learn, and perhaps have still not a little to learn, from our Church of England friends. It is now a good while since we began to build churches with more pretension to architectural beauty, and we hope that there is a growing sense among us of the religious value of reverent bearing and order and decency in the outward forms of worship. Where we should differ from Mr. Peile is in our conception of what is demanded by worship of God in the beauty of holiness. We should lay the emphasis on the holiness. We should argue that the concept of beauty, like all others, is relative to the ideals of those who hold it. In this case, our concept of beauty in worship will be relative to our thought of the God to whom the worship is offered. And conversely, our thought of God will be reflected in our worship; and not only so, but it will in the long run be restricted by its forms. This truth may be made clearer by illustration. We all admit that the Christian idea of God is higher than the Jewish, and that the advance in the idea of God involves a corresponding advance in the mode of worship. The Jews clung to external modes of worship which, in effect, made Jerusalem the only place at which the worship could be fully and adequately rendered. But our Lord has taught us that "the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. . . . God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." This was revolutionary teaching; it moved the centre of gravity of worship from the formal to the spiritual, from the external to the internal. It made not adequacy and decorum of outward form, but inward holiness of spirit the vital thing in worship. Hence it surprises us to find Mr. Peile referring to the divine instructions to Moses as to the details of the Tabernacle worship as a direct authority for the artistic ordering of Christian worship. Ought we not to have got beyond Moses? Of course, we cannot dispense with forms without in effect dispensing with united worship altogether. This I have recognised already; and I now add that wherever there are forms, there will be a

danger of formalism. Mr. Peile frankly acknowledges the danger in the case of his own church, and we shall, if we are equally frank, admit that we too are not free from it. We are always tending to slip into ruts, to attach value to forms in themselves, and let them usurp the place of the spirit, so that they cramp or suffocate it instead of giving it play. But we contend that the danger is reduced to a minimum if we keep the forms simple. There is then less temptation to become absorbed in the forms, or attach value to them for their own sakes. And we hold that simplicity does not necessarily involve loss of beauty or fitness to the character of the God of beauty. For the supreme beauty of God is moral and spiritual. He is Truth and Love, and both of these have a grand simplicity. There is profound significance in the proverbial representation of Truth as naked; and Love involves a radical simplification of nature in those of whom it takes possession.

We are shy of anything like elaborate ceremonial because history repeatedly warns us that where it is admitted it inevitably gravitates from the secondary to the primary position. Many at least of those who practise it learn to regard it as not the accident, but the essence of their religion. Mr. Peile's admission on this point has a frankness that does him great honour. He says that the danger is realised just in proportion as the movement becomes fashionable and attracts many adherents. These will often fasten on the ceremonial as the most obvious, and perhaps easy, part of the system, and fail to realise its more arduous obligations. Presumably it is specially such persons who are most open to the further danger signalised by Mr. Peile, of thinking "more of their own special presentation of the truth and of external aids than of the Church Catholic." Against this he strongly protests, and maintains that Anglo-Catholic prayers for the conversion of England are not prayers for such things as the use of vestments, but for the saving of souls. For himself we unreservedly accept this disavowal, and we readily believe that it holds good also for many of his brethren. But we cannot help being aware that there are churches in which prayer is concentrated upon supplication for the wider or universal prevalence of this or that bit of Catholic ceremonial, and we meet with Anglo-Catholics who make these things of the essence of the Christian religion, to the practical exclusion from their charity of those who cannot accept them for themselves. It would seem as though wherever certain external forms are made requisite, or at least invariable, people will be liable to regard them as the fundamental element, if not the whole, of the religion of which they form an integral part. This reflection applies also to our next point, which we may entitle

Christian Life, Individual and Social.

"The insistence on a disciplined inner life," and the insistence that the Catholic faith shall colour the daily life and contact with our neighbours, are claimed by Mr. Peile as further sources of strength to his movement. Under the former head he insists most truly that we should not be less earnest and methodical in our Christian life than we are in sport or art. As examples of discipline for the inner life he instances fasting before Communion and Confession. In an interesting revelation of his own spiritual history, he tells us that the Holy Communion has become to him a new service altogether since he began to act on a conviction "that so sacred a gift demanded a bodily discipline from very reverence," and that "as one grew in the spiritual realm, I found myself demanding some such spiritual aid" as Confession.

This is another matter in which I think we have a good deal to learn from our Church of England friends. I believe that our private devotion is apt to suffer from a poverty and in particular a narrowness of range which would be largely corrected by following a stricter method. I will say for myself that I believe we often lose heavily through not being trained to the use of the great classics of devotional literature—"the prayers of the saints." Fasting, also, I believe to have a rightful place and wholesome use in the discipline of the Christian life. Here, again, I must give an individual opinion, for many of my Baptist brethren would not, I suspect, agree with me. I would, however, remind them that our Baptist forefathers still had their days of fasting and humiliation, and, as they believed, to their spiritual profit. They continued this practice because they found authority for it in the New Testament. Their Lord had said, "Thou, when thou fastest." In the same context they found, on the other hand, the true value and proper limits of fasting. "Anoint thy head and wash thy face," said the Master, "that thou appear not to men to fast." And the injunction occurs in a passage, the general drift of which is to emphasise sincerity and reality in religion. The outward practice is merely a help to the inward realisation of spiritual experience. Fasting can afford such help; it can assist towards the subduing of the flesh and the giving of the spirit its rightful dominance over the flesh. It is safe and good as long as it is used with a clear recognition that it has no value in itself or in the sight of God, but only as being capable of promoting an inward life which has such value. As soon as fasting begins to assume the aspect of a virtue or an end in itself, it becomes illegitimate and hurtful. Especially is this the case where fasting is insisted on to the

postponement of the weightier matters of the law—justice and the love of God. I have known cases in which, in a small household, an individual's insistence on observance of ecclesiastical fast-days has been the cause of more or less serious inconvenience to other members of the family. And if fasting communion is made a rule, people are apt to regard it as a thing required or commanded by God, and to make it a sort of fetish. I have known a man of very delicate constitution himself insist on practising it, although thereby he endangered his health, and once or twice actually reduced himself to a fainting condition.

As to confession, again, we can allow that it may have its wholesome use. A Christian may occasionally gain great consolation, encouragement, and guidance by revealing his burdened conscience to a friend of riper experience, whether minister or layman, who commands his confidence. But he must be entirely free, both as to his choice of confidant, and the occasions and extent of his confession. Mr. Peile assures us that confession is entirely free in his church. "Any Anglican priest who teaches compulsory confession is disloyal to the Church of England." Undoubtedly that is true. It does not alter the fact that priests not a few urge frequent confession as a duty or ideal for the devout Churchman. And in proportion as it is urged, the impression is likely to be created that God requires it, and that in itself it is a good thing to do. And there is such a thing as coming to regard confession as a set-off to one's sins, so that one thinks more lightly of sinning instead of more seriously.

In general, where certain particular observances are especially inculcated, we think we discern a tendency that the individual should regard these "churchly" duties as tantamount to religion, as coextensive with Christian life, or at least as taking precedence of other obligations, so that there is comparative indifference to other parts of Christian duty. Mr. Peile affirms that "we stress the point that mere reception of the Blessed Sacrament is not enough." At the same time he admits the prevalence of considerable indifference to social obligations, at least in respect of missionary work. To us it appears that there may be a positive relation between the Sacramentarianism and the indifference. When the individual's attention is disproportionately centred upon frequent reception of the Sacrament, with its preliminaries of confession and fasting, is it not probable that he may come to feel that this substantially is religion, and be conscious only of relatively a faint impulse to his social duties instead of realising that religion should be transfusion of the whole life and its activities, social as well as individual, with the love of Christ?

Finally, Mr. Peile insists that the Anglo-Catholics stress

LEARNING.

By holding conferences and selling "well-got-up cheap and popular booklets dealing with the Catholic Faith" (Anglo-Catholic Manuals of Instruction, 3d. each) the movement tries to teach people to think for themselves.

Ungrudgingly I pay my tribute to the scholarship of the English Church. I acknowledge that her scholars do not lose lustre by comparison with those of any other church, and speaking for myself, I avow that in the realm of scholarship I often get more from their books than I can from those of Free Church men. But then, the most eminent scholars of the Church of England are not as a rule supporters of the Anglo-Catholic movement.

The popular propaganda of the movement deserves our admiration for its wholehearted zeal and earnestness. Whether it is calculated to achieve the object of getting people to think for themselves is another matter. It seems scarcely possible, within the compass of a threepenny manual, to supply adequate materials, *pro* and *con,* for the formation of an independent judgment upon, say, the origin and nature of the ministry in the primitive church, or indeed to do more than give the Anglo-Catholic conclusions on this and other important and much discussed problems. The position assigned to the priest in Catholicism seems to us to result too often in the layman being kept *in statu pupillari.* We meet Anglo-Catholics who hardly venture to have a mind of their own in religious matters, apart from the sanction of their priest. We think it preferable that the New Testament should be the manual of instruction placed in the people's hands, and that they be urged to read it for themselves, under that guidance of the Holy Spirit of God which we believe is not withheld from those who seek it in humble faith. We are alive to the perplexities which it presents, but we hold that without the discipline of personal grappling with difficulties, no sturdy and independent power of thought can ever be developed.

In conclusion, Mr. Peile has told us—and again we thank him for his frankness—that "I see no chance of our reunion with any who would ask us to deny . . . that since the apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." Let us, with equal frankness, inform him of our terms of reunion. We are ready to hold Christian fellowship with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness—with all who are loyal disciples of His, seeking to obey His words and His will as they discover them in the writings of the New Testament.

A. J. D. FARRER.

The Atonement and Democracy.

THE word "Atonement" appears in the New Testament only once—in Romans v. 11: "We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the atonement"; but here the word would be better rendered "reconciliation," as is done in the Revised Version, or the meaning of the Greek word may be very well rendered "at-one-ment."

The retention of the term atonement, however, is useful as suggesting the intimate connection that St. Paul makes between the Cross of Christ and the solidarity of the race. This is specially emphasised in some of his other statements, such as, "For we thus judge that if one died for all, then all died."

It is important to realise that when the Apostle Paul uses the term "atonement," or "reconciliation," here, he is not thinking so much of a doctrine of atonement, of a piece of mystical theology, as rather of a very definite experience—a fact in the lives of the men who knew Jesus.

