Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

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

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

Buy me a coffee	https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology
PATREON	https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb
PayPal	https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

Baptist Quarterly 19.1 (January 1961)

THE
BAPTIST
QUARTERLY

incorporating the Transactions of the
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

IT was high time that we had a new manual for ministers. "A Minister's Manual" compiled by Dr. M. E. Aubrey served the denomination well enough in past decades but has now outlived its usefulness as influences of liturgical revival have become more and more felt within the denomination. So now we have a replacement. It is "Orders and Prayers for Church Worship" compiled by Ernest A. Payne and Stephen F. Winward.* Such a partnership in compilation should ensure that the worthwhile emphases and understanding of worship by Baptists—both past and present (and some may say on studying the manual, future, also!) have their proper place.

The new manual contains the usual material of sentences and prayers for public worship set out, however, according to the various elements within the pattern of worship—adoration, confession, intercession—and also according to the on-going events of the Christian calendar from Advent to All Saints. There is also a Lectionary covering Old and New Testament lessons for morning and evening services for two years. Service orders for all the Ordinances of the Church are provided, as also is a useful section on the Ministry of Visitation, as the worship is transferred from the sanctuary to the home. All this is to be expected and—as the compilers have presented it—to be welcomed. No doubt liturgical experts will be able to fault some of the compilation and we will leave them to do so. Rather would we make one or two comments on the new manual from the point of view of the minister whose responsibility it is to lead his Baptist congregation in worship Sunday by Sunday.

---

* Published by the Carey Kingsgate Press at 12s. 6d.

We have noted already the helpful ordering of material for public worship. This is made much more useful by the Introduction which sets out the principles and pattern of Christian Worship and then goes on to relate these to the contents of the book. The first part of the Introduction should provide ministers with useful material either for sermons on worship or perhaps, better still, material for teaching and discussion or worship on other occasions in the church's life. Our congregations are reputed often to be exceedingly reluctant to change the habits of the past—especially in forms of worship; possibly a greater part of this reluctance is due to the failure on the part of ministers to show adequate and convincing reasons for change. On page xii of the Introduction we read: "Full Christian Worship is not only scriptural and sacramental; it is also pentecostal." Set that sentence before our Baptist people and few would comprehend it, whilst many would be exceedingly suspicious of it. Analyse and explain its meaning as do the compilers of the manual and people will more readily come to see that the normal pattern of our worship needs reconsideration—to say the least! Not necessarily in a complete reordering of events so as to be totally unrecognisable—as a few think and many fear—but rather, in the first instance, in the clearer allocation of particular meaning and purpose to the events within the order. To take but one obvious example, to give clear content of adoration and confession to the "first" or "short" prayer and to make the often rambling "second" or "long" prayer a specific act of intercession. Similarly, after discussion on the Introduction people will more easily accept the idea of worship as a dialogue in which the congregation—and not just the minister—shares in the conversation and communion with God.

Just as important, however, is the understanding of the right use of the Ordinances of the Church, notably the services of dedication and the two sacraments. Discerning readers will notice significant changes within the orders as set out in the new manual. It is obviously at this point that the theology of the Church and its sacraments impinges upon the liturgy. The service of dedication, as set out, begins with a very welcome statement as to the meaning of the service. It is not being cynical to say that ministers, parents and congregations are all too often vague at this point. The manual clearly states that the elements of thanksgiving, commitment of parents and church and the blessing of the child belong together in the service. Opportunity is provided within the order for the congregation to stand to signify its acceptance of a share in the responsibility for training the child in the way of the Lord. This act is significant in that thereby the service is made not simply a service for the family before God—but for the family within the participating congregation of the Church before God.

Probably the most significant order within the book is that of the baptism of believers, together with an order for the laying on of hands with prayer upon those who have been baptised, followed by the rubric: "The Minister shall then proceed with the administration of the Lord's Supper." This is in line with the growing practice in Baptist churches of linking baptism firmly with church membership, through the service of baptism being followed immediately by reception into church membership at the Lord's Table. Baptism is thus made, not solely, an individual's response to God's activity in the Gospel, but also an act whereby the individual is made a member of Christ's community—the Church. The suggested return to the old General Baptist practice of laying on of hands after baptism (still followed amongst some European Baptists) is to be welcomed. For not only has it scriptural authority but it also offers a clear distinction between reception into church membership of the newly baptised and the offering of the right hand of fellowship to those who enter a church by transfer. Whilst welcoming this comprehensive order, we have the feeling that the introduction of the laying on of hands is likely to be difficult in many churches—both because of practical difficulties which Baptists are often adept at finding to prevent change, and also for fear of the misinterpretation of the act. In connection with this point, we cannot help regretting that the compilers did not feel able to expand slightly their section in the Introduction on the Ordinances of the Church so as to say a little more about the full service of baptism and reception into church membership.

In conclusion, we welcome an order for the Lord's Supper which assumes that the actual celebration is an integral part of a total service with preaching and that from the very beginning the service is recognisable as one of Holy Communion. Let us hope that this manual will hasten on the present move towards the disappearance of the "tacked on" Communion Service.

Altogether this manual is to be warmly welcomed. Ministers will do well, however, to use some parts of it with discretion, at first, bearing in mind that changes are best wrought, not with shattering suddenness, but as a result of preliminary explanation and education in practice.

Carey and his Biographers

WILLIAM CAREY died in his seventy-third year on 9th June, 1834. Widely honoured and acclaimed as he was, and with his story the pride of Baptists in Britain and America, his death was yet something of an embarrassment to the Baptist Missionary Society. The relationship of those at home to the Serampore trio had proved difficult ever since the death in 1815 of their faithful friend, Andrew Fuller. By 1818 a group of young recruits had established the Calcutta Missionary Union and were working on their own and in a manner overtly critical of those at Serampore. The main hostility of the younger group was directed against Joshua Marshman and they tried, completely unsuccessfully to detach Carey from him. The home committee sided with the junior men and visits to England by William Ward (1818-22), Mrs. Marshman (1820-21), John Clark Marshman, her son (1822-23), and finally Marshman himself (1826-29) proved unable to overcome the widening breach. On March 27th, 1827, after a lengthy and contentious meeting of the committee, there came a parting of the ways and for the following ten years there were two societies seeking the support of British Baptists—the Baptist Missionary Society, of which John Dyer was the secretary, and the Society in aid of the Serampore Mission, of which Christopher Anderson, of Edinburgh, was secretary.

The reconciliation of the two groups was achieved after difficult and protracted negotiations in the spring of 1837 at the very time of Marshman's death. But Carey's passing had occurred in the middle of the period of separation and this presumably accounts for the otherwise surprising fact that the only memorial sermon which found its way into print (at a time when such sermons were very numerous) was one delivered by Christopher Anderson (1782-1852) in Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh.

This sermon by Anderson must be regarded as the earliest printed biographical sketch of the great missionary. First published just after delivery, it was re-issued in 1835 and again in 1837 and contains much of interest, including quotations from a letter from the young Scot, John Leechman, to Samuel Hope of Liverpool, giving a full outline of the address Marshman gave at Carey's funeral. Christopher Anderson had been Fuller's nominee as his successor both in the Kettering pastorate and the secretaryship of the B.M.S. He had first met the young man when in Scotland in 1802. Three years later Anderson spent some months in Olney, London and Bristol and made the acquaintance of the leading English Baptists. He would have made a very able B.M.S. secretary, but when Fuller died there were too many eager for radical changes in the management of affairs, too many who were suspicious that Anderson would follow Fuller's methods. When in 1827 the breach between Serampore and the B.M.S. became an open rupture, it was Anderson who remained staunchly loyal to Carey and Marshman and organized support for them. Of his memorial sermon he wrote thus to J. C. Marshman:

> "If you behave as you have done to the end of your days, whatever calumnies assail you while you live, as soon as you are gone there will be notices of you, and some of them abundantly inaccurate, though meant in your praise. So it has begun to be in regard to Dr. Carey, and more, no doubt, are forthcoming. Every man will like to tell his own tale, and what with wrong hearing and wrong rehearing, they will, I doubt not, make strange work of it." (*Life and Letters*, p. 313).

His own hasty outline was intended, he says, "to stop the mouths of the inaccurate and unfriendly." In putting it together he was able to draw upon letters he had received from Carey's sister, Ann.

The first biography of Carey was that written by his nephew, Eustace, and published in 1836 in both England and America. Eustace Carey (1791-1855) was the son of Carey's brother, Thomas. He had joined his uncle at Serampore in 1814, after a period of training first under John Sutcliff, at Olney, and then under Ryland at Bristol College. He was a popular young man with preaching gifts far above the average, but was soon in the group at loggerheads with Marshman, to the great concern and disappointment of Carey. In 1825 Eustace was compelled by ill-health to leave India and things he said on his return home certainly added fuel to the fires of disagreement and contributed to the final breach. It was, however, at the request of the B.M.S. committee that he undertook the life of his uncle and he was able to incorporate in it a great deal of original documentary material in the form of letters, often quoted *in extenso;* he also included an account of Carey by his youngest son, Jonathan, and a sketch of Carey's work as an oriental scholar and translator by Professor H. H. Wilson, of Oxford. Not unnaturally, perhaps, in view of the time at which he wrote and the circumstances then prevailing, Eustace Carey passed rapidly over the closing years of the great missionary's life, eschewing any detailed reference to the unhappy controversies, though making clear that he "entertained opposite convictions from my honoured relative."

> "In Dr. Carey's mind and in the habits of his life," wrote Eustace, "there is nothing of the marvellous to describe. There was no great and original transcendency of intellect;

> no enthusiasm and impetuosity of feeling: there was nothing in his mental character to dazzle, or even to surprise. Whatever of usefulness and of consequent reputation he attained to, it was the result of an unreserved and patient devotion of a plain intelligence and a single heart to some great, yet well defined and withal practicable objects. . . . The leading characteristics of Dr. Carey were his decision, his patient, persevering constancy, and his simplicity" (American edition pp. 411-412).

Six years later, in 1842, in the jubilee history of the Baptist Missionary Society, Dr. F. A. Cox quoted with approval the remark of Fuller that "the origin of the Society will be found in the workings of our brother Carey's mind." The reunion of the Serampore Mission with the B.M.S., had by then been accomplished. Cox was conscious of the remarkable double triumvirate whose deeds he was recording—Fuller, Sutcliff and Ryland, in England; Carey, Marshman and Ward, in India. His words about Carey are far more glowing than those of Eustace. He describes him as at his death

> "one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the standard bearers in the Christian army. . . . He evidently possessed that kind of universality of mind, if it may be so called, which is generally seen to characterise genius. . . . Had he been born in the sixteenth century he might have been a Luther . . . had he turned his thought and observations merely to natural philosophy, he might have been a Newton. . . . But his humility shone ever brighter than his genius" (op. cit., I pp. 370, 379).

Carey's next biographer was Joseph Belcher (1794-1859), the one-time secretary of the Baptist Union, who after settling in the United States published a life in Philadelphia in 1853. Clearly Belcher had the books already mentioned in front of him, but he was able to add to a few fresh facts and impressions of his own.

Far more important was the substantial work *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward,* published by John Clark Marshman (1794-1877) in 1859, an abridged version of which appeared in the Bunyan Library five years later. J. C. Marshman was the gifted son of Joshua Marshman. He grew up at Serampore and became the trusted assistant not only of his father but also of Carey. His knowledge of events and personalities was unrivalled and he was an able writer. Inevitably his pages are in the nature of a defence of the Serampore Mission and in particular of his father. He had, however, no doubt as to Carey's outstanding greatness.

> "He took the lead in a noble enterprise. . . . His exertions were sustained less by the impulse of enthusiasm than by a predominant sense of duty. The basis of all his excellencies was deep and unaffected piety. So great was his love of integrity that he never gave his confidence where he was not certain of the existence of moral worth. He was conspicuous for constancy, both in the pursuits of life and the associations of friendship" (Abridged edition, p. 314).

In 1873 C. B. Lewis, of the Calcutta Mission Press, published a full-length study of the eccentric but devoted Dr. John Thomas, with whom Carey sailed to India. This had not before been attempted and threw fresh light on many episodes in Carey's early years in India. An earlier volume containing many important letters to and from the Serampore missionaries was *The Life and Letters of Christopher Anderson,* by his nephew, Hugh Anderson, which appeared in Edinburgh in 1854.

This new material enabled James Culross, also an able and well-informed writer, to produce in 1881 a useful popular life of Carey. Four years later there appeared from the pen of Dr. George Smith the first full length biography of a really scholarly character. George Smith, a Presbyterian by upbringing, went out to Serampore as a young man and became editor of the *Friend of India,* a journal started by the Marshmans for Europeans and Anglo-Indians. He collected materials for his book in the office, the press and the College and among Indian Christians and Brahman pundits whom Carey had influenced. He gathered a number of formerly unpublished letters and had contact with certain of Carey's numerous descendants. Moreover, Smith was also the author of biographies of Henry Martyn, Alexander Duff and John Wilson, so that the whole background of modern missions in India was familiar to him. Victorian in size and style, with the man often lost in the movement, Smith's work yet achieved the status of a minor classic and in 1909, twenty-four years after its first appearance, was included in Everyman's Library, with reprints in 1913 and 1922.

In 1886 John Taylor, the Northamptonshire printer and antiquarian, issued an extremely valuable but now rare illustrated pamphlet entitled *Biographical and Literary Notices of William Carey, D.D. . . . comprising extracts from Church Books, Autograph MSS and other records, also a list of interesting mementoes connected with Carey.*

Smith's life and Taylor's pamphlet provided the basis for another popular and widely circulated biography that by John Brown Myers, one of the secretarial staff of the B.M.S. *William Carey, the Shoemaker* first appeared in 1887 and was often reprinted.

In 1892, the year of the B.M.S. centenary, came the first indication that further new material on the life of Carey might be discovered. Leighton and Mornay Williams edited a volume entitled *Serampore Letters,* the correspondence of Ryland, Carey, Fuller and others with John Williams, a Welshman by birth, who became in 1798 a pastor in New York.

Then, shortly before the first World War, S. Pearce Carey, Carey's own great-grandson, set himself to write a new full-length biography. Smith's life he once described as "learned but ponderous; never personal, intimate, aglow." Those last adjectives fitly characterise his own work, which first appeared in 1923 and, with a few revisions and addtions, in 1934. Pearce Carey's introduction to the field of study came as a result of writing a life of another of his great-grandfathers, Samuel Pearce, of Birmingham. He was able to draw on family traditions and papers, as well as on the letters in the B.M.S. archives, many of which had been used and published by Eustace Carey. He was also able to use records in Northampton and Leicester and letters preserved in the Baptist Church House and at Regent's Park College, which do not appear to have been seen by earlier students. His energy and enthusiasm, aided by those of his brother, William, ferreted out many new facts, while two years in India provided valuable local colour for the latter part of the story. Pearce Carey's life of his great-grandfather is a notable achievement and to read it when it first appeared was a memorable experience for many still living. The book has, however, certain drawbacks.

Eustace Carey said of his uncle: "He had no help from that warmth of feeling, that sensible glow of spirits, partly animal and partly mental, that fervour and fire, to which painters and poets are so deeply indebted." (*op. cit. p.* 412).

If this be true then Pearce Carey, who was often thought to resemble his great-grandfather in physique, cannot have been like him in temperament. Both in speech and with his pen Pearce Carey was exciting and imaginative. The passage in which he describes the first meeting of Dr. John Thomas with the Northamptonshire group on 9th January, 1793, is not uncharacteristic:

> "All hearts went out to him, for the courage of his coming, with his injured foot much swollen. Strange that they should make his acquaintance as one brave but limping, like a Jacob after Jabbok. He dragged a maimed self ever, game but lame, warrior but weakling." (1923 edition, p. 103).

More serious is it, however, that Pearce Carey did not hesitate to make minor changes in his quotations from letters, sometimes adding, sometimes removing a phrase, sometimes omitting a whole passage or conflating his documentary sources. It would not be right to describe what he has done as "bowdlerising" and never did he alter facts. It remains true, however, that again and again one is not given an exact quotation. Further, as is perhaps inevitable when a descendant or relative writes a biography and is inspired by a liberal dose of hero-worship, a few facts—which at this distance of time need no longer be concealed—are withheld. A word must also be said about the indices to the two editions. That to the 1923 edition published by Hodder and Stoughton is useable, if inadequate. When in 1934 the book was transferred to the Carey Press, Pearce Carey was allowed to provide what can only be described as a fancy index of his own devising. It is worse than useless. Those who wish to find anything quickly in this volume of many hundred pages must have recourse to the index in the earlier edition and then look for the corresponding passage in the later one.

Three years after the first edition of Pearce Carey's life of Carey, another but briefer one appeared. Its author was F. Deaville Walker, a Methodist editor with a wide knowledge of the modern missionary movement. Based chiefly on Eustace Carey and J. C. Marshman, together with a number of contemporary biographies, *William Carey: Missionary Pioneer and Statesman,* 1926, provides an admirable pen-portrait and breaks new ground by drawing on the files of the *Northampton Mercury,* which was appearing twice a week in Carey's day and which clearly exercised an influence on his development.

Two brief later sketches of Carey should be mentioned : the one by Pearce Carey, published in 1936, the other and more important one by Dr. Arthur Dakin—*William Carey, Shoemaker, Linguist, Missionary*—issued for sixpence by the B.M.S. in 1942.

In 1945 there appeared a substantial academic study entitled *William Carey, especially his Missionary Principles,* by Dr. A. H. Oussoren, minister of the Reformed Church at Middelburg. Written in Holland under war-time conditions this work almost inevitably contains a number of minor errors and misunderstandings. It has, however, great value as coming from a non-Baptist and because it deals at length with the influence on Carey of Moravian missionary achievements and policy. It also gives useful details of the Auxiliary Society formed early in the nineteenth century among the Dutch Mennonites to give help to the B.M.S.

All this means that a really scholarly and definitive modern biography of Carey remains to be written. The importance of the subject would seem to demand it. The materials exist in almost bewildering profusion, but they are uncatalogued and ill-ordered, though almost all are to be found in four libraries, those of the Baptist Missionary Society, the Baptist Union, Regent's Park College and Serampore College. More than four hundred of Fuller's letters have now been traced and copied (see *Baptist Quarterly,* XV, 1953-54). One of the first tasks for some research student might well be the preparation of a calender of Carey's letters. The numerous pamphlets relating to the Serampore controversy also require examination. In the meantime Dr. W. S. B. Davis, formerly of the B.M.S. staff in India and now of the United States, has been given facilities to write a Bengali life of Carey, while the Rev. J. B. Middlebrook has followed the example of his predecessor, J. B. Myers, in producing a popular account of Carey's life and work to mark the bicentenary of his birth.