We ought to understand very clearly in these days that we are not saved by theology, but by religion. We are not saved by our theoretical understanding of God's relationship to us, but by the actual relation realised in our experience. Just as there would be no astronomy without the heavenly bodies, so there could be no theologies without religious experience. The vital thing is the experience. The theory changes with increased knowledge—indeed, it is well to remember that there have been something like a dozen widely accepted thories of the atonement in the course of Christian history, none of which may be described as entirely satisfactory to the modern mind. It is instructive to recall that for nearly a thousand years the Christian church thrived upon a doctrine of the atonement associated with the Greek Father Irenaeus, that would find very few champions in these days, even amongst the most orthodox. It was the theory that at Calvary Jesus was paid over by God as a ransom to the devil. The devil, however, was not strong enough, or clever enough, to hold his ransom, who slipped through his fingers and rose from the dead. So man was delivered, Christ suffered no harm, and only the devil was worsted. Yet even through so crude a theory, which

nevertheless retains a grain of truth, the great common experience of reconciliation with God was mediated, and for nearly one thousand years men did receive the jewel of the gospel in this strange setting. It is then to the experience of atonement that we must direct our attention.

The disciples found that in contact with Christ their hearts were drawn to God in a new and more powerful experience of His presence and His love. Through Christ they came to the Father, they learned what God was like. This experience began before Calvary. Through Jesus they learned that God was a God who forgave sin, even "unto seventy times seven." But at Calvary the love of God which dwelt in Jesus blazed forth with supreme splendour, revealing itself as ready for any and every sacrifice required for human redemption. In the belief of Paul, whatever objective atonement human sin demanded was guaranteed in the death of Jesus. Brought up as the apostles were in the atmosphere of Jewish religion, they could not conceive of human deliverance from sin without sacrifice, and whilst possibly their visualisation of the type of sacrifice required may not be possible to us, the principle holds good self-evidently that without such sacrifice of the Best on behalf of the worst there can be no deliverance from sin.

This is a principle that we see operative about us in our own life. Human sin flings an often well-nigh intolerable burden of sacrifice and redemptive effort on to the shoulders of the pure and the good and the true. What we have learned of Jesus compels us to carry that principle right up to the Godhead as the fountain of such redeeming energy—as indeed the ultimate and supreme sacrifice.

We may say with reverent truthfulness that we do not know all that may be involved in this objective atonement—that we only know from Jesus and His Cross that the great transaction is done or the great process is in being. Through the Lord Jesus Christ we receive the atonement whatever it may involve. Here is a truth that should relieve souls that are perplexed theologically. The receipt of Jesus is the receipt of the atonement. Whatever be the truth about His Cross, whatever its efficacy, it can be ours only as we receive the Crucified, and it can be ours by receiving Him, however little or however much we may understand the doctrine. As John Oxenham has so eloquently expressed it in his poem, "Credo":

> Not what but Whom I do believe,
> That in my darkest hour of need,
> Hath comfort that no mortal creed
> To mortal man can give.
> Not what but Whom.

Christ is to us Himself the pledge, in terms of most solemn sacrifice, terms so ultimate for our human condition—a sacrament of broken body and poured-out blood—that God *is on our side against our sin,* and however far that sin may have run beyond the power of our righting it cannot escape His atoning effort. To receive this truth with one's whole faith is to experience reconciliation or at-one-ment. One is put right with both God and man, even with one's self.

The fact that the Most Innocent has chosen not to stand outside the sinful race of man, but has joined Himself to that race to focus upon Himself its weakness and error and to succour with His unsquandered strength every sinbound soul achieves for the soul that will believe it a two-fold deliverance.

In the first place it provides a deliverance from the awful fear of judgment that sin dictates, so that the soul finds free access at last to the Heavenly Father, ready either to bear its judgment patiently or to pour its life forth in emulation of the Divine Sacrifice, knowing that it is in the hands of a God of infinite love.

In the second place, the believing soul is delivered from the fear of his fellow's sins and sinfulness, that fear which makes it so hard to forgive.

The late Dr. Dale used to be fond of arguing that in the Cross of Christ every human soul is already forgiven, and the gospel was the proclamation of that forgiveness. Certainly the doctrine of atonement seems to exert all too little influence upon the average Christian's judgment of his neighbour and puon his practice of forgiveness. If God pledges Himself in Christ to make our sins His responsibility, leaving us free to concentrate all our energy upon future obedience, then similarly we must see His grace as the counteracting power of all other human sin and overcoming in us of that fear of it which is so easily translatable into policies of suspicion, harsh repression, or cruelty. A world which holds the fact of Christ is a world in which the power of sin is fundamentally broken.

At this point we should be ready to see the bearing of this great fact of reconciliation in Christ upon the problem of democracy.

It is possible for us to say that *modern democracy has been the creation of Christ and of Christ crucified.*

Democracy in the ancient world was a very limited thing as enunciated by Aristotle and as practised by the Greek City States. The boasted democracy of Athens left out of account the vast hordes of unenfranchised slaves and aliens. The same was true of the Roman Comitia. The rudimentary freedom of our Teutonic ancestors, whilst testifying to more vigorous interest

in the liberty of the common man, was speedily corrupted by the autocratic elements in civilisation. With Christianity, however, in its earliest purity there appeared a new valuation of the individual soul. Says H. W. Nevinson, in the *Growth of Freedom*: "The Kingdom of God is within you. That was the astonishing discovery in which lay the vital germ of Christianity's finest influence on the world. Law was made for man, and not man for law. Appeal was no longer made to Caesar, but to God. This insistence upon the incalculable value of every human being for whom Christ died was the great service of Christianity to the history of freedom. Laws, masters, officials, and emperors shrivelled to small account before a soul confronted with eternity and redeemed by the Son of God." The grand equality of Divine love manifested in the Cross to every human soul has remained ever since a great central fire at the heart of the Christian Church at which the impulse towards democratic liberty and democratic solidarity has kindled and rekindled itself time and time again in the course of human history. The Church herself has been far from faithful to that central truth; for the unhappy establishment of Christianity as a state religion in the Roman Empire, and later in other states, including our own, deeply corrupted the Church's loyalty to this intrinsic democracy of the gospel. Yet it is not too much to claim that the institution of political democracy could scarcely have reached the degree it has done among the Anglo-Saxon race if they had not been very deeply imbued with that free Christianity recovered in the Puritan and Evangelical strain.

The famous Declaration of Independence that lies at the foundation of the great Republic of the West was the offspring of that simple faithful democracy of the Crucified which sailed in the gallant little *Mayflower*. If, then, to-day, the common people of every nation are striving to realise their world-solidarity, it is because this valuation of the human soul for which Christ died has become so much the common property of mankind that its origin has been obscured or forgotten.

We must go on to say further, however, that not only is Democracy the creation of the atoning Christ, but it *cannot endure without Him*. The problem of human solidarity is proving itself a much more intractable one than the rather facile radicalism of the nineteenth century dreamed. It seems easy enough for us to realise the social impulse along lines of least resistance. We are easily persuaded to multiply cohesions of humanity that are perfectly convenient, yet this may prove eventually a very serious obstacle to real democracy. In the long run a class-consciousness may prove a very much bigger barrier to human sympathy than a strongly individualist one.

It is quite true that class-consciousness has often proved a liberation of the individual to a bigger outlook upon life. The world class-consciousness of the working man is infinitely preferable to his old self-centredness and crass nationalism, but if his sympathies are permitted to harden at the class-conscious level, the sense of resource, the sheer weight of numbers involved, all the common tendencies of crowd-consciousness may conspire to precipitate conflicts far more terrible and destructive of civilisation than the world has yet known. It would not be the first time that in human history the hour of supreme opportunity has proved the hour of supreme peril.

Is there a power that can inspire the social impulse to travel *the lines of most resistance,* to bridge the deep gulfs of misunderstanding, dislike, and even hate that divide the classes? Is there a great power that can inspire to great forgiveness and the setting aside of ancient grudges and hoary injustices; that can lift human sympathy over the dreaded colour bar, and put a girdle round the earth which shall leave not even the vilest human soul outside? The answer is, that there is such a power in the love of God as it comes to us in Jesus Christ. If it be said that Christianity has failed in its reconciliation of the classes it can be claimed that not only is it the parent of such sympathy as already exists, but that it has amply compensated for its measure of failure here by its great work of reconciliation *between races* as evidenced in its gigantic and extraordinarily successful missionary enterprise. Not even the Socialist International can show such a record of white devotion to the coloured races as the Christian Church is exhibiting daily. That Christianity has not entirely succeeded is a responsibility that must be laid at the door of those who refuse it as well as those who accept it. Christianity is not something that works automatically; it calls for human choice. It is not a Divine compulsion, it is a Divine appeal. A faith that has done so much to reconcile such deep antagonism, to keep classic instances in mind, as Jew and Gentile, Patrician and Plebian, Master and Slave, English Peer and Little Factory Victim, Anglo-Saxon Capitalist and Negro Slave, Hindoo Aristocrat and Hindoo outcast, European Scholar and Camaroon Native, Holy Christ and Dying Thief, is surely a faith that is worth trying upon the greatest scale possible!

Dr. L. P. Jacks, in his recent *Challenge of Life,* has pointed out that whereas the moral problem of the past has been largely the problem of discovering the moral hero who could give effective leadership, the peculiar problem of our time is *the production of mass action of the moral heroic type.* Less and less must we depend on leadership and more and more must the

average man yield himself to the right spirit and take risks for his ideals if true democracy is to be achieved. Yet how shall the average man fall in love with all humanity, especially in its strange, often so objectionable and definitely repulsive types? How shall he surmount his fear of the drunkard, the vicious, the militarist, the greedy extortioner, aye, even the tyrant, and indulge a real hope of world democracy unless he can feel with utmost confidence that Love is at the heart of things and is working in and through all things, its great work of reconciliation or at-one-ment. The atonement waits for its effectiveness *to be received*, and there is no more reasonable appeal to every true lover of democracy the wide world over than that voiced by Browning in the cautious language so beloved of the modern world:

> What say ye of Christ, friend,
> When all is done and said,
> You like this Christianity or not?
> It may be false, but will you wish it true?
> *Has it your vote, to be so if it can?*

In other words, will *you* receive the atonement?

A. D. BELDEN.

WALTER WILSON, who published a history of dissenting churches in London, Southwark and Westminster, prepared one copy of the work for annotation and illustration; that copy, on large paper, bound in eight volumes, is in Doctor Williams' Library. He gained very little further information on Baptists, but as to the origin of Maze Pond he does make explicit correction of the usual story, citing the church records. Samuel Mee is never mentioned there, the first pastor was Thomas Warburton, who was succeeded by Edward Wallin. The statement involves further corrections.

Wilson procured several contemporary portraits, which he mounted. The Baptists are:—Abraham Austin, Richard Burnham, William Clarke, James Foster, Andrew Fuller, John Gale, John Gill, John Gosnold, Thomas Gwennap, Richard Hutchings, Isaac Kimber, Caleb Langford, John MacGowan, John Martin, Benjamin Messer, John Piggott, John Reynolds, John Rippon, Robert Robinson, John Rudd, Joseph Stennett, John Stevens, John Sutcliff, Dan Taylor, Timothy Thomas, Samuel Wilson. Such a collection makes us wonder at the century which appreciated these men, and ignored Gifford, Ward.

Conditions of Success in the Pastorate.

Address to the Students of the Bethel Theological Seminary, Stockholm.

I HAVE lately seen a number of the former students of this Seminary who are now at work in the pastorate in various parts of Sweden. To come into close touch with those who trained them for the work, and to have the opportunity of speaking to those who will shortly follow them in the service of the churches up and down this beautiful land, are privileges that I value very highly. The fame of this Seminary is spread abroad, not only through all Sweden, from Malmö to Haparanda, but through all the Baptist world. Every one knows that, under God, the striking success of the Baptist work in this land has been chiefly due to the efficiency of this Seminary as a training ground for preachers of the gospel and shepherds of the flock of God.

If I am to say anything useful to you in the time at my disposal to-day, it must be something based on my own experience and observation. You can all read books on homiletics and pastoral theology for yourselves. You are plentifully instructed in the theory of those subjects by learned preceptors whose business it is to teach you. It will be more fitting for me, as a plain working pastor, and moreover a pastor from another land, to confine myself to things which come when Seminary days are over and the work of life has to be faced.

In twenty-five years in the pastorate one sees many things happen. I have seen some men leave college and settle in quiet, out-of-the-way places in the country. They have grown in power, in usefulness, and in honour. They have occupied one sphere after another with increasing success. They have risen step by step as on a ladder. To-day they are filling the most responsible positions in our denomination, both in the colleges and in the pastorate. There must be some reason for that success.

Again, I have seen something very different. Men of undeniable brilliancy of talent have settled in important churches

with every prospect of usefulness. They have not fulfilled their promise. They have lost grip, moved to smaller spheres, declined in power, and disappointed the hopes of those who foretold great things for the Kingdom through their means. Some have even given up the ministry altogether, and gone back on their ordination vows, if they have not gone back on Christ. There must be some reason for such failure.

A third class stands out in my mind—the largest class of all, thank God. They are men who, although not possessing brilliant gifts, by persistent study, sound preaching of the kind that keeps close to the Bible, faithful care of souls in the pastorate, and the force of high Christian character, succeed. They win souls, build up churches, and receive the affectionate respect of all who know them, and the trust of their people in unstinted measure. We call them the average men, and they are the backbone of our denomination in England.

One cannot help asking why some men fail and why others succeed. Yet no one can answer either question fully. A pastor's failure contains a secret element hidden from the most observant eye, and known only to the Searcher of hearts. It may be emotional, it may be spiritual, it may be moral, it may be intellectual. That is to say, a man may have been mistaken about his call, mistaking a gust of feeling for a divine summons; or he may have lost faith in the truth and importance of the message he was ordained to declare: or he may have fallen under the power of the adversary through neglecting to watch and pray: or he may have found the strain of the work too great for his unbraced and undisciplined mind. We can only guess at the cause of failure where the reason is not notorious.

On the other hand, a man who has met with success could hardly tell you the reason of it. No man can see himself as he really is. Most men who meet with favour are too modest to note their own virtues, too humble to think of their own qualities. They do not think of themselves in any self-conscious sort of way. They think of their people, and of their work, and lose themselves in the privilege of service. The pastor does not live who could answer the question, "Why I was successful in the pastorate."

Only in general terms can the conditions of success in the pastorate be named. Given the reality of a man's call, the possession of the requisite natural gifts, and a suitable training—all of which may be assumed in the case of men who have got into the seminary, got through, and got out with honour—the conditions of success I would emphasise are five.

The first condition of success in the pastorate is CHARACTER.

By this I do not mean merely good moral character, as commonly understood. I take it for granted that Christ's man will be scrupulously honest in all his dealings, perfectly truthful in his every utterance, and absolutely pure in his speech and behaviour. That is to say, there is no place in the ministry of Christ for any one who is not what we call in England a gentleman. But Christian character goes beyond that.

When a young brother goes to his first church, what has he to do there? What does Christ require of him in that sphere? To preach? To organise the workers so as to get the best out of each? To shepherd the flock, especially the sick and the sinsick? Yes, all of those things in their place, and more. But there is something Christ requires of him before preaching, organising, or visiting. He is to *be* something before he does anything. An old minister gave to a young one this word concerning his pastorate in Ephesus: "Set the believers an example of speech, behaviour, love, faith, and purity." The young pastor has first of all to strive to become the best Christian in his congregation, in his village, in his town. He is to be a sample Christian: not merely the best talker on the Word, but the best doer of the Word. He is to be an example of the type which the ministry and the church exist to create and perpetuate. The young pastor is to be the best model of his own teaching.

I need not remind you, who are students of theology, that even our divine Lord's word is only guaranteed by His character. He has authority because of what He showed Himself to be. We attach final authority to His words because the sinlessness of His life declares Him to be more than man. And His word is also best illustrated by His character. He was everything He wished others to be. He was everything He preached. So must it be with the Lord's servant, in measure. In the present day no man will be heeded because of his office, or on the ground of any external authority whatsoever. The young pastor's word must be guaranteed by his own character. If he is not prepared to strive with all his might to become a first-class Christian, let him even now seek some other path of life. It may be possible to be a successful author, editor, organiser, or peripatetic vendor of occasional pulpit fireworks without being a good Christian—I do not know. But I am sure that no one can survive the rigorous scrutiny involved in pastoral relationships unless he is humbly striving to walk with God, and to show forth His praise not only with his lips but in his life. Pray, brethren, not first that your sermons may be a success, or that your churches may be a success, but that you yourselves may be a success. And let this aim be cherished not as a condition of success in other things, but because it is right.

To indulge a prudential motive at this point is to vitiate all. Look after the health of your soul, and God will look after the welfare of your churches.

The second condition of success in the pastorate which I will mention is DILIGENT STUDY. If you think that severe intellectual labour is a thing that can be laid aside when once you leave the seminary, you have not understood what the seminary is for. A seminary course is intended to put you in the way of becoming a student for life—not to make further study unnecessary. The seminary is the place where you make the tools with which you can work as a student when you go hence. All that you can do here is to lay a foundation. A foundation is not much in itself; it is invisible, and apart from the superstructure, useless. Unless you keep up the studies to which you are introduced in this place, you will be worked out in three years, and your people will be tired of the sound of your voice, and fret for your departure from among them. You will join the ranks of those who occupy many different spheres in a few short years, and become a burden to the denomination from middle life to the end.

As soon as you are settled in your first church you should substitute for that compulsion under which you labour here a voluntary yoke of your own devising. There is both an intellectual and moral necessity for doing so. It is necessary for your growth in knowledge. That goes without saying. And it is necessary for your stability of character. Few men can spend money wisely if they keep no accounts. You have something more precious than money to spend. You have the spending of time, and time which does not belong to you but to Christ and the church which has called you and sustains you. You cannot spend that time as a wise steward unless you plan for it, and adhere to your plan. The plan should fence off hours for study, and allot the hours their tasks. The plan should be reasonable enough to convict you of sin if you should fall short of its requirements. Do not make the plan impossibly hard, or you will be excusing yourself on the ground of its severity.

Details every man must work out for himself, but until you have something better from experience, let me offer general advice.

Work steadily through the great books in the several departments of theological study. Never mind the little books, go for the big ones. Always have on hand one of the standard books of exposition, or systematic theology, or church history, or a treatise on one of the great doctrines, and work away at it as you have learned to do with a text book in the seminary. Be your own professor, and continue on the lines followed here.

But add to this kind of reading, and alongside of it, two other sorts of books. First a book which you cannot read easily, a really hard book—it may be of philosophy, or science perhaps, at any rate, a book which compels your utmost attention and puts your mind on the stretch. The mind may be compared to an elastic band. It will enclose a certain area without any strain whatever. Only under pressure will its capacity be enlarged. The object in reading a hard book is to put pressure on the mind in order to enlarge its capacity. Some men are diligent readers, yet their minds do not increase their range of action. The reason is not that they are mentally indolent, but that they never travel outside the range of topics which can be studied without strain. That is to say, there is rarely in their intellectual exercises anything which has the effect of stretching the compass of the mind. Of course, strain on the mind is a comparative matter. What is a strain to one is easy to another. All I mean is that we should all do something which to us is hard mental work.

Second, a lighter book, as a foil to the heavy one. This may be of poetry, travel, biography, or (sparingly and judiciously), fiction. The purpose of this kind of reading is to gain information, of course, but to do so in a pleasurable way that relieves the mind of strain and monotony of mental food. In speaking to students elsewhere, I have called these three kinds of books, "Stock books," "Stiff books," and "Light books." It should always be possible for a young pastor to say, when asked, what book in each of these classes he is occupied with.

I know that, to the giants, this plan of reading will appear pitifully meagre; but the giants are not in my view, nor would they need any advice from me; I speak only to those who have not better ideas of their own.

The results of your reading on each of these lines should be preserved in three manuscript books. First, a large, well-bound book, in which you enter extracts from authors, not for the purpose of quoting them in sermons, but as intellectual wealth to be stored up, and as a record of your reading through the years. The right of entry into this book is the sheer weight and importance of the matter the extract carries. Second, a slighter book in which to enter texts and topics for sermons or other discourses. Into this goes everything of pulpit value, except illustrations. This sermon seed-book is so often spoken of, that I need not say much about it. Leave a page for a subject, add what occurs to you as the probable line of treatment, and leave it to grow. Third, a rough book, in which you enter everything of an illustrative nature. All your reading will contribute to this book. Make the daily newspaper pay for the time you spend on it by demanding, even from it, an item per

day for your illustration book. The roughest note will do, so that you can recall the point. When an entry has been incorporated in a discourse, draw a line down through it. Keep this book at hand when you are sermonising, and rarely will it fail to yield something to lighten a heavy sermon or brighten a dull one. Biography, travel, fiction—all sorts of reading will throw up something for this rough book.

The third condition of success in the pastorate is SYMPATHY. In the pastorate we deal with persons, not with things. That is what makes our calling the most difficult calling on earth. We do not deal merely with ideas, as does the poet or the philosopher. Nor do we deal with commodities, as does the manufacturer or merchant. We deal with persons, good, bad, and indifferent. A pastor, therefore, needs much of that quality which goes to the making of a wise father or a sweet and influential mother. He must have sympathy. Without that he may be many things, but not a pastor. The men who only deal with ideas may be striking preachers; perhaps that is why they are apt to be found in those spheres which demand but a minimum of pastoral labour. But those men are no sort of models for the average man to copy. Their spheres are unusual in character and few in number.