To this review of the printed material regarding Carey and the sources on which it is based a few gleanings of a personal character may be added. The only portrait of him that has ever been reproduced is that painted in Calcutta by Robert Home in 1812, when Carey was fifty-one years old. This portrait now belongs to Regent's Park College, which also owns another painting possibly made at Olney just before he sailed for India, by one of Sutcliff's students. Edmund Carey, his father, is described as "a short, dotty man" and somewhat diminutive size seems to have been a family characteristic. Thomas Scott, the evangelical clergyman, described William as "a sensible looking lad." As early as 1804 Carey told Fuller: "I feel some decay of sight and am obliged to wear spectacles." Six years later, writing to Sutcliff he said: "My sight so fails that I cannot read small Greek with glasses of the greatest magnifying powers my eyes will bear." The spectacles in the Home portrait are thus more important than might at first appear.

In 1949 Mr. Charles Jewson sent to me a copy of a letter from Andrew Leslie to Thomas Theobald, of Norwich (the original being now in the possession of a great-grandson of the latter, Mr. Basil Cozens-Hardy). Leslie wrote in June, 1824, shortly after his arrival at Serampore, and thus describes Carey, then nearly sixty-three years old:

> "Dr. Carey is a very equable and cheerful old man, in countenance very like the engraving of him with his pundit. In body he is much inferior, being rather less in size and not so robust, and he does not wear such a fine dress as is given him in the plate. His general habit is white stockings, nankeen breeches, a white waistcoat, a round white jacket and an old black hat hardly worth a shilling."

Eustace Carey was able to print a number of Carey's letters to his sisters, Ann and Mary, but did not reproduce that of 25th October, 1831, which appeared in the *Baptist Quarterly,* October, 1938, and has special interest since material of this kind for the last few years of his life is somewhat scanty.

Some information not before published about the printing and sale of the *Enquiry* will be found in the introduction to the facsimile edition which the Carey Kingsgate Press is issuing to mark the bi-centenary of Carey's birth. The first Minute Book of the B.M.S. records that the Society gave Carey £5 5s. 0d. towards the expenses of the removal of his goods in 1793 from Leicester to Hackleton. A letter sent by Fuller to John Saffery, of Salisbury, in May, 1793, shows that John Newton introduced Carey and Thomas, when they were seeking passages to India, to Wilberforce and Thornton, who later, of course, became their staunch champions. Newton in 1797 said to Ryland of Carey: "I look up to such a man with reverence. He is more to me than Bishop or Archbishop; he is an apostle."

Dr. Pearce Carey presented a number of his papers to Regent's Park College. Among them is a letter written by Carey to John Chamberlain in June, 1821. It refers to the death of Charlotte Rumohr, the frail Danish lady, who was Carey's second wife.

> "The loss of a wife who lived for no earthly object but that of making me happy, who anticipated all my wants, and interpreted my very looks, who was a helper indeed in spiritual things, and a great assistance in my work; is a great loss indeed. . . . She was ready to depart. Hers was a life of prayer and delight in the word of God, so that at the time of her departure she had nothing to do but die. I with reason feel severely, but in no trial during my life had I so few reasons for regret, and so many for perfectly acquiescing in the will of God."

Fourteen months later Carey married again. Culross tells us that the day was fixed and guests invited when, only three or four days before the ceremony, Carey discovered he would need a licence and that to get it he would have to take an oath. To this he had a conscientious objection and so applied to have the banns published, which meant postponing the wedding for three weeks.

Carey had seven children, all born to his first wife, Dorothy Plackett, of Hackleton. The eldest, died in Piddington. Another girl, Lucy, died in Leicester. His third son, Peter died in India. Of his other sons, Felix (1785-1822), Jabez (1793-1862) and Jonathan (1794-1874) all had children, giving Carey at least sixteen grandchildren, the eldest of whom died in 1810 and another as recently as 1937. Of his numerous great-grandchildren several are still living, as are of course many representatives of later generations.

What would Carey say about all the attention that has been and is being given to him? He would find it embarrassing and distasteful. Of that there can be no doubt. In a letter to his son, Jabez, written in January 1824 he told of his election as President of the Agricultural Society of India in the formation of which three years earlier he had taken as leading part. "This," he said, "brings me out to public view in a manner I would have avoided, but I had no choice." His well known words to Alexander Duff and his choice of an epitaph show how deeply he distrusted publicity and praise. At Ryland's request Carey sent him in 1816 an account of his early religious development. "As it is very uncertain whether I shall not dishonour the Gospel before I die, so as to bring a public scandal thereupon, the less said about me the better." To Carey this was a real and continuing fear, and it was *Ephesians* ii. 8 that he asked Marshman to speak on at his funeral service: "By grace are ye saved."

There is here a psychological problem which demands the attention of those who would get close to Carey. How are we to reconcile his intense self-distrust with his great achievements, the range of his interests and his apparent decision of character? Of all his many biographers only his nephew Eustace seems adequately conscious of the enigma and of all his biographers only Eustace and John Clark Marshman saw him at close quarters. Yet the enigma is one that a twentieth century biographer must set himself to present, even if he cannot solve it. Did its secret lie in Carey's humble origin and lack of early educational and social advantages, in his physical inheritance or in his religious experiences and beliefs? It may well have been a combination of all three. Thomas Swann, of Birmingham, declared that Carey once said to him: "Brother Swann, I am not fitted for discipline. I never could say No. I began to preach at Moulton, because I could not say No. I went to Leicester, because I could not say No. I became a missionary because I could not say No." But even if this was an entirely serious remark (and may there not have been a twinkle in Carey's eye when he made it?) it does not account for what happened, nor for Carey's continuing inner dis-ease.

Ever since his death people have been talking not only about Dr. Carey's Saviour, but about Dr. Carey, for his story is not one that can be forgotten. His influence has been extending like the ripples on a pool into which a stone has been thrown. "A living man is certain to stop talking," wrote Kierkegaard, "but once a dead man begins calling out (instead of keeping quiet as is the custom)—who is to silence him?"

ERNEST A. PAYNE

Problems of the Church in the Congo of Today*

INTRODUCTION

DISCOVERED by the Portuguese in 1482, the Congo remained until 80 years ago a "geographical location." On the inside of a roofing sheet on the Mission station of Quimpondo on the south bank of the Congo estuary I read two years ago the following legend: "Mission Mukimvika, Congo river." There was in the penultimate decade of the last century no land of Congo, no frontier, no nation, only a multitude of tribes speaking for the more part the derivative dialects of an original Ur-Bantu, living imperturbably the static life of closed communities, and transmitting from generation to generation the skills, techniques and traditions that should conserve the solidarity of the group. Legend and folklore preserve something of the primitive history of these Bantu peoples who, a millenium ago, swept through the central uplands of Africa, forcing the aboriginals back into their pigmy fastnesses or away into the far south-west corner of the continent, the bushmen refugees of the Kalahari.

Certain groups of tribes from time to time achieved a wider cohesion under the leadership of outstanding chieftains, as for example the Kongo kingdom of the 14th-17th centuries which achieved a hegemony over the coastal area extending from Pointe Noire in the north to Luanda in the south and inland as far as Stanley Pool. Thanks to one or two outstanding monarchs a large measure of homogeneity was established within this kingdom, with a common language, customs and culture. It impressed the Portuguese explorers to such an extent that Camoens in his great epic "The Lusiads" refers to it as "that exceedingly great kingdom of Congo."

But generally tribal groups were small and, though tribes like the Bangala and the Lokele created their Phoenician settlements at strategic points along the rivers, the bounds of tribal habitation at length became closely defined, with fishing, hunting and tillage rights clearly indicated. A sign of the extensive trading carried out by these Congo peoples is the appearance in upper river areas of the "sea-shell currency" of the old Kongo kingdom, a currency obtained from the island protecting the port of Luanda, at least 1,500 miles from modern Stanleyville.

---

* This article was written in June, 1960 on the eve of the granting of independence to the Congo.

THE NATION

(*i*) *1878-1908* When Stanley, having crossed the continent on his epic journey of a thousand-days-less-one, arrived at Boma in 1877, thus opening the Congo basin to the influence of the modern world, the history of the new "nation" was begun. During its early years Stanley himself and Leopold II of Belgium were the determinative figures. The appearance of the International African Association, formed in 1876 to direct the scientific exploration of Central Africa, had rendered urgent the solution of its political future and brought about the calling of the Conference of Berlin in 1884. In the following February (1885) a treaty was signed whereby the Congo Free State was established under the leadership of the Belgian King Leopold II: but within twenty years the difficulties entailed in a private individual, even a royal personage, trying to establish the economy of so vast a country on his own, led to such appalling abuses that in 1908 the Congo was entrusted to Belgium to be administered as a colony.

(*ii*) *1908-1955* The storm of protest that had led to the Congo becoming a Belgian colony made for great sensitivity in the mind of Belgian governments with the result that administrative services during the past fifty years have been of an increasingly high order. Before the First World War inexperience and a shortage of trained administrators meant inefficiency and at times an unsympathetic attitude towards the government's programme of development. The very size of the land added to the magnitude of the task. Communications, apart from the natural waterways, were primitive and the asperities of the climate quickly tore roads to pieces. The population, too, was sparse because of sleeping sickness, infant mortality and (at a later stage) urbanisation—with its dire consequences in broken family life, malnutrition and the civilised diseases of tuberculosis and syphilis.

The disruption caused by the introduction of a unitary administrative system was eased when in 1910 indirect rule was restored: and this system has persisted in the rural areas until the present day. But the exploitation of the country's wealth has been the government's primary concern, and under the policy of paternalism the benefits of increased wealth were passed on to the community as a whole on an increasing scale. In the 1940's it appeared as though Belgium intended to follow the Franco-Portuguese policy of "assimilation," inviting Africans who could meet certain "civilised" requirements to become recognized as citizens and become subject to Belgian law alone: but by 1957 only 116 Congolese and their families had availed themselves of this privilege. In 1955 Governor General Petillon presented to the Council of Government a policy of "association" but no provision up to this point had been made for any preparation of Africans to participate in political life. In this there was no *racial* discrimination since the European community in the Congo were in like case, there being no political franchise for anyone.

The physical and social benefits accorded to the population were however of a high order, being rooted in an educational system built up almost entirely with the aid of missions. The literacy rate for adults is given as 35/40 per cent, and 75 per cent for those of school age. Two million children attend school. There are two universities, Lovanium, near Leopoldville, founded in 1954, and Elizabethville, founded 1955. In 1954 the number of hospital beds in Congo was 4.4 per 1,000, as against 0.4 in Nigeria, while in 1958 more than a quarter of the ordinary budget of the country was being spent on social services. The labour laws leapt ahead of every other country in the continent, guaranteeing among other things, a minimum wage, family allowances, free lodging (or indemnity), free medical care and medicines, old age pensions, and allowances for widows and orphans. In the trades, and in commerce, Congolese have revealed outstanding talent. Trade unions have had freedom of action since 1957. In 1958 equality of pay and of opportunity to all members of the Civil Service were accorded without distinction of race. BUT (and here was the miscalculation) it was not until the *end of 1957* that the first political rights were granted to either Europeans or Africans.

(*iii*) *1956-1960* It was in 1956 that the first portents of change appeared. *A Belgian professor* published a study entitled "A Thirty Year Plan for the Emancipation of the Belgian Congo," in which he urged the necessity of granting democratic freedom to the Congolese. At the same time the *Roman Catholic bishops* addressed a declaration to the faithful calling on the government to grant equal pay for equal work, freedom for trade unions, and political rights for the Congolese. And finally a group of *evolués* issued a manifesto calling for progressive emancipation of the Congo over 30 years. *Abako,* Kasavubu's Lower Congo association, criticised this strongly, and demanded immediate independence.

The government's reply to these appeals was to organise local elections in three of the major cities, on a male franchise: and to appoint Congolese mayors for wards in the African quarters of those cities. But the demand for political liberty increased.

Then in 1958 two events outside the country provoked a heightened demand for independence from within. First on August 24th de Gaulle granted the choice of independence to French colonies south of the Sahara and on November 28th the erstwhile

French Congo became the Congo Republic, just across the water from Leopoldville. Second, on December 5th, three Congolese were delegates at the Accra Conference, which claimed self-determination as the right of all African peoples. A month later, January 1959, the banning of a political meeting in Leopoldville started a riot when many Africans were killed and extensive damage was done to property.

Within ten days of the riot King Baudouin had broadcast a message to the Congo, promising independence by stages, and the government drew up a programme of elections, and a progressive devolution of authority on to the democratically elected representatives of the people. But two of the major parties, the MNC and the ABAKO, boycotted the elections for the first stage of this process, with the result that the government, after much hesitation, called a round table conference in Brussels for January of this year (1960). On January 27th it was announced that Independence would be proclaimed on June 30th.

Is there then a Congo nation? The answer must be "Not yet." A new state is being born under the impulse of African nationalism: but the cement which binds a nation together, which has been described as "the daily plebiscite in the hearts of men"—the union of men's wills to exist as a nation—has still to prove itself.

THE CHURCH

The story of the *pioneering days* of the missions in Congo is well known and we may perhaps be excused from entering into details here. Suffice it to say that up to 1918, 16 missions had established themselves in widely distributed areas of the Congo. Generally speaking, progress was along the lines of the rivers, but, with satisfactory relationships obtaining between the missions, there was little, if any, overlapping between them. Missions of the Roman obedience, however, either fortuitously or by design, were frequently established in close proximity to existing Protestant work. The Baptist Missionary Society, by virtue of its aim to establish a chain of missions across the continent, was left in the distinguished but unfortunate position of having its stations strung out along 1,500 miles of the Congo river, working with a dozen different tribes, using more than twenty vernaculars, and consequently having much difficulty in administration and in the interchange of personnel.

There remained, however, certain areas that had still not had the Gospel preached to them, notably the Kivu in the east, the Ubangui in the north, parts of the Kwango in the south west, and the northern Sankuru in central Congo. Into these regions came societies of various denominations and of varied nationalities, American, British and Scandinavian. By the outbreak of the Second World War the number of missions had more than doubled, but thanks to the spirit of comity prevailing between missions, there was still no overlapping.

The 1930's saw the steady development in *urban life* throughout the country and the war years still further aggravated the movement of population with the result that the missions in the large centres were no longer able to cover adequately the needs of the population. The Salvation Army opened work in Leopoldville in 1934 and they have since extended their activity to other large cities—Stanleyville, Elizabethville and Thysville. The American Presbyterian Mission working in the Kasai region of the Congo was invited to open work in Leopoldville in 1954 and has made itself responsible for certain of the new suburbs. Today there are 52 missions and mission agencies at work in the Congo, with some 2,500 missionaries in all.

The *legislation* governing the work of Protestant missions in the Congo basin was determined by the General Act of Berlin signed in February 1885, whereby it was laid down that the signatory powers should "protect and favour without discrimination of creed or nation all religious, scientific or charitable organizations created and organized for ends which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the benefits of civilisation." Christian missionaries were to be specially protected. Freedom of religion and religious toleration were guaranteed to all. On the annexation of the Congo Independent State by Belgium in 1908 the earlier guarantees were repeated and sanctioned by Belgian law: and further confirmation was given in 1919 by the Treaty of S. Germain-en-Laye.

Despite these guarantees, however, *Belgian interpretation* of the laws has been variable. For 25 years (1878-1903) there was friendly co-operation: but this was followed by 45 years of sharp discrimination against Protestant witness, while the most generous aid was being given to Roman Catholic missions. It is argued that this assistance was given to the latter because they were Belgian and therefore "national": while the Protestant missions were with a single exception of foreign origin and allegiance. The beginnings of this discrimination are traced by some to the outcry against the abuses of the administration of the Free State in which Protestant missionaries provided much of the evidence. It is worth noting that Roman Catholics also protested against the abuses, but their protests ceased when King Leopold II signed a convention with the Vatican in 1906. Despite a growing recognition on the part of impartial Belgian observers that the presence of Protestant missions was not inimical to the integrity of the Belgian Congo, privileges granted to the Roman Church increased and in 1924, when a new programme of education was launched, a convention signed with the Roman missions accorded them vast unilateral financial aid during the next twenty years and beyond. Only after the Second World War in 1948 did Protestant missions get put on a footing of equality with the Roman missions in regard to subsidies for educational work.

Despite the disabilities under which they have laboured, Protestant Missions have been singularly blessed during the past 80 years. From their work and witness has sprung a *Protestant community* of some two million Congolese, nearly half of whom are baptised church members. They are to be found in every province and district of the country. They have learned through the traditions of evangelical Protestantism something of the freedom and the discipline of the Christian life. They have not become so involved with government patronage as has the Roman communion, and for this reason have so far shared the relative immunity of Protestant Missions during the recent disturbances. But there are not many highly trained leaders to be numbered among them, largely because of the paucity of first-class educational institutions available to Protestant Christians. "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble." This is the old cry of a Church being thrust by the march of events into great and heavy responsibilities. But it is a cry, not of despair but of hope, not of fear of failure but of the assurance of victory.

CHURCH AND NATION

We have looked at the lineage of the nation and at the evolution of the young church, and we now have to look at the relationship between the two. The Bakongo proverb, "Mwan'owutwanga, mbundu a mwana kawutwanga ko" may be translated "the child is born but the soul of the child is not born"—by implication it is given by Nzambi and when life here is ended the soul joins its fellows in the forest shades. But in our present context may we not say that if the nation is being born, the soul of the nation is not born, for the soul of the nation is, or should be, the Church of God, the gathered community that is God's gift to the nation. What are its functions at the present time?

(1)—PROBLEMS OF SELFHOOD

(i) *Church and Mission.* Twenty-five years ago it was a cliche of the psychology class that "Man is born an individual, that he grows to selfhood and that he achieves personality." The church in Congo is now growing to selfhood. In some places it has lived under the influence and protection of Missions for seventy years:

in others it is still a minor. *Here* the church has experienced a real autonomy from an early stage, with a consistent application of the three-self principle of self-support, self-government and self-propagation: *there* the church may have been very much an appendage of the mission with the will to independence inhibited by too much wealth or wisdom from afar. There is no uniform pattern either in intention or in practice. But in recent years with the urge to self-expression in political life, there has come a surge of feeling in the church for a parallel development in the religious sphere, which means the " taking over " of missions and the integration of their plant and personnel in the body politic of the church.

This is the most urgent problem of the moment, although finally by no means the most important. But it is the contemporary crisis to which an answer must be found very soon. Various solutions have been sought and some tried. Briefly they may be grouped as follows:

(a) Separation. The church enjoys full freedom in all ecclesiastical affairs without becoming involved in the institutional work of the associated mission. This has the advantage of not burdening the church with institutions that it cannot maintain: but the disadvantage of divorcing the church from responsibility in the most striking manifestation of Christian service that the mission affords.

(b) Consultation. The church and mission retain their several independences but form joint boards to control the institutional work of the Church-Mission complex.

(c) Assimilation. The mission conferences include an ever-increasing number of Africans on their councils and boards until control passes to the African church. This ensures African control but tends to make permanent the mission form of organization.

(d) Integration. The missions make over their institutions to the church and missionaries become members of the local church, working within its framework and no longer enjoying extra-ecclesiastical rights as may sometimes have been the case. All financial assistance from abroad is administered by the local church councils.

All four forms of adaptation of the church-mission relationship are found in Congo today and it is the pre-eminent concern of many church leaders, but this is a problem of growth. Problems of achievement are couching at the door.