Pray, therefore, for a pastoral heart, warm, tender, self-forgetting. I have never known a diligent and sympathetic pastor to be a failure. On the contrary, I have known men who achieved surprising success though possessed of moderate preaching power, because they had the heart at leisure from itself. If no one could succeed as a pastor without extraordinary talents we might well despair. But it is not so. If a man has a sympathetic nature he has the talisman of success in the pastorate.

Miss no opportunity of showing sympathy. If there is trouble or sorrow, be the first to show that the affliction is a matter of concern to you. If you hear of a case of sickness, let no one be before you in calling on the sick person. Use to the full the opportunity that sickness gives you of seeking the spiritual welfare of the patient. When you are summoned to a case by an interested friend, go at once. If you delay you may have the mortification of being too late. You may arrive, as I once did, only to see the blinds down.

It is not less important to show sympathy with the joys of your people. If a young lad has passed a stiff examination, or a girl has got happily engaged, or any kind of joy has come to a person or family, let your letter be the first they receive. And do not do things like this as a matter of policy or duty, but from the loving interest you feel in the welfare of those over

whom you have been set. Cultivate an interest in your people, and little acts of this kind will become second nature to you. By such slender cords will people be bound to you. They will pardon your occasional failures in the pulpit if they know that you love them and are always concerned for their good. And, moreover, if you should have occasion to rebuke them for any fault, you will find that they will receive it from you all the better if they feel that your love makes the duty a sorrowful one.

Without sympathy you will not be in a position to deal wisely with individual cases. The sinner who has done wrong and stayed away, the inquirer who has his difficulties, doubts, and fears, the little children who must be remembered by name—all these and many more must be carried on your heart, as the high priest of old carried the names of the tribes on the breastplate of remembrance when he ministered before the Lord. Get into the way of thinking much about people. It was for people that Christ died, not ideas. You are ordained to serve and save persons.

The fourth condition of success in the pastorate is HUMILITY. Time allows me only a few words on this important matter. When you settle into the pastorate you will, as a very young man, be called upon to preside over deacons' meetings and church meetings, wherein you will find many people older, wiser, and holier than yourself. Treat them with the respect which is due. They were in the church before you came. They will probably be still in it when your talents have secured you a place more worthy of you. Meanwhile, go softly. Remember that the wise monitor who said to the pastor of Ephesus, "Let no one slight you because you are a youth," also said, in the same breath, "Never censure an older man harshly; appeal to him as a father. Treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters—with perfect propriety."

Remember that pastors are for churches, not churches for pastors. The church does not exist simply to afford you a platform upon which to display your shining talents to an admiring world, and maintenance while the performance lasts. That is essentially a showman's idea. I trust you will never descend to it. Pastors are for churches—to live for them, serve them, suffer for them if need be.

The fifth condition of success in the pastorate is PATIENCE. Want of patience brings premature discouragement. Be patient, therefore, with yourself. Do not be discouraged if your preaching hangs fire at first. Persistent endeavour will bring its reward before long. Never commit decisive acts under the immediate stress of strong feeling. If you are tempted to resign and fly from difficulties, write the letter by all means—it may be

a useful relief to your feelings, as well as an exercise in elegant composition—but tear it up the next day. Never post the letter of passion, however many times it may be written. And do not contend about trifles. Let small things go. If the time ever comes when you have to make a stand (it probably will never come if you have sense), let it be on good ground and about something of importance. You may be beaten, but you will not look ridiculous, and the sympathy accorded to the vanquished in gallant fight will be yours.

And have patience with your people. They may try your patience, but think how you try theirs! Change things slowly. Set out to win their confidence first. After they have had two or three years experience of your practical wisdom they will believe in your methods as firmly as they believe in your gospel. Give them good reasons. They will appreciate good reasons as well as other people. It once took me three years to get consent to something I believed in. Haste might have split the church. In the end it was done by a unanimous vote. Waiting was trying, but it was worth while.

My last word is this: brethren, continue to be students when you leave these halls of learning. There are adjustments to the thought of this age that you have yet to make. It is no disrespect to seminaries to say that they cannot teach you everything. If you learn how to learn it is enough. But you must go on learning. Michael Angelo studied new forms of art when he was past eighty years of age. When surprise was expressed that he, the acknowledged master of the world with chisel and brush, should, at his age, learn new things, he answered, "I hope to die learning." I hope that spirit will animate every man here. Then by God's grace there will be a good time before the churches of Sweden.

GILBERT LAWS.

BLUNHAM. There were fifty people here in 1669, led by John Wright, a collar-maker, who was licensed in 1672. In 1715 they were led by one Perry. Nine years later they organized and opened a meeting-house; Usley from Birmingham ministered 1725-1737, then returned. Thomas Craner ministered 1739-1756, then went to London; a new building arose towards the end of his pastorate. Abraham Clarke followed, 1758 till his death in 1767. Thomas Thomason came at once, but was ordained only in 1771. Such were the facts gleaned by Josiah Thompson about 1779.

A Baptist Student--John Collett Ryland

Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Historical Society, Regent's Park College, on Wednesday, April 29th, 1925, by the President, Principal H. Wheeler Robinson.

WILLIAM NEWMAN, the first principal of Stepney (Regent's Park) College, who was an assistant in the school kept by John Collett Ryland, at Enfield, has told us (in his *Rylandiana,* p.2), two incidents of John Collett Ryland's boyhood which may be taken as fully characteristic of him. "At twelve years of age he teazed his father so much for a gun that he knocked him down with a stick; and then, to make it up with him, he gave him one. Soon after, as he was setting it down (not regarding the trigger) against a box, the whole charge went into the ceiling. After this his father gave him a horse. He bought spurs; and the faster the horse galloped the more he spurred him. At length the horse threw him against a bank, and left him there bleeding most profusely." This was the headstrong and passionate youth, born of an impetuous ancestry, who was captured for Christ and Calvinism by the young pastor of Bourton-on-the-Water, Benjamin Beddome. Here is what the youth wrote of his minister in the diary before us, when, through Mr. Beddome's interest and influence, he was at the Baptist Academy at Bristol:

> June 25th, 1744, M 6½. Surely Mr. Benj. Beddome is an instance of the Existance of God and the Truth of the Christian Religion. Wt Could Change his Heart, and induce him to leave his Profession or Trade—which was much more Profitable—and what could move him to Stay at Bourton rather yn go to Exeter, to which he was strongly sollicited—what is it yt moves him to preach, Pray and be so active? is it not ye Delight he finds in ye Work—Tis plain that tis not Worldly Interest."

Here we see the aspect of religion which chiefly appeals to a young man—the unselfish and generous devotion to some high cause. Young Ryland was not so happy (or thought he was not), in the minister and teacher whom he found at the Bristol Academy, Bernard Foskett. Mr. Foskett, who also acted as minister of the Broadmead Church, won the enthusiastic praise of his colleague, Hugh Evans, for his character and devotion to

duty during nearly forty years of service; but Dr. John Rippon, whilst quoting this praise, goes on to admit that "his method of education was limited rather than liberal; severe rather than enchanting; employing the memory more than the genius, the reasoning more than the softer powers of the mind; . . . Mr. Foskett was not the first of tutors" (*An Essay towards an History of the Baptist Academy at Bristol*, p. 22). So we find John Collett Ryland, eager and impetuous in temper, inquisitive and speculative in mind, rather discouraged by the training of this elderly disciplinarian who could not appeal to his pupil's enthusiasms:

> "June 15. 2 in the Afternoon. If God dont bless me wth Abilities for ye Ministry I'll Get me a place to be an outrider for a Bristol, Coventry, or London Tradesman—when this Year is finish'd wth Mr. Foskett. I shall partly See how ye Matter will go—and if I dont Engage in ye Work of ye Ministry, I'll Endeavour to return ye Money Paid for My Board—and any More they Expended on My Account,—and what they Desire for Interest—and Engage in ye Buisness I served my Apprenticeship to Learn—and if Please God I am able I'll also Make Mr. Fosket a Handsome Present for bestowing his Pains on such a Dull Fool as I have been, and I am afraid shall ever be."

But the gratitude to Mr. Foskett here expressed gave way to other feelings. On April 1st, 1745, after nine months' more experience of his teacher, he writes:

> "This day when wth Mr. Foskett he chid me exceedingly —and spoke some Severe Words which make a lasting impression on my Soul.—but if he knew my desires and endeavours to approve my Self Sincere in the Presence of God, and the doubts I do—and have for a long time labour'd under—about some of the Fundamentals of all Natural and Reveal'd Religion—I believe he would not be so Severe in his Reflections upon me."

The next day, however, we read, "Mr. Foskett was in a good temper and us'd us kindly." That such an attitude should be chronicled suggests that it was the exception rather than the rule—which is rather hard on a college principal! Perhaps it is a good thing that students no longer keep college diaries. A couple of months later (May 30th, 1745), there is a rather enigmatic entry, "Note what Mr. B. Beddome told me last Saturday—that the Day before, i.e. on Fryday, Mr. Foskett *spoke to him again, about my going in the Country.*" Over this is written in specially large and distinctive characters, "Bernard Foskett's Ignorant Cruel Hardness of Heart to me." This

unfavourable judgment of his tutor was no passing mood of indignation, for nearly forty years after (March 18th, 1784, Thursday evening), John Collett Ryland wrote down this deliberate judgment of his college days: "Foskett should have spared no pains to educate our souls in grandeur, and to have enriched and impregnated them with great and generous ideas of God in His whole natural and moral character, relations and actions, to us and the universe. This was thy business, thy duty, thy honour, O Foskett! and this thou didst totally neglect" (Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 37). That is a fairly sweeping condemnation, characteristic of the man who wrote it. Perhaps the truth was that the teacher's way of comprehending and handling divine truth was not the pupil's, and that the pupil was passing through his years of storm and stress, whilst the teacher had forgotten his own.

These spiritual struggles of a student's heart are reflected in not a few pages of the diary. Thus he writes (May 25th, 1745), five days before the last named entry: "I thought: If there was no God nor my Soul was not Immortal, no Death, Judgment, Heaven or Hell, yet I would not live beneath the Dignity of the Human Nature." Quite early in his college life he systematically analyses his condition:

> "*Inward man,* for the most part, very dark, weak and wicked. My memory greatly failed me. My understanding very much blinded with sin. My conscience very stupid and unfaithful. My affections very carnal and corrupt. My reason almost ruined, and had little power to exercise itself. My thoughts exceedingly vain, corrupt and trifling, wild and ungovernable, unsteady and unfixed. Unbelief very strong indeed; atheism, and every other corruption, working strongly in my heart. Sometimes ready to deny the being of God and of Christ, etc" (as quoted in Newman's *Rylandiana,* pp. 29, 30).

Such condemnation of himself, in one form or other, constantly recurs throughout the diary. Introspective analysis is carried to an altogether morbid degree; wherever the fault may lie—with himself, with his college, with his theology—no one who reads these pages to-day could claim that he was taught to see life steadily and to see it whole. The seminary life can be as unhealthy as the monastic, and I have been frequently reminded of the records of life in monastic communities by the diary of this Baptist student. Again and again he blames himself for having a good appetite for his meals, in such terms as these: "From 1½ till 2. Spent at Dinner: very greedy and after the Creatures. My rapacious Appettite may well make me

blush, and O! what Darkness, Atheism, Ignorance, Unbelief, Enmity, Madness, Distraction and folly, Selfishness and Uncharitableness Dwells within me in every Power of my Nature" (Feb. 15, 1744-5). This morbidity was evidently reflected in his outward behaviour, for he records (Feb. 4, 1744-5): "Evg. at Supper. *Mrs. Heritage and Mrs. Evans gave me a hint about my strange, Stiff, unmannerly Conduct towards Mrs. Ev., and towards many of our Friends, etc., when I pass by them.*" On the other hand, this shy and awkward youth from the Gloucestershire farm was apt to let himself go too much when it came to prayer; two days before this incident he writes: "Mr. Foskett gave me a hint to Day about expressions in Prayer —not to be too rash." The hint from the ladies evidently bore some fruit, for two days later we find the note: "God helping, Provide better for Table Conversation." Later on (April 19th, 1745), we find the resolution carried out: "This Day at Dinner happily fell into a strain of Telling Remarkable Stories and Events—O! that I may be assisted to provide suitable, seasonable, pleasant, Profitable and usefull Entertainment this way, whenever I've an opportunity." He developed the methods of the expert *raconteur,* for further on we read (May 13th): "The afternoon spent in finishing the Abstract, and in Collecting some little stories; The evening after Supper spent in Reading and telling Little Stories." This facility in anecdote became quite a characteristic in the after days, as his school-assistant, William Newman, records; one way of rewarding good conduct in the school was to fetch Mr. Ryland to tell a story. This is rather an interesting example of the way in which the consciousness of a defect may actually lead to the acquirement of a marked characteristic—when there is sufficient resolution. In Ryland's case, that quality of resolution comes out most notably in what is known as the Bristol vow, which has often been quoted, first, I think, in the funeral sermon over John Collett Ryland, preached by John Rippon in 1792 (p. 41). The original is written in large characters on a piece of worn and folded paper which has been pasted into the diary:

> "June 25. Ev. 10—1744. Aet. 20 yrs 8 Months 2 Days. If theres ever a God in Heaven or Earth, I Vow protest and Swear in God's Strength—or that Gods permitting Me, I'll find him out and I'll know whether he loves or hates me or I'll Dye and perish Soul & Body in the Pursuit & Search.
>
> Witness Jno. Coll. Ryland.

Nobody but a thoroughgoing Calvinist, face to face with the definite issues of a limited Election and an alternative

Reprobation, the love or the hate of God, could state the issue quite like that, and nobody but one of Ryland's eager, passionate, extravagant temperament could so fling himself into the search for God and ultimate truth. Yet the words do not rise to the noble height of that somewhat similar cry of Bunyan's, as he faced the prospect of death: "If God doth not come in, thought I, I will leap off the ladder, even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven come hell. Lord Jesus, if thou wilt catch me, do; if not, I will venture for thy name." John Collett Ryland's strong Calvinism was proof even against Charles Wesley's eloquence. Under date April 2nd, 1745, we read:

> "After Meeting was over We went to hear Mr. Cha: Westley at the Room; he was preaching or expounding John 5, 1 to 14 verse, on Our Lord's healing the Impotent Man, and charging him to sin no more, Lest a worse thing should befall him. Mr. Cha. Westley positively asserted falling from Grace, in the strongest Terms. I thank the Lord I thought at yt Time on Mr. E. Coles Discourse on Final Perseverance, also coming home, and at Prayer and at Supper, with an unusual Impression, and it seem'd to Strengthen, Comfort and enlarge My heart in Thankfulness and Praise."

So the terrible heresy of Charles Wesley did him some service after all—by confirming him in his previous belief.

We get a glimpse of this student's meditations (quite unconsciously touched with humour):

> "June 22d. Ev. 10. Laus Deo. I fell into a Beautifull Scheme of Reasoning as I sat Musing wth my head down and my eyes shut—Thus— How comes Man to be endow'd with those Various powers and properties wch I find in myself, viz.
>
> I can cast my Eyes all around me in ye Day Light and see Coulers, Shapes Motions. I can Look up and See the Sun with his cheering Rays in ye Daytime & ye Moon and Stars by Night, ye Sky, ye Clouds, etc.
>
> Down upon this Terraqueous Globe I can see such a Sort of Beings as Myself, and also Females wch are some of them Sweet & Lovely Creatures, but who gave them & us of ye Male Sex our Existance; Did We our Selves? No; then we must be and not be at the Same time.
>
> Did our Parents? No; For wheres the Father or ye Mother yt will or Can Say that they—either Father and Mother Fashion'd their Sons or yr Daughters in ye womb. They neither of them knew wch Sex ye Child woud be or

wt Shape, whether Strait or Crooked, Wise or Foolish, Ugly or Handsome."

To this interesting meditation there is appended the word "Unfinish'd," and in that word much virtue lies. Elizabeth Frith, of Warwick, was probably not yet within his horizon.

No one could say, after reading this diary, that John Collett Ryland faced his life-work with a mean and impoverished conception of its intellectual demands. In the BAPTIST QUARTERLY for April, 1925, there may be found his ambitious programme for a year's work at college. It must be here sufficient to give another and briefer summary of his aims (June 7, 1744, M. 6¼):

> "I beg if ever the most High God sends me forth into the Publick Work of the Ministry, I may go well Qualified, if it please His gracious Majesty to give me Large and Exact Skill in 5 Languages, and Large Skill and Knowledge of about 20 Arts and Sciences, Including that one which is above them all, viz. DIVINITY—this, this is what I woud Excell in, Both in the Theory and Practice of Every Branch from the Greatest to the Least."

He shows a very laudable ambition that he and his fellow-students may beat the college record, and "excell all the young Students that have ever been before us" (July 8, 1744). Already he cherishes thoughts of authorship, which he was destined to carry out almost too copiously. "N.B. Make a Little Greek and a Little Hebrew Gramr., if ever thou livest to have Skill enough" (July 10). It is good to read that, on going to bed on July 12th, he "long'd to know more of the Hebrew Tongue"; it is to be wished that more students felt like that when they get up! His methods of study are good, and his self-made "Rules for Daily Examination" might be profitably employed bv the student of to-day:

1. Wt New Words have I gain'd in the Eng. French, Latin or Hebrew Languages or in any Part of Grammar in those Tongues.
2. Wt New Ideas in the Human Sciences. Especially Rhetoric, Logic, Ontology, History, Chronology, Geography or Natural Philosophy.
3. Wt New Words or Ideas in ev'ry Book that I have Read this Day, whether Human or Divine Subject.
4. Wt have I gain'd in Divinity either in ye Theory or Practic Part, in Keach, in Vincent, in Confession of Faith, in Dr. Ridgley's Body of Divinity, but more Especially wt have I gain'd from the Holy Scriptures Old or New Testaments.

And be sure Examine ev'ry night at Least; how much of Self has been in all thy thoughts, words, and works that Day, whether Natural, Sinfull, or Righteous self, and examine thy Natural, Moral & Religious Conduct.

(July 10, 1744.)

He forms the excellent purpose of committing to memory select portions of the Bible, and tests himself by making himself repeat such passages whilst kneeling on his bed (July 3 and 4). He also constantly analyses the books he reads, and a good part of the diary is filled with such analyses. It may be of interest to quote in full a sample day from the diary, though we must remember that he is an "introvert" and not an "extrovert," like Pepys, who was so full of zest for things without:

"Feb. 1. Friday. 1744-5. M. 6½ awoke. M. 7 arose. very dead, dark, hard and miserable. O! I am for ever Miserable if Christ dont appear in rich Mercy to me. Pray'd & yn [then] read Genesis I.—at 7½ was call'd down to Breakfast & Prayer, till 8¾; then came up Stairs; from 9 to 10 engag'd as usual; from 11 to 1, with Mr. Foskett; from 1 till near 2 at Dinner; my heart too much engag'd in the Creatures, etc.; from 2 to 4½, Putting my Papers & Books in good order; very dark and dull all the time, tho' some Sorrow at bottom for my past sins and follies and present deadness & stupidity; from 4½ down by the Fire, reading over my Quotidianas from June 16 to Dec. 31, 1744. Some things in them worth another Review—at 5 Begun Mr. John Reynold's Confirming Catechism—5th. edit. 12mo. 1734. About 6 Began his Book Entituled Enquiries concerning the State and Oeconomy of the Angelical Worlds.—8vo. 1723. A curious Treatise.—at 7 Began & took a Cursory View of it thro'out Mr. John Hurrion's Scripture Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in 16 Sermons. 8vo. 1734. A Most Excellent & Glorious Performance. at 8 engaged wth our Family in Usual Service—and then till near 11, reading Mr. Hurrion's aforesaid noble Treatise.—O! for a Heart to embrace this glorious Lord God the Spirit in all his operations. ev. 11—up Stairs. Read as follows (viz) Promises To the Fatherless and Widow, pag. 45—Of the Means of Grace, page 77 to 81. To Faithful Servants.—Sect. 4. 202—Ps. 1. Matth. 1.—I thank the Lord I hope I had a little more Life to night. I hope God the Spirit has not quite forsook me—went to bed more Comfortable and Lively than for some time past—near 12 oClock."