(*ii*) *The Witness to Universality*. One of these is the Church's testimony to the universality of the Gospel, the inclusiveness of the family of God. The land to which missionaries came was a land of tribes. There are those who estimate some 200 languages and dialects in vogue in the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. Largely because of these language barriers, but also through the vicissitudes of history—the incidence of slave-raids or of attempts at a wider hegemony on the part of a tribe with a rising birth-rate—latent antagonisms would from time to time result in bitter warfare. Some authorities are persuaded that the Bantu-speaking peoples were originally monotheists, and there is considerable evidence to support such a view: but with it was combined a universal dynamism, which at a later stage deteriorated into fetishism and magic. According to some Bantu myths, Nzambi had, in disgust at man's disobedience, abandoned the world for some distant deistic abode, leaving the world, from which he had abdicated, at the mercy of anarchic spirits. The loss of the concept of "One God over all" facilitated the hardening of clan loyalties, ancestor worship and exclusivism, and the entrance of the Christian Gospel did not immediately detach Congolese from this pattern of thought. Because of the vastness of the country, missions were generally widely spaced from one another and served particular tribes. Travel by Africans was limited; and they did not often see African Christians of other tribal groups. Sometimes the acceptance of the Gospel by one group was an adverse circumstance in the attempt to take it to another. On the other hand, early missionaries often lived in very close and intimate fellowship with their early converts and this no doubt was a constant witness to the universality of the Gospel. Many among them had the discernment to make sympathetic studies of the culture and beliefs of the people to whom they went and this was of great value in helping to convince the African that he was not accursed among men, but that the universal God had indeed not left himself without a witness among them, even before the missionary came.

What in the last forty years has alternately encouraged and threatened the witness to universality has been the movement of population to the towns. Africans plucked from their traditional environments and set down in artificial agglomerations such as Leopoldville or Stanleyville or Elizabethville have been placed under great tension. There is the *desire to be freed* from the restrictions of tribal law for the enjoyment of the fruits of sin for a season: and at the same time the *desire to belong* to some group that retains the interdependence and mutuality enjoyed in tribal society. (Small wonder if the incidence of mental sickness in Africa has increased with urbanisation.) In the church there have been demands for worship services on tribal lines, but these (while understandable and of very real value, if they are thought of primarily as opportunities for evangelism) have in certain places threatened not only the unity of the Christian fellowship but its witness to universality. Some of the proliferating African sects, such as Kimbanguism, have developed along tribal lines, while others like Kitawala have a broader appeal, having no tribal limitations to their membership. Both types of movement, however, extol the particularity of African religion and show a hostility towards the European and his religion. Unfortunately, in the cities, missionary residences have often had to be built in the white quarter with the result that there has been much less intimate contact between the missionary and his people than on a bush station. The fact that urban Africans are often employed persons in contrast with the self-employed peasant agriculturalist is a further factor limiting opportunities for fellowship. As a result of these and other factors there have at times arisen quite strong anti-white feeling within local churches. The appeal of the African sects is enhanced in African eyes by their African leadership, particularly at a time like the present when the upsurge of nationalism is so strong. It may yet be that, when the Church has won the battle against the exclusivism of the tribe (which is not yet wholly true), it will have to withstand an exclusivism based on race. It is at this point that the missions are called upon to reorientate their thinking and to merge themselves in the life of the Church, so that Church and Mission may be seen together in their essential oneness.

(*iii*) *The Need for Unity.** We, in this country, do not doubt the universality of the Christian Gospel; but the appeal for unity, or at least for a unity that can be seen, has not the same measure of popular support. In Congo this has been hitherto a Mission problem, but for the best part of 50 years there was no real difficulty. As already stated the vast size of the country meant that there was little if any overlapping of mission areas: and there was insufficient mobility on the part of the African population for church members to become very conscious of differences in doctrine or practice between the churches or (as was more often said) between the missions. Roman Catholics, arriving in the country ten years later than the Protestant Missions, established themselves everywhere and the sharp contrast between them and the Protestants in regard to forms of worship, discipline and status vis-a-vis the government, helped create a spirit of unity between Protestants of every shade. Inter-mission co-operation was a noteworthy feature of the pioneer days but the first missionary conference was not held till 1902 with 34 missionaries present. In the next 22 years nine further conferences were held. They were conferences of missionaries, not societies and they were purely consultative in character. But the principles of comity and co-operation were practised constantly. In 1925 this Missionary Conference ceased to exist and the Congo Protestant Council was born. The first full-time secretary was appointed in 1928 and the HQ were moved to Leopoldville. Important developments in the next ten years were the MOTT conferences in 1934, the creation of a central Bookshop in 1935, and the preparatory work for the Diamond Jubilee of Protestant Mission Work in 1938. The Mott Conference accepted certain proposals, beginning with the words—"A sense of fellowship and unity is already widely spread among the members of the Church of Christ in Congo," and went on to recommend that all Christian churches in connection with Protestant missions in Congo should use a common name, and that members of any Congo evangelical church be accepted by any other Congo evangelical church on presentation of a valid card of membership or letter of transfer. The CPC later recommended the use of the name "L'Eglise du Christ au Congo" and this was accepted by a majority of the missions, but not all. Other recommendations made by the commission on co-operation and fellowship included the holding of Regional Church Conferences in suitable centres and the revision of the constitution of the CPC in order that churches might share in its work.

---

* I am indebted for material in this section to research carried out by Rev. H. F. Drake, B.D., S.T.M.

Parallel with the Diamond Jubilee Conference of Missions held in 1938 there was held the first General Convention of Congo Christians which was attended by Africans from 34 stations of ten different missions. Eighteen different languages were represented. No resolutions were recorded but the inspirational character of the meetings was high and there was a discussion of common problems and future prospects. In 1946, when a West Central Africa Regional Conference was held in Leopoldville, it was urged that some agreed statement of faith and order should be formulated but this was found to be a matter of great difficulty. A commission on faith and order set up in 1946 was disbanded in 1948: but in 1949 a short doctrinal statement *was* issued as an interpretation of the basis of membership of the CPC. In 1949, also, the first Regional Conference sponsored by the CPC was held at Blukwa when 72 Congolese delegates from 40 mission stations and representing 21 different tribes attended. The conference was called for consultation and fellowship and not to transact business. Two further conferences were held in 1951 in North West and Lower Congo. A conference for Kasai and Katanga was held in 1953.

The proposal that there should be African representation on the CPC, first made in 1946, did not gain every much support; and in

1954 it was decided to organize a separate Conference of African Church leaders with a view to the formation of a Central Church Council for the whole of Congo: but delegates attended from only seven churches. They proposed that such a Central Council should be formed. Regional conferences were to be organized to popularise this proposal but they were *not* held, and in 1956 the CPC, instead of pursuing the idea of a separate church council, voted that from 1957 one African delegate from the "church of each mission" should be admitted as a councillor with full voting powers. Two African pastors attended the Accra Meeting of the IMC in 1957 (Dec.) and the AACC at Ibadan in January 1958.

At the CPC meetings in 1958 the African councillors expressed the wish to see in the near future one Church under the name of the Church of Christ in Congo, and asked for a constitution to be drawn up for discussion in 1959. They also proposed that a number of regional conferences be arranged to discuss the principles involved, but only two such conferences were held before the 1959 meeting and their recommendations reversed the trend of the previous year by "rejecting the idea of organic unity for the Church of Christ, preferring that each church group should remain autonomous and that fellowship with other groups should be maintained by regional conferences and the annual meeting of the CPC."

The lack of consistency in the attitude of the CPC and of Congolese Christians is indicative of the diverse nature of the Protestant Missions working in the country. This resulted in the CPC withdrawing in 1958 from the IMC with which it had been associted throughout its life. The organization of the WCC in 1948 was the cloud on the horizon, for certain missions had objected to the CPC accepting the invitation to send a consultant to the Amsterdam Conference. After ten years of difficult negotiation it was finally decided in 1958 (when the principle of integration of WCC and IMC was accepted) that its link with the IMC should be severed for the sake of continued unity within the Congo.

The Missions, while co-operating generously with one another through so many years, have not been able to move very far along the path to organic union. In regard to order there ought not to be very great difficulty in securing some measure of unity among Africans. Neither episcopacy nor congregationalism are strongly entrenched in Congo, most missions having accepted some form of presbyterian order as being the best suited to Congo conditions. As for doctrine a majority of missions have practised believers' baptism, but certain influential groups in the south, notably the American Presbyterians and Methodists, are paedo-Baptists, and this divergence in practice could cause difficulty. But the chief obstacle to unity at the Mission level has been theological, and it is here that the church also is likely to encounter its biggest problem in seeking to unify its witness to the new nation.

(2)—PROBLEMS OF THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

(i) *The Primacy of Spiritual Values.* "The first task of any religion is to witness to those spiritual values which apprehended by the soul, are the basis of that inner order without which no outer order is possible." The Christian Church recognises Jesus Christ as God's revelation to man of those values, values incarnate in a person, and for which that Person died, and it is the duty of the Church in Congo to testify to this fact. Since Christianity entered the Congo in close association with explorers, traders and administrators, who were of the same race and religion, it is not surprising if many Congolese failed to distinguish between what was of the faith and what was simply Western civilisation. I remember very clearly an old man standing at the door of my house in Congo and saying that he wanted his boy brought up in the light. When I asked him what the light was, he opened the skirts of his shabby coat and said, "I don't want him to die in darkness as I shall." Missionaries entered into a nexus of static societies whose material culture had not progressed very far beyond the stone age. They brought with them the tools of societies already well advanced in the industrial revolution and, as new discoveries were made, the Congolese were constantly being startled by the introduction of still further evidences of the white man's resources and resourcefulness. This was often ascribed initially to his superior magic, but many a white man (preferring to pander to his own pride) decried the possibility of there being any extra-sensory sources to account for his technological superiority, and thereby greatly undermined the readiness that the African revealed to interpret that material superiority as being due (as finally it is) to the liberating and creative consequences of Christian faith. In recent years criticism has at times been directed at the African for having a materialistic outlook. Often it has been nothing more than a legitimate desire for a better standard of living: but where there is bitterness it is largely due to the corrosive acids of our own false standards that we have mingled with the cup of cold water of the Gospel. Now we fear the violence that we have practised and the unbelief that we have instilled: and it is left to the little flock to reawaken, if it may, the African's age-old confidence in the reality of the spiritual world. Not a few who call themselves Christians in Congo have been drawn to a confession of faith by the clear signs of material benefits that surround a mission. The schools and hospitals, the orphanages and social centres, begun as they were in response to human need, have often been regarded as nets or fish-traps and the use of such metaphors has even been sanctified by the approving lips of African pastors: but the very obstrusivenes of institutions has at times obscured the church building that has stood behind them. Should it so happen that the State, whether by design or accident, dooms our institutions to starvation by the denial of Government subsidies, this may yet be the greatest blessing of independence for the Congo church. Her first task is surely to insist on the centrality of a religious interpretation of life, and upon Jesus Christ as the one Lord and Saviour. Untrammelled by the institutions, she would then seek other means to influence the nation, and other methods to draw men to the Cross of Christ. But at least she would be seen to be what she is claimed as being, "The Bride of Christ" and not the "Woman of Samaria."

(*ii*) *The Call to Service.* "I have come among you as one that ministers," said our Lord. And the missionary church has accepted the three-fold commission, "Go preach!" "Go teach!" "Go heal!" as waymarks of its ministry. We have already noted the dangers that can arise by a too great concentration upon schools or hospitals, and Protestants in this country have pressed for long enough that the education and health of a people is primarily the function of the State. There is no doubt that at certain times and in certain places the establishment of Christian institutions has been necessary, where the State for instance has been unable or unwilling to develop such services. This was the truth in our own country, and it has been true in the Congo. It is also the tenacious attitude of the Roman Church. But, for all the superficial benefits (and they are often more transitory than we care to admit), it is gravely to be questioned whether the true health of the church is conserved by its institutional work. Better that Christians should participate in the social institutions of the State, acting as true leaven in the body politic than establish their own. The churches' concern with social issues is not to be flattered and bowed out with kind words concerning schools and hospitals: but rather to be implemented by the creative intervention of its membership in any and every legitimate activity of society—be it trade unionism, journalism, learned society, local authority, or any other public or voluntary service. Christian workmen in Congo have won for themselves a name in many places for serious-mindedness and integrity. Nurses and teachers in the public service will often have opportunities of witness denied to those who work in missionary institutions, with two additional benefits, to wit, on the positive side, the provision of adequate financial aid and the statutory amenities; on the negative side, a disassociation from the charge of proselytism through loaded institutions. This is not to say that the church should retreat hastily from all its existing hospitals, schools and colleges, but that it should not regard their eventual loss (if such be the final outcome) as an unmitigated tragedy. It is highly probable that there will continue to be groups of people whose needs the State will be unable to meet, the blind, the aged, the delinquent, the mentally ill, in whom the church can show its interest and among whom pioneer action in the realm of social service may be undertaken, until such time as the public conscience and the public purse provide an alternative solution.

(*iii*) *The Question of Relevance.* It is sometimes charged that loyalty to the world fellowship implies disloyalty to the nation (as is allegedly the case with communism). It is equally the church's duty to dispel this doubt by making use of such elements in the local culture as may assist in communicating the Gospel. One complicating factor is that we all tend to confuse Christianity with the form that Christianity takes in our own culture. Inevitably therefore missionaries in all ages have spread the culture of their own lands of origin and have sometimes created great confusion in the indigenous mind as to just what Christianity is. Elements in Congo cultures have sometimes been exercised high-handedly without a true appreciation of their values to the community. The "bride-price" for example, "initiation," "libations," "ancestor worship," "rogation ceremonies." It is noticeable that first generation Christians are often more rigorous in their rejection of certain such practices than the missionaries themselves, but that second and third generation Christians who had no direct experience of the old way of life are able to readopt or baptise into the church cultural elements which are meaningful to the nation and no longer, even by association, at variance with the interests of the Christian community. This is surely much to be desired. The Book of the Revelation gives the promise that the "kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour" into the Kingdom, and it is when we see the Church moulding the life of Congo society and adapting its worship and church order to something more akin to the culture of its peoples: when we see the truths of the Christian revelation interpreted afresh in the light of the natural religion of the African which is the witness that God did not fail to give: then shall the triumphal day arrive for the little flock to whom God will give the Kingdom.

(3)—THE PROBLEM OF CHURCH AND STATE

One serious problem remains to be considered, the problem of Church and State.

(*i*) *Privilege.* The terms on which missionary work was begun in the Congo were terms of special privilege. It has been shown that Roman Catholic missions in particular benefited enormously from State Aid and protection: Protestants less so, until the year 1948, when subsidies for education were made available to them. The fact that Protestants were in a position of diminished privilege and that their missionaries were mostly non-Belgian has meant in recent years a more friendly attitude towards them on the part of the Congolese, particularly as the demand for independence has increased. On the other hand Protestant missions have been strongly criticised by their adherents at times for not having done more for them in the realm of education. Certain missions which on conscientious grounds refused to accept subsidies in 1948 have even been threatened with secession by their associated churches, because of their failure to provide better educational facilities. In the cities for the past ten years the State has intervened directly in the educational field, since it was quite beyond the capacity of missions to provide the necessary buildings or teaching staff. Will the State continue to subsidise the educational and medical services of the Christian churches in the Congo Republic? Provided the stability of the national economy is maintained, it is difficult to see how they could do otherwise *at this stage,* since the contribution of churches to these services is so great. But what *is* possible is that Separatist movements like Kimbanguism which already has its "personnalité civile" may also seek the establishment of schools subsidised by the State. However, much we may deplore the recognition of these "sects," the removal of the charge of privilege from the relationship between the Christian communities and the State is all to the good.

(*ii*) *Establishment.* Both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are established in Belgium, but the Belgian Protestant Synod has been extremely weak and dilatory in responding to the missionary opportunity in the Congo. Various attempts have been made through the years to relate the Protestant community in Congo to the Synod, but the fact that it was in receipt of State Aid for ecclesiastical purposes strengthened the resistance of missions to any such suggestion. Nevertheless for the State schools in Congo the Belgian Synod became the recognised agency a year or two ago through which appointments of "full-time teachers of the Protestant faith in official schools" were made. Some churches in Congo may look to the government for financial aid for their church work, particularly for the payment of pastors: e.g. the meeting of the Congo Protestant Council Lower River Regional Conference requested that this should be examined. The reasons for this move are not hard to find and may be stated thus:

1. The present State Aid to the Roman Catholic church.
2. The relative poverty of the Protestant churches.
3. The recognition of the Church as part of the Welfare State.

It is a tempting vision for the Congolese Church—but it is strongly to be hoped that churches will set themselves against such an involvement so that their monitory function vis-à-vis the State may not be jeopardised.

(*iii*) *The Dual Citizenship.* Christians are citizens of this world: but they also have a citizenship which is in heaven: and this dual citizenship inevitably brings its tensions. The Congo Church, *learned* to some degree in the problems raised by the impact of the Christian Gospel on tribal society, has now to apply its knowledge to the problems of church and state, which have hitherto been the concern of the missions. The history of missionary work in the Congo records many instances of men and women who have not been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and who have endured persecution for the sake of Him in whom they had believed. The future at present is uncertain, but of this we may be confident—the Church for all her weaknesses is firmly planted in Congo soil, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

CLIFFORD PARSONS

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ERNEST A. PAYNE, M.A., D.D.
General Secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

CLIFFORD J. PARSONS, M.A., B.D.
Associate Foreign Secretary, Baptist Missionary Society.

BRIAN G. COOPER, B.A.
Member, Historical Society.

N. CLARK, M.A., S.T.M.
Minister, Amersham.

Reviews by: C. H. CLEAL, V. E. W. HAYWARD, J. K. S. REID.

The Academic Re-discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century

(*concluded*)

JOSEPH MEDE

JOSEPH MEDE is the third figure to be considered in this study of the academic re-discovery of the literalist apocalypse in the early 17th century. Born in 1586, Mede went to Christ's College, Cambridge at the age of sixteen, and remained there as a fellow of the college until his death in 1638.[1] Mede's learning was not confined to theology: logic and philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences, history and philology, astrology and Egyptology all came within his encyclopaedic range. Devoid of ambition, the studies in which he immersed himself gained him an international fame he had not consciously sought.[2] Mede was no rigid ecclesiastical partisan, and the breadth of his Anglican churchmanship included opposition to Puritan liturgical austerity and schemes of Presbyterian polity, the acceptance of the notion of the Papacy as the Anti-Christ, the curious admission that Rome nevertheless taught the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and finally sympathy for Dury's dreams of Church unity.

Mede's reputation as a theologian particularly derived from his contribution to biblical apocalyptic studies, which he revolutionised. The fact of this achievement and the nature of his millenary exegesis formed an essential element of the background to the rise of popular millenary feeling in England in the mid-17th century.