It will be seen that the diligent student of those days got through an enormous amount of reading, including much more

study of "theology" in the narrower sense than is done by the average student of to-day. If we ask how he found time for it, the answer lies in the story of such a day as we have just had. He concentrated on the one thing and had few distractions. We can count on the fingers of one hand the references to public events in the diaries before us. There is no reference to social and philanthropic activities such as take no small part of the life and energy of a Christian man to-day. The sight of the "outsiders" in the streets of Bristol does not stir this young Calvinist to evangelistic or missionary ardour towards them; he writes: "When out in Town, saw many poor objects—N.B.—God assisting Improve by them—and Stir up others—and constantly" (Mar. 30th, 1745); or again, "N.B. this morning *going to Mr. Day I had such a sense of Distinguishing Goodness of God to me—above the* 100*ds* & 1000*s yt Walk about ye Streets that it exceeded my Belief. My Soul was almost overwhelmed at the Sense of it* (May 8th, 1745). There you have the unhappy side of the doctrine of predestination as held in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, before the Evangelical Revival. We cannot forget that it is John Collett Ryland who is reported to have said to young William Carey so long after these Bristol days, "Young man, sit down, sit down. You're an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He'll do it without consulting you or me" (*William Carey*, by S. P. Carey, p. 50). Ryland was an enthusiast himself; but then enthusiasts about different things always find it hard to understand each other. The truth is that the sharp cleavage between the Church and the World which is so well illustrated in this diary, and characterises the religious life of the time, meant narrowness of judgment as well as concentration of aim. The faults that we Protestants can see in Catholic asceticism have belonged often enough to our own Puritanism, which is indeed Protestant asceticism.

It would go beyond the subject to trace the subsequent life and work of this young Bristol student in his double capacity of Baptist minister and schoolmaster. The same characteristics remained, and the promise of his gifts and ardour was amply fulfilled. It must be sufficient to recall two passages to illustrate this. One is an account of the education of his son, John Ryland, who succeeded him as the minister of College Lane, Northampton, and afterwards became the principal of Bristol Baptist College:

> "John is now eleven years and seven months old; he has read Genesis in Hebrew five times through; he read through the Greek Testament before nine years old. He can read Horace and Virgil. He has read through Telemachus in French! He has read through Pope's Homer, in eleven

volumes; read Dryden's Virgil, in three volumes. He has read Rollin's ancient history, ten volumes 8vo. And he knows the Pagan mythology surprisingly" (August 28, 1764, as quoted in the funeral sermon by Rippon, p. 43).

There is more than paternal pride in those words; there is the sense that he is giving to his boy that which he was once so eager to win for himself.

Better known is the story told by Robert Hall of his being taken by his father as a little boy to Mr. Ryland's school at Northampton. It was the time of the American War of Independence, and Mr. Ryland sided with the Americans against his own government. Finally Mr. Ryland burst out characteristically with the declaration that if he were General Washington he would call for his officers and have them all bled into a punch-bowl, himself the first, and then all should dip their swords into the bowl and solemnly swear never to sheathe those swords whilst an English soldier remained in America. "Only conceive, Sir," said Robert Hall, in telling the story, "my situation; a poor little boy, that had never been out of his mother's chimney corner before, Sir, sitting by these two old gentlemen, and hearing this conversation about blood. Sir, I trembled at the idea of being left with such a bloody-minded master. Why, Sir, I began to think he would no more mind bleeding me, after my father was gone, than he would killing a fly. I quite expected to be bled, Sir" (Newman, *Rylandiana,* pp. 194ff. quoting John Greene in his "Reminiscences of the Rev. Robert Hall," 1832, p. 92). There you have the Ryland of "the Bristol vow," still eager, passionate, extravagant, still young at heart in his enthusiasm. Whilst I do not attach much importance to "last words," I think that there is something fitting in the last words of John Collett Ryland (Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 22)—"I'll go and try."

Stony Stratford

THIS church has always been allied rather more closely with others to the north, in Northamptonshire and Warwick, than with those to the south, in the same county of Bucks.

In 1651 a meeting of General Baptists in the Midlands was attended by representatives of thirty churches. The nearest to Stony Stratford were *Easenhall,* four miles north-west of Rugby, *Marston* in Warwick (perhaps Prior's Marston, four miles from Byfield in Northants), *Ravensthorpe* in Northants, near Long Buckby, *Horley,* three miles north-west of Banbury in Oxon, *Sundon* in Beds., eight miles east of Leighton Buzzard. As these encircle Stony Stratford, we are tempted to infer that no Baptist church existed there at that date. The meeting decided to send out messengers to plant new churches, and quite possibly this was founded as a result.

In 1654 the Fifth-Monarchy men were exciting fears, and a meeting of General Baptists was held in London, which disclaimed them. Morley signed from Ravensthorpe, Monk from Berkhampstead, John Hartnoll from Winslow, Stephen Dagnall from Aylesbury; but no one can be identified from Stony Stratford. Two years later another meeting was held in London, attended by much the same men, and again Stony Stratford is not to be recognised.

The earliest local evidence is that in 1657, John Emerson of Cosgrove (yeoman) and W. Fortnell of Paulerspury took a lease of a plot of ground , 48 by 20, south-west of the Cofferidge, from William Hartley; and it is implied that in May a building was erected, able to accommodate a hundred people. The registers of these parishes might throw more light on the men involved. Hartley does seem to have been a Baptist, the Registrar of births, etc., appointed under the Act of 1653. "Emerson" is probably a slip for "Emerton": William Emerton of Awbury Monke (Aldbury in Herts?) was reported in 1669 as preaching at Drayton Beauchamp, on the main road from Berkhampstead and Tring to Aylesbury; Randal Emerton was a Baptist rich enough to be nominated as sheriff for Herts. in 1670.

In 1659 the General Baptists of sixteen counties met at Aylesbury, as we learn from the church book of Dalwood in Devon; but the minutes are not extant and we do not know if

Stony Stratford was represented. A Confession of Faith was adopted next year by a meeting in London, and to the men above named can be added the following of the neighbourhood: Francis Stanley of Ravensthorpe, William Smart of Wingrave, Joseph Keach of Soulbury; there are seventeen others whose locality is not known.

James Slye, of Potterspury, is the authority for the statement in 1831 that George Martyn was the first pastor here. That can hardly be the precise state of the case, for this church was General Baptist, whereas he was a Presbyterian minister, a royalist staunch enough to appear in arms for Charles in 1659. Calamy said of him that after he was ejected from Weedon Beck, in Northants, he "exercised his ministry pretty much among an handful of honest people at Stony Stratford"; and this is confirmed by the fact that application was made on his behalf by Nathaniel Ponder in May, 1672, for licences that he might preach in his own house at Haversham, and at Edmund Carter's houses at Stony Stratford and Wolverton. As all these were called Presbyterian, we can hardly say more than that he may have preached in the Baptist meeting-house occasionally; but that he was ever the ordained Elder is incredible.

Another licence was, however, desired for the house of John Britten, in Lavendon, half-way between Bedford and Northampton, near Olney. This family was destined to be closely linked with Stony Stratford, and the first sign was that in 1675 new trustees were appointed on the death of Emerton. John Fulford of Stony Stratford, brazier, was associated with John Brittaine junior of Yardley Gobion, carpenter. Of another John Britten, born in 1660, we shall hear much.

When we ask how services were maintained in this long period of persecution, 1660-1687, we must remember that the General Baptists had three kinds of preachers—Messengers, who superintended a wide area, both preaching and administering; Elders, ordained to one particular congregation, which might be drawn from and might meet in, many villages; Ministers, answering closely to our lay preachers. As yet, we are unable to identify any Elder of Stony Stratford at this time, though it is probable there were two or three joint-elders. We do know the Messengers who worked in the district; Hartnoll of Winslow was reported in 1669 to the bishop by many clergy, so were Monk of Berkhampstead and Morley of Ravensthorpe, with his colleague Francis Stanley.

There are traditions of five ministers here, "Jenkins, Cook, B.K., Sturch, Fouks." There was a Jenkins family at Winslow, which sent out more than one preacher for half a century. There was a Cook family at Chesham and Berkhampstead, equally

helpful. B.K. was the well-known Benjamin Keach, born at Stoke Hammond in 1640, baptized 1655, married a Winslow girl 1660, brought into prominence by a trial for his children's primer in 1664, much in demand by the General Baptist churches of Bucks for the next four years, till he went to London. John Sturch and Richard Fulks were members at Aylesbury. Therefore it would almost appear that the church at Stony Stratford relied on preachers from the outside, and may have had none of its own.

We have reports from the two incumbents in 1676, that there were in the east side of the street thirty-one dissenters over sixteen years of age, and on the west side ten more. Persecution raged all over the district, troops being sent into the county on purpose. One of the treasures of the present church is an old window-frame through which the preacher could slip into the wood, and in ten minutes be across the river out of the jurisdiction.

Yet, when liberty was secured, and there was time to take stock and re-organize, a Pedobaptist minister who settled at Pury reported that the Baptist Church numbered sixty-seven members, twenty-five in Stony Stratford itself, fourteen in Yardley (Gobion), eight in Paulerspury, six in Potterspury, seven in Hanslope and Thrupp (*i.e.*, Castle Thorpe), three in Blisworth, two in Denshanger, two in Wicken. All these places lie on the Pury side, and this shows that if the meeting-house was in Bucks, yet the church was largely Northants. It would be well to search the Quarter Sessions rolls at Aylesbury, and see who registered the meeting-house, and when.

From 1690 we are well-informed both as to the Bucks General Baptist Association, and the General Assembly. The former consisted of seven churches at first, and there is no mention of Stony Stratford. Quite possibly the church looked northward, and was in touch with the General Baptist churches at Welton, Northampton, Coventry, Ravensthorpe. In the troubles raised by Matthew Caffin, the Northamptonshire Association took a strong stand for a thorough investigation; but this was evaded till 1705, when all who would not express themselves clearly on the divinity of our Lord were expelled from the Assembly. From all these troubles this church stood aloof, and there is no trace of its being represented at Assembly or Association.

In 1689 the church at Slapton began a new book, and the accounts show at once frequent payments to John Shenstone, a family to be noted; this particular man seems to have been aided as in poverty; the church had its own Elder, but often enjoyed the preaching of Edward Fowkes from Northampton. In 1702

it brought over John Britten some distance, paying for horse-hire twice the sum from Northampton. From this time he and Shenstone were frequent preachers, aided presently by Philip Cherry.

On 12th November, 1709, John Brittain's name appears as auditing the accounts of Slapton, and thenceforward annually. On 21st April, 1712, he was at the Association in Aylesbury, and was asked to mediate in a trouble at the Ford church. The church of Slapton came to depend almost entirely on him and Nathaniel Kinch; but there is no reference to his place of residence. An entry of 1719/20 shows him presiding at a meeting of the Slapton church held in Bradwin. These entries prove that he was a man of great weight in this district.