Mede's enunciation of a novel method of interpreting the Johannine Apocalypse led him to conclusions about its meaning no less startling; this was his dual achievement. His method of interpretation was contained in his *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1627), which was not a commentary but a key or method of arrangement, in which Mede demonstrated that the order of the apocalyptic prophecies could be determined from internal evidence, without previous reference to the external evidence of historial events.[3] Mede held that the latter could be applied to the Apocalypse only according to the sequence of prophecies contained therein, instead of the hitherto usual method of arranging the prophecies according to their most likely coincidence with historical events. Contemporaries and later commentators alike recognised Mede's achievement as the founder of modern apocalyptic studies.[4] For our purposes this "technical" theological achievement was important for three reasons: it established Mede's reputation in this field and created a ready public for his further apocalyptic works; it set forth a method which others, including the less learned and discriminating, could apply for themselves; and Mede's own application of his method led to his re-assertion of the literal interpretation of the millennium.

The latter was mainly promulgated in his *Commentary on the Revelation* (1632), which sets out his scheme of Church history and its culmination in the establishment of the Kingdom of the Saints on earth, but his other works also discussed it.

Mede regarded the visions in the Apocalypse as a prophetic record of the destiny of the Church, most of which had already been fulfilled. For him the Papal power and Catholic Church were the continuation of that Roman Anti-Christ first manifest in imperial Rome, which oppressed the true Church but would be overthrown for ever with the personal reign of Christ and the Saints. From his reading of Scripture and observation of the troubled political world of the 1620s and 1630s, Mede concluded he was witnessing that final age of the fulfilment of those cataclysmic pre-millenial events foretold in those Apocalyptic visions as yet unaccounted for. These events he believed would occur within less than a century. The current generation was seeing the outpouring of the Fourth Vial upon the Sun, which he interpreted as the separation and deliverance of the German Empire from the House of Austria, by a semi-messianic conqueror who would lead the attack against the Romish Anti-Christ. Mede saw Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden in this role: "And behold . . . there is now at length come from the North God's revenger of wrongs, to succour afflicted and distressed Germany; a godly King, happy, and which way soever he cometh, a conqueror, whose prosperous progress is more speedy than the flight of an eagle. Is this not he whom the Lord of Hosts hath destinated to execute the work of this Phial?"[5] Gustavus' death in 1632 showed he was not the expected deliverer, but Mede's general contention was not altogether falsified, since he had only prophesied a reduction of Rome's power at this stage, its complete downfall being subsequent upon the defeat of the Turks and the return of the Jews to the Holy Land. Biblical chronology, especially the Book of Daniel, informed Mede these events would be completed and the Millennium set up by a certain year between 1625 and 1716;[6] reverence for the subject forbad any closer calculations!

Mede was very cautious about pronouncing upon the nature of this imminent millenary state,[7] for he was fully aware that the doctrine of a personal reign of Christ and the Saints on earth a thousand years was a highly unorthodox one. Conscious of the difficulty of the subject and its dangerous associations, Mede concluded that a detailed description of the millennial state was impossible; yet the broad truth of a literal millennium he found himself forced to uphold—for four reasons. The application of his exegetical method to the relevant Scriptures permitted no other conclusion; the notion was confirmed by other Scriptures; it was orthodox doctrine in the immediately post-Apostolic Church; Christ and Peter had never denied the millenary understanding of the Judgement Day common in their time.[8] These two latter considerations were especially attractive to all Puritan radical elements wishing to return to the beliefs and practices of the early Church. Apart from outlining the destruction to come upon the enemies of the Church, and declaring that the millennial Kingdom would be a time of renewal and restoration in the earth,[9] Mede gave no details of the future. Yet he certainly created widespread interest, enthusiasm and controversy among his wide circle of correspondents, and, later, his reading public. Among the latter were not to be lacking those who would supply the details of the millennial state, and do so in terms of political and social radicalism.

The range of Mede's contacts was wide and his correspondence voluminous. Those with whom he maintained contact between 1628 and 1638, and who displayed interest in apocalyptic exegesis, included Archbishop Ussher; Dr. William Twisse, chaplain to the Queen of Bohemia and later curate of Newbury; Samuel Hartlib and John Dury; the Calvinist theologian Dr. William Ames; Sir William Boswell, the resident English ambassador at the Hague; Thomas Hayne, and many others in England and in continental Protestant circles. Among these men circulated not only Mede's writings and unpublished manuscripts, but also a wide variety of apocalyptic exegesis from diverse sources. Ussher praised Mede's original contribution in this field, and Twisse in 1629 declared that Mede was being used of God to revive the notion of the earthly millennium of the Saints "in a more seasonable time, when Anti-Christ's kingdom should draw near to an end," while in 1642 Twisse re-affirmed that Mede was the one person most responsible for the contemporary advances in apocalyptic understanding.[10] Undoubtedly Mede gave a great stimulus to apocalyptic studies, and for many re-established the validity of a millenary exegesis.

Joseph Mede's influence certainly did not cease at his death in 1638; indeed, not until after then did any of his works appear in English. The years 1641-43 saw the publication of his major works, and several further editions appeared in subsequent years.

The Apostasy of the Latter Times (1641) dealt with the degeneration of Romanism and contained some of Mede's chronological predictions about the advent of the millennium; it was highly commended by that moderate Presbyterian, Stephen Marshall.[11] *A Paraphrase and Exposition of the Prophecy of St. Peter, concerning the day of Christ's Second Coming,* (1642) and *Daniel's Weeks* (1643) were two of Mede's other works of prophetic exegesis that appeared for the general public, but the most important were the English translations, by Richard More, of *Clavis Apocalyptica* and *Commentary on the Revelation* (both 1643). More came of one of the leading county families in Shropshire, and most prominent for its support of the Parliamentary cause in a predominantly Royalist county in the Civil War. At his death in 1643 More was M.P. for Bishop's Castle. Having read various interpretations of the Johannine Apocalypse More found Mede's most sastifactory, translating it into English for his own convenience and finally publishing it at the suggestion of his friends. It is illuminating that the House of Commons Committee for Printing and Publishing delegated a Rev. Arthur Jackson to read these translations, in case their millenary exegesis might be potentially socially dangerous. Jackson reported that although Mede's millenary notions were unusual, "the printing of it will not be perillous," but would afford spiritual blessing to many.

The parliamentary organs of censorship had decided Mede's millenarism would not be socially dangerous, and in terms of explicit and direct influence, they were almost certainly correct. Mede, Twisse and their associates in this field of biblical studies had always stressed that the millennial kingdom should never be regarded as one of carnal delights, a heresy which could be used to justify moral anarchism and social upheaval, which neither Mede nor any of his group had the slightest intention of encouraging or countenancing. Mede said to a friend: "beware of gross and carnal conceits of an Epicurean happiness misbeseeming the Spiritual purity of Saints,"[12] and he granted that the chiliasm of the early Church, though substantially correct, had been "deformed with many erroneous misconceits and idle, yet some not tolerable, fancies."[13] It was generally acknowledged by supporters and critics alike of the millenary position, not only that it was contrary to orthodox theology as understood for many centuries, but that also that it was the kind of doctrine which had been used in the past, and could be employed again unless great care were exercised, for revolutionary and anarchic purposes. Hence Mede's moderation when advancing the millenary idea even as a form of interpretation, the extreme caution of Mede and his associates about applying it in detailed terms, and their limitation of the latter to such issues as the outcome of the Thirty Years' War, the conversion of the Jews, and missionary work among the Red Indians. Of itself, the prophetic exegesis of Mede neither preached nor directly inspired that social radicalism with which all contemporary commentators agreed millenarism could so easily be associated.

The extent to which Mede's works had an indirect influence in this connection can only be guessed at: radical preachers may have read him, and other holders of Fifth-Monarchist ideas than Thomas Goodwin,[14] the leading Congregationalist, may have had their thoughts turned to millenary exegesis by Mede, and not acknowledged the fact in their writings—if they wrote at all. It is very likely that Mede's works were very widely read after his death—Hayne ranked him along with Brightman and Alsted, Archer and Knollys, as being among the leading and most influential exponents of the millenary position.[15]

Joseph Mede of Cambridge completed the academic re-discovery of apocalyptic ideas that had begun in Elizabeth I's reign with the thought of Thomas Brightman and been taken a stage further in the writings of Alsted. Mede's use of a novel method of exegesis of the Apocalypse led him to re-discover the notion of the literal millennium of the Saints on earth. This became more and more an academically acceptable and socially respectable concept. Mede's biblical chronology made him regard his own 17th century as the final age of the world, an analysis seemingly borne out by the turbulent politics of England and Europe alike. In the 1630s Mede's ideas aroused considerable interest among his associates and correspondents. In the 1640s their wider availability in English for the general public undoubtedly contributed to the rising atmosphere of millenary feeling in England.

CONCLUSION

The academic re-discovery of apocalyptic ideas was an important aspect of the religious mentality and intellectual atmosphere of the mid-17th century years in which the Baptists first emerged as a distinctive element among the organised religious forces in England. Too great a preoccupation with notions of a literal millenary paradise was feared as socially subversive by the ruling classes of the time, and the spread of millenary ideas was embarrassing to the Baptists of the 1640s because they were, quite wrongly, regarded as responsible for their dissemination. *The Short History of the Anabaptists of High and Low Germany* (1642) was typical of much literature which used the activities of the 16th century Anabaptists of Munster to condemn the 17th century English Baptists as dangerous millenary heretics and social revolutionaries. Although in the 1640s and 1650s a number of Baptists were attracted by millenary notions once they had become generally prevalent, (see my article "The Shattered Baptists," *Baptist Times,* May 28th, 1959), a study of the emergence of these ideas reveals that it was not in the first instance a product of the sectarian movements. The Baptists, like the other Independents of the time, were influenced by an apocalyptic atmosphere created —or at least re-discovered—by academics.