Now the Assembly which in 1705-8 purged itself of its vague members, met in 1712 and 1713 at London; in 1714, 1715, 1716 at Stony Stratford, 1718 at Coventry, 1720 Stratford, 1721 Northampton, 1722-1725 Stratford, 1726 London, 1727-30 Stratford, 1731 London: it came to be known as the Stony Stratford Assembly. Evidently there must have been in this town a strong church or a strong man—perhaps both.

About 1715 John Evans of London was taking a careful census of all dissenting churches. From Mr. Jennings, of Kibworth, in Leicestershire, he had a letter with a great deal of information as to Northamptonshire. It shows General Baptists abounding, but those in many villages linked into one church. What concerns us is two entries, which are slightly ambiguous: (1) John Brittain of Cosgrave, minister of 240 people at Yardley, Stony Stratford and Thorp in Bucks; (2) Nathaniel Kinch of Horley, ministers at Bifield and Chipping Warden; John Britain and Philip Cherry minister at Woodend Weston and Bradwin; all these people, with Banbury and Horley, make one church.

We infer then, that Britten, who was fifty-five years old in 1715, resided at Cosgrave, that he was Elder of Stony Stratford, that he gave help to the northern church at Slapton, also to the six-village church to the south.

It is no surprise to learn from the minute-book of the Aylesbury Association that in 1721 he was ordained Messenger, Joseph Hooke coming from Lincolnshire for the purpose. Henceforward he was both technically and really the leader of the General Baptists in the Midlands. In 1723 a house in Towcester was fitted up for worship, and in 1725/6 it was duly conveyed to him: this was one of the centres of the Slapton church, and Weston-by-Weedon became another. All neighbouring churches now take note of him, ordaining, presiding at business, administering baptism, and breaking bread.

In 1731 he arranged for the Assembly to meet at White's Alley in London. The ambiguous General Baptists had kept up a rival Assembly, which met intermittently, and overtures for union were accepted. A clear pronouncement was made on Christology, and on 10th June, 1731, reunion was effected, John Brittain's signature heading the list. It is much to be regretted that the Stony Stratford Assembly book, which was deposited with James Richardson of Southwark, has been lost; for it would have been the spine to which might easily have been articulated the many local records.

In 1733 the Assembly minuted that it very much condoled with the church at Stony Stratford in the great loss it had maintained by the removal of its late worthy minister and pastor, Brother John Brittain, Messenger of the churches; but it was glad to hear that the Lord had provided for them so that they were capable of continuing the worship of God among them, in which the Assembly would always be willing to afford its best assistance; it would be glad to enjoy the church's company and assistance next year; and it desired brother William Gyles, of Winslow, to carry this message. To succeed Brittain as Messenger, Samuel Welton, of Coventry, and William Allen, of Ford, were nominated, but William Johnson seems after some delay to have been ordained.

The Northamptonshire Association and the Bucks Association were not satisfied with the turn of events. They sent a strong and reiterated protest against singing in worship, which the Assembly declined to endorse. Also they objected to one article in the terms of reunion, which had been inserted with the hope of pleasing them, but was presently deleted to please them. Yet the two Associations felt very luke-warm towards the Assembly.

Stony Stratford in particular never held any further communication with the Assembly. It would appear that Brittain had overshadowed everybody, and on his death a rapid decay set in, both among the Associated churches and even in his own church. Association meetings become rarer, and churches drop off; in 1747 Woodrow was declared disorderly, in 1750 Wycombe collapsed, and the remaining members joined Amersham, in 1759 only Winslow was represented at the Association, next year only Berkhampstead, "the other sister churches being entirely decayed and broke off from us because they were too stiff in their mode of faith." By 1775 Winslow church had "turned Calvine"; twenty years later the Amersham people were so feeble they left their building unused, and met in a vestry of the Calvinistic Baptist meeting-house.

Now Stony Stratford was one of the earliest churches to

undergo this metamorphosis. In Brittain's later days he had been helped by Samuel Shenston, who succeeded him as sole Elder, and died in 1736. He was followed by Richard Irons, "resident preacher," even at Christmas, 1734, "a downright Baxterian," of whom we gladly would know more. One critic in 1738 spoke of "the reign of Richard the fourth"; he showed his Calvinism by inviting John Heywood, the Pedobaptist of Pury, to conduct an evening lecture in the Baptist meeting-house at Stony Stratford; he was doing the same thing at Towcester alternately with Stanger of Weston. Irons was followed by Tift, of whom nothing is recorded. During his pastorate the meeting-house was enlarged at the expense of the son of Samuel Shenstone. All this while the Brittains were doing good work in the neighbourhood and in London, but they seem to have done nothing here, except that between 1747 and 1756 Thomas Brittain, son of John, came over repeatedly from Chalton for funerals and the Lord's Supper.

About 1786 Samuel Hatch became pastor, a thorough Calvinist; he drank in something of the old spirit, and named his son Samuel Shenstone Hatch. The next pastor was John Goodrich, from Accrington and Preston. He drew up a church roll on 1st January, 1790, showing twenty-five "real members," besides seven "transient members," of Winslow church; two Shenstons were actually resident. He drew up a new church covenant, in the Lancashire fashion, and caused every member to sign it. The contrast of thirty-two with 240 in the days of Brittain is painful; and the accessions under Goodrich were not many. For the rest of the century only fifteen entries were made in the minutes, and from 1802 to 1815 there is nothing. An aged member remembers that a man baptised in 1802, fell into sin, and was excluded by the others, who were all women; he was restored in 1815. One other man joined, and he too was excluded for attacking the minister's character; with that entry the minutes of this pastorate cease. Meantime the pastor's son, John William Goodrich, born here in 1789, baptised at Leicester by Robert Hall, had been received as a member, called forth to the ministry, trained at Bristol, welcomed back 1814, sent again to Bristol. He helped his father latterly, but about 1822 the father resigned, leaving the church in low water and bad odour.

In 1823 John E. Simmons from the university of Glasgow was invited to the pastorate. He drew up a new covenant and thoroughly re-organised the church. A new "chapel" now replaced the old meeting-house, and the church was fairly launched on a new career.

From the earlier period it would be interesting to follow

the careers of the Shenstons and the Brittains, who, of course, intermarried with the Stangers and the Staughtons; John Brittain Shenston recapitulated in his personal doctrinal evolution much what we see here, and in so many of the old orthodox General Baptist churches, a passage over to Calvinism, which was sweetened and redeemed from Antinomianism.

JOHN GIBBS, clergyman at Newport Pagnel, became Baptist, and started Baptist or mixed churches there and at Olney. Bennett ministered at the former, but in 1707 it dissolved and asked advice from Northampton as to a new start, so that Robert Hansel was ordained in 1709. Later ministers were Palmer and John Hewson. At Olney, the Pedobaptists were led off by Morris to a new place, leaving Gibbons to minister to the Baptists at the old place. When Gibbons went to Royston, Olney declined. But in 1738 Drake of Yardley fostered both Royston and Olney, continuing his work for over twenty years. With 1776 Olney at last got on its feet, when John Sutcliff was ordained. Josiah Thompson is the authority for the earlier statements.

* * * * * *

CAMBRIDGE had a chequered early story. From Hussey's church there was a secession in 1721, which divided again two years later. Preparations were made to form a Baptist church, meeting at a house hired in Stone Yard; but the Baptists withdrew and hired Miller's Barn on St. Andrew's Street in April 1726. Two years later they returned to the Yard, where Andrew Harper became minister over a mixed chiurch; he died in 1741. Two years later, the church called from Floore an Aberdeen M.A., George Simpson; he left for Norwich about 1756, and the doors were closed. Salvation came from Anne Dutton of Great Gransden, who told of a young man aged 23, Robert Robinson, recently baptized by Dunkham of Ellingham. He came in 1759, the church soon bought Alderman Adshead's place, and built a new house in 1764, at a cost of 500 guineas. Such was the account gathered by Josiah Thompson.

The Church Covenant

OF THE PARTICULAR BAPTIST CHURCH, MEETING IN THE HORSE FAIR, STONY STRATFORD, BUCKS.

WE whose names are underwritten do now declare, that we embrace the word of God as our only guide in matters of religion, and acknowledge no other authority whatever as binding upon the conscience. Having, we hope, found mercy at the hands of God, in delivering us from the power of darkness, and translating us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, we think and feel ourselves bound to walk in obedience to his divine commands. On looking into the sacred scripture, we find it was common in the first ages of Christianity for such as professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, voluntarily to unite together in Christian societies, called in the New Testament, Churches. Their ends in so doing were, to honour God and promote their own spiritual edification. Having searched the written word, we trust, with a degree of diligence, in order that we may know how to act, as well as what to believe, and sought unto God by prayer for divine direction, we heartily approve of, and mean to follow their example. With a view to this, we now solemnly, in the presence of the all-seeing and heart-searching God, do mutually covenant and agree, in manner and form following.

1. To maintain and hold fast the important and fundamental truths of revelation. These we apprehend to be such as respect the natural and moral character of Jehovah, and the various relations he stands in to his rational creatures; the original purity but present depravity of human nature; the total moral inability and yet absolute inexcusableness of man as a guilty sinner before God; the perpetuity of a divine law, and the equity of its awful sanction; the infinite dignity of the Son of God in his original character as a divine person, possessed of all the perfections of Deity, and his all-sufficiency for the office of Mediator between God and Man, in consequence of the union of the divine and human natures in one person; the acceptance of our persons with, and the enjoyment of all good from God, through his mediation; the proper divinity and blessed agency of the holy Spirit in our regeneration, sanctification, and

consolation; in one word, that our full salvation, from its first cause to its final consummation, is a display of sovereign goodness accomplishing the gracious purposes of him, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, and known unto whom is the end from the beginning.

2. To seek by all proper means the good of the church with which we stand connected. To this end we engage to attend regularly, as far as we have opportunity, all seasons of public worship, church meetings, and meetings of prayer appointed by the church. When we are absent we will be ready to give an account why we were so, if required. We will diligently watch for the appearances of God's work in our congregation; and if we see any setting their faces Zion-ward, we will endeavour to instruct and encourage; and having hopeful evidence of the reality of God's work upon their souls, will lay before them the privileges they have a right unto, and the duties they ought to be found in, of following Christ in his Ordinances and Institutions. If called to the painful work of executing the penalties of Christ upon the breakers of the laws of his house, we will endeavour to exercise it in the spirit of the gospel, without respect of persons. In all questions that shall be debated at our church meetings, the brethren shall speak but one at a time; and if a difference in sentiment should take place, we will endeavour in brotherly love to weigh the matter fully and deliberately, and then put it to the vote in order that it may be determined by the majority. Also we engage that according to our ability, we will contribute our share towards defraying all necessary expenses attending the worship of God. We likewise promise to keep the secrets of the church, and not to expose its concerns to the world around.

3. To esteem our pastor highly in love for his work's sake. This we will endeavour to manifest by frequently and fervently praying for him; diligently attending on his ministry; encouraging his heart and strengthening his hands to the utmost of our power in the work of the Lord; freely consulting him as we have occasion and opportunity, respecting our spiritual affairs; treating him affectionately when present, and speaking respectfully of him when absent. As he is a man of like passions with others, we will endeavour to conceal and cover with a mantle of love, his weaknesses and imperfections; also to communicate unto him of our temporal good things, knowing that the Lord hath ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

4. To walk in love towards those with whom we stand connected in bonds of Christian fellowship. As the effect of this, we will pray much for one another. As we have oppor-

tunity, we will associate together for religious purposes. Those of us who are in more comfortable situations in life than some of our brethren, with regard to the good things of Providence, will administer as we have ability and see occasion, to their necessities. We will bear one another's burdens, sympathize with the afflicted in body and mind, so far as we know their case, under their trials; and as we see occasion, advise, caution, and encourage one another. We will watch over one another for good. We will studiously avoid giving or taking offences. Thus we will make it our study to fulfil the law of Christ.

5. To be particularly attentive to our station in life, and the peculiar duties incumbent on us in that situation. We who are husbands or wives will conscientiously discharge relative duties towards our respective yoke-fellows. We who are heads of families will maintain the daily worship of God in our houses, and endeavour to instruct those under our care, both by our words and actions. We who are children will be obedient to our parents in the Lord. We who are masters will [render] unto our servants that which is just and equal. We who are servants engage to be diligent and faithful, not acting with eye-service as men-pleasers, but with singleness of heart as unto God, knowing we have a Master in heaven. We will in our different places of abode, enquire what we can do for the good of the church to which we belong, and as far as we have ability, we will open or encourage the opening of a door wherever we can, for the preaching of the word, remembering that we ought to be as the salt of the earth.

6. To walk in a way and manner becoming the gospel, before them that are without, that we may by well-doing put to silence the ignorance of gainsayers. We will practise the strictest honesty in our dealings, and faithfulness in fulfilling all our promises. It shall be our study to represent a fair picture of religion before the eyes of the world in the whole of our conduct and conversation. We will abstain from all vain amusements and diversions, by which time would be foolishly spent, money wasted, our minds carnalized, and we exposed to many dangerous temptations. We engage in a special manner to sanctify the Lord's Day. In fine it shall be our study to keep our garments unspotted by the flesh, and walk as becometh saints.

7. To receive such, and only such, into communion with us as in a judgment of charity we think are born again; have been baptized according to the primitive mode of administering that ordinance, and profess their hearty approbation of, and subjection to, this our solemn Church Covenant.

These things, and whatever else may appear enjoined by the word of God, we promise in the strength of divine grace to

observe and practise. But knowing our insufficiency for any thing that is spiritually good, in and of ourselves, we look up to him who giveth power to the faint, rejoicing that in the Lord we have not only righteousness but strength. Hold thou us up, O Lord, and we shall be safe! Amen!

The above Covenant signed by us whose names follow, at our Church Meeting November 4th, 1790, and other convenient opportunities. John Goodrich, Pastor.

ABINGDON. This church was on Fifth Monarchy principles. When Pendarvis died in 1656, his body was brought up the Thames in a sugar-cask packed in sand, and services were held for a week. Cromwell was so fearful of an armed rising that he sent a regiment to keep order, and the colonel did at last order the funeral meetings to disperse. The burial was in Ock Street. A legacy of £50 enabled more land to be bought in 1670. At this time the leaders were captain Consolation Fox, William Stevenson, Simon Peck, of St. Helen's; in 1672 licences were taken for John Coombes and John Man to teach at the house of Katharine Peck. In 1678 and 1681 the church entertained an Association, to which delegates were sent from St. Albans, Hemel Hempstead, and Petty France in London. By 1689 John Tomkins was pastor, and a building arose by 1700. William Fuller came about 1705, and revived the cause in his forty years' ministry. Then came Daniel Turner from Reading in 1748, who by 1790 had associated John Evans. Much of this information was collected by Josiah Thompson, who adds the curious note that at Wantage there was a minister in 1713, William Jones, under whom that church declined, because he tried to discover the Longitude.

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RIDGMONT. Its church book opens in 1701, with W. Jarvis as pastor. Five years later he was succeeded by Samuel Butler, who died 1739, and William Davis, who died 1716; they were assisted by Ralph Baskerville and John Maurice. Baskerville was pastor in 1750, but three years later Joseph Loydal was called from Walgrave; he was excommunicated in 1766. William Pike followed next year, and the church became close Baptist in 1770. Such was the story gathered by Josiah Thompson in 1779.

The Indulgence of 1687 in Wales

TRAFODION CYMDEITHAS HANES BEDYDDWYR CYMRU: 1924. "Declarasiwn 1687: Tipyu o'i Hanes a Barn Cymru aur dano," gan T. Richards, M.A., D.Litt., Maesteg, tt. 52.

FOR the ignorant, the above may be interpreted as "Transactions of the Historical Society of the Baptists of Wales, 1924." A booklet of 52 pp., it consists entirely of an address delivered to the Society on September 23, 1924, by Dr. Richards, which he modestly calls, "Some Notes on the History of the Declaration of Indulgence, 1687, and on the attitude of Wales towards it."

To students of the history of religion in Wales, the author is already well known as one of the very few who are devoting themselves to the work of research in that field with scientific thoroughness and great success. He has already proved his extraordinary capacity for such a task. Older historians, like Joshua Thomas and Thomas Rees, with one or two others, may have scratched the surface here and there, while more recent and better equipped students like Mr. Shankland and Principal J. H. Davies, have delved a little deeper in patches; yet Dr. Richards must have found the seventeenth century to be almost virgin soil for work such as his. Moreover, he seems bent upon carrying on his operations systematically over the whole ground, and he has already brought to light many treasures which call for still more minute investigation. His volume of over three hundred pages on the *History of the Puritan Movement in Wales,* covered the period from 1639 to 1653, that is, from the institution of the first Separatist Church in Wales at Llanvaches, Monmouthshire, up to the time when the Propagation Act for Wales expired. It was published in 1920. His still fuller volume on *Religious Developments in Wales from* 1654 *to* 1662, saw the light in 1923. These were both written in English. Several other contributions in English and Welsh deal with single episodes and personalities in the religious history of Wales, both inside and outside this period. They are all crammed full (almost too full for any general consumption) of all kinds of interesting facts about men

and movements which were very little or not known at all before. Each of them in turn put the future historian of religion in Wales more and more heavily in debt to Dr. Richards. They are all so interesting that one is relieved to realise, after taking thought, that in none of them has Dr. Richards quite succeeded in writing history in any literary sense. He still may do so, but so far one's main regret is that he has given us something betwixt and between. He has not been satisfied with a clear record of patient research, and yet he has not quite succeeded in transforming it into an interesting historical narrative in style and arrangement. It is something less than the one and something more than the other—and the something more is not always to the good. There is danger in such a *via media*. His style has always been rather too rich and allusive for a clear record of individual discoveries and (one is tempted to say) sometimes too blunt and acid in its personal references and inferences for the sober historical critic. The reason for this is, of course, that Dr. Richards is too much alive to be satisfied with a bare record of facts, and too much interested in their meaning to allow any facts to pass without anticipating the contribution they are likely to make to the finished history that must one day come. I, for one, am not anxious to deny his dangerous right to the double rôle of the writer of history and of the successful researcher, but it is evident that the task is a very difficult one, and it is not many who have succeeded in overcoming its difficulty.

In any case, as an ordinary teacher of general church history in a Welsh Theological College, I have to devote all my energies, unfortunately, to the successful and thankless task of keeping abreast with the rapid strides of such specialists like Dr. Richards in all parts of the field. One can, therefore, only look from afar with envy upon their fruitful work of research, and share only by proxy in their joy of discovery in fields like the early history of Nonconformity in Wales, while accepting humbly and thankfully at second-hand the treasures they bring home rejoicing. We can only dream of the time when it will be possible in Wales for those who teach a theological subject to share also, to some extent, in the thorough and scientific research of men like Dr. Richards. At present, he stands almost alone so far as any comprehensive work of research into the origin and early history of Nonconformity in Wales is concerned. He certainly receives no help from the theological colleges, which ought to be, under proper conditions, the inspiration and the home of all work of this kind.

In the contribution before us, Dr. Richards deals with an episode which takes him far on towards the end of the seventeenth century. The attitude of the later Stuart kings towards

the Nonconformists, of which these Declarations of Indulgence are one expression, is a curious instance of the tortuous ways in which their mind naturally worked. They are signal instances of how the cunning mind can blind and gull itself by its own superficial cleverness, and therefore concludes that other minds can be as easily blinded and gulled by its tricks.

Much more even than in the case of the Indulgence of 1672, that of 1687 was a fatuous instance of laying the snare in the sight of the bird. This special investigation by Dr. Richards into its reception by the Welsh people shows that it was no more successful in Wales than elsewhere.

Dr. Richards is naturally compelled to devote some space to a general description of the historical situation as a whole, to the character of James II., and to the contents and form of the Declaration itself, as well to the attitude of English Nonconformity generally to it. But even in these preliminary discussions he is not satisfied with a second-hand description, but keeps close to the original documents and sources of information.

On page 14 he comes to the question of the reception given to the Declaration of 1687 in Wales. So far as the Nonconformists are concerned, there are three aspects to the problem.

1. The first is how far they actually made use of the freedom provided by the Indulgence without even asking for the legal recognition it provided.

2. The second is to what extent they went even so far as to register formally under its provisions.

3. The third asks how many of them definitely expressed their approval of it, and their gratitude for it.

These three represent quite different attitudes, and probably to some extent quite different types among the Nonconformists. Of the last, it is quite easy to dispose. Out of the sixty addresses of thanks to the king for his gracious clemency, published in the *London Gazette*, three only came from Wales—one from some Independents in Monmouthshire, one from a group of Independents in North Wales, but emanating especially from Shrewsbury, and one from some Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents in south-west Wales (including especially the district around Swansea). There is evidently some mystery surrounding all three. As usual, no names are attached to them in the Gazette, and there is no strong reason for thinking that any of them are genuine and spontaneous expressions of the mind of any convinced Nonconformists. They were all probably engineered in some way or other by the king's agents, working on the fears or greed of a few nominal Puritans, who were ready, at a price, to become the king's tools.

Dr. Richards describes particularly the attitude of six more