NOTES

[1] For Mede's life, see: *Dictionary of National Biography;* B. Brook: *Lives of the Puritans* (1813), Vol. ii, pp. 429-34; D. Neal: *History of the Puritans* (1822), Vol. ii, pp. 310f.; J. Hunt: *Religious Thought in England* (1870), Vol. I, pp. 167f.; J. Worthington: *Works of Joseph Mede* (1672 ed.), p. i-xlv; Rev. A. Jenour: *Rationale Apocalypticum* (1852), p. 320, note.

[2] Among those who praised his achievements were Pastor Paul Testard in France, Ludovic de Dieu and Dr. Antony Walaeus of Leyden, and Archbishop Ussher in Ireland.

[3] Jenour, *supra,* pp. 401-8.

[4] e.g., Worthington: *Works,* General Preface; note on Mede in Darling, *Cyclopaedia Bibliographica.*

[5] *Commentary on the Revelation,* II, p. 117.

[6] *The Apostasy of the Latter Times,* pp. 658-62.

[7] *Commentary on the Revelation,* II, pp. 121f.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 121-2, 134-5.

[9] *A Paraphrase and Exposition of the Prophecy of St. Peter* (1653 ed.), pp. 26-7.

[10] See Twisse's Preface to More's translation of *Clavis Apocalyptica.*

[11] See Preface.

[12] Worthington: *Works,* III, pp. 603-5.

[13] *Ibid.,* V, p. 923.

[14] Goodwin acknowledged Mede as the source for some of his millenary ideas in his *The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms* (1646), pp. 23, 37. For Mede's acceptance of the Fifth Monarchist scheme of history, see *The Apostasy of the Latter Times,* pp. 654-5.

[15] Thomas Hayne, *Christ's Kingdom on Earth* (1645), pp. 47, 54, 77, 80.

BRIAN G. COOPER

We imagine that readers will know that 1961 sees the bicentenary of William Carey's birth. Will members please note that the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society is to be held on Monday, May 1st, in the Institute Hall of the Westminster Chapel with tea at 4.30 p.m. and business at 5.0 p.m. We shall hear an address by the Rev. Brynmor F. Price, M.A., B.D. on "Carey and Serampore—Then and Now." Mr. Price speaks from 10 years experience of Serampore and we are sure he will have much of great interest to say. Members are permitted to bring friends to tea and the meeting.

In the Study

SO many studies of Bultmann and his programme of demythologizing have appeared in recent years that many must be hard put to it to decide how adequately to familiarise themselves with the controversy and the real issues without the expenditure of more time and money than they can realistically afford. It is therefore with unreserved thankfulness that I note the appearance of a substantial volume[1] which, while grappling with all the basic problems, may yet, by reason of clarity and readability, be confidently commended to the student whose background of relevant understanding is minimal. Five years ago Dr. Macquarrie gave us a study in this general field which rumour reported the author himself considered to be a little premature. However that may be, his second thoughts and further thoughts have been worth waiting for, and the net result must enhance an already considerable reputation.

Are there limits that must be set to the demythologizing process? Bultmann evidently thinks there are. He will walk the road of existential analysis to a certain point, but then halts to plant in his path and ours an immovable kerygmatic boulder. At the boundary of human possibilities he sets an act of God. This is paradox; but is it contradiction? At least it is a procedure that opens him to attack from two sides—from a Barth who will convict him of the destruction of an objective atonement accomplished apart from man, and from a Buri who will demand that he finish his task and dekerygmatize as well. It seems that the Bultmannic position will satisfy no one. The Roman theologian will side with Barth, and the philosophical existentialist with Buri.

Happily there are other interested parties to be considered. There are the biblical writers. There is also modern man. Bultmann is passionately concerned with both. He wishes to bring them together. His concern is in the broadest sense evangelistic. Existential analysis may provide a valid and valuable key to the understanding of the Scriptural Gospel and a meaningful point of entry into the modern predicament. Certainly there are obscurities and ambiguities in Bultmann's thought, or at least in his expression of it. But the verdict of careful examination must be that he is still on the side of the angels, and that the biblical Gospel is still in his hands. Where he fails us is in his estimate of modern man and the extent to which we may rightly go to meet him. In so far as he reinterprets the Gospel with regard to the modern *world-picture* we should be wholeheartedly with him. In so far as he may verge on the distortion of the Gospel by abasing himself before the modern *self-understanding* we should recall him to his own essential roots. It is this menacing possibility that often makes the rightful paradox in his thinking and presentation appear as damaging logical contradiction.

---

[1] *The Scope of Demythologizing*, by J. Macquarrie. S.C.M. Press, Ltd. 25/-. 1960.

Such is Dr. Macquarrie's verdict. He arrives at it by way of illuminating discussion of Bultmann's thought and Bultmann's critics. It is a sane and sympathetic assessment; and it may well be right. In any event it will surely contribute to a more appreciative understanding of the work of one of the greatest of contemporary New Testament scholars.

But New Testament scholarship has a wide range of pre-occupation; and the patient examination of Gospel material still provides opportunities for fresh and deeper understanding. So far as the third evangelist is concerned, the portrait of Luke the historian is increasingly being overlaid by the picture of Luke the theologian. We may not simply dismiss this process in terms of the swing of the pendulum. The brushes are being wielded not only with vigour but with discernment. Herein is to be found something of the importance of the translation of some notable studies in Lukan theology.[2]

This book is a collection of essays rather than a systematic investigation. It seeks to probe St. Luke's mind and reveal some of his significant theological ideas and emphases. Dr. Conzelmann passes under review geographical elements in the Gospel, eschatology, redemptive history, christology, and the appropriation of salvation. He is seldom far from the text. Significant detailed appraisal of his judgments could be provided only by a scholar willing to rework the enormous mass of material pressed into service. Nevertheless, some general observations may be ventured.

I must confess that I found the later pages of the book the least convincing. This may be due partly to flagging zeal, but partly also to a certain incoherence of presentation that seems inseparable from collected studies of this nature. On the other hand, it is surely indisputable that a flood of light is thrown upon the structure of the third Gospel, upon the reflective use of traditional kerygmatic material, upon the determinative theological impact of a delayed Parousia, upon the Lukan answer to the first century situation in terms of the stages of redemptive history. Would it be wholly misleading to assert that it was St. Luke who struck the decisive blow against apocalyptic eschatology, and thus laid the ground-plan for the Apostles' Creed?

---

[2] *The Theology of St. Luke*, by H. Conzelmann. Faber & Faber. 30/-. 1960.

Whatever the answer may be, a generation that rightly insists upon the unity of Holy Scripture will yet need to understand and plot that unity in richer and more complex terms. This will necessarily involve a fuller appreciation of diverse theological presuppositions and perspectives. It is just here that a work of this kind can make a lasting contribution.

It is more than forty years since Dr. Relton gave us *A Study in Christology*. Now, in retirement, he has gathered together and made more readily available past essays in the field of doctrine.[3] He has no material change of mind to record, and is therefore content that the words of yesterday should speak to today. This is a bold stand for any man to take. There must inevitably be argument about its justification.

For the plain fact is that this sort of collection invites the twin charges of incoherence and irrelevance. As to the first, some convincing defence can here be advanced, in that a certain unity is imparted through concentration of interest and attention upon christology both in itself and in its relation to the doctrine of God on the one hand and sacramentalism on the other. As to the second, acquittal is less sure. It is refreshing to be indirectly reminded that not every work of merit and value was written since 1945, that there is so much of theological worth and significance stemming from the early part of the century, though so rarely quoted and so seldom read today. Yet what is lacking is the immediacy and appeal of the theological word that speaks from and to the contemporary situation. The philosophical climate has changed; and if the basic problems are the same, the points of impact have shifted. A call to contend for the transcendence of God against over-emphasis upon his immanence sounds faintly, as if from another world.

Nevertheless, the final balance is a credit one. For we are keenly aware today of the central importance of christology, and it is just here that Dr. Relton has his most powerful word to say. The essential issues that confronted Chalcedon, that divided Antioch and Alexandria, are with us still. We may break with tradition if we will, but we had best understand it before we take such a step. Many who pride themselves on their orthodoxy would in fact find themselves to be in the camp of Apollinaris, or Nestorius, or Eutyches. Others who decry the historical formulations might discover on closer examination that in their different terms they did but echo them. This is a book that should both to see with crystal clarity precisely what it was that the great Fathers were trying to say and to proclaim.

[3] *Studies in Christian Doctrine,* by H. M. Relton. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 21/-. 1960.

But the Chalcedonian Definition did not mark a terminus. It set the limits within which the truth was to be found. For the further explication of that truth the Church has turned to Leonitius of Byzantium and his exposition of *enhypostasia.* It is this conception that Dr. Relton has always defended, and it is its reinterpretation for our day and age that he demands. He leaves us in no doubt as to what was at stake and what is at stake. Whether we reach his conclusions or not, we can trust him to be a sure guide along the way. Perhaps the crucial questions we have to ask ourselves are two. What is it that makes a truly and fully human person? Was it precisely our empirical humanity that the Son assumed? If these are complex problems, yet they cannot be ignored. For, in the end, our christological understanding must govern the whole range of Christian belief.

This truth finds illustration in the interesting study in sacramental theology that Dr. Relton provides. He works out the familiar but still significant correspondences that obtain between christological heresies and eucharistic understandings. The result is a presentation of fundamental cleavages of thought and interpretation which may fruitfully be kept in mind by those who are eager to gain the most from the recent translation of a work on the Lord's Supper[4] from the pen of an eminent Swedish theologian.

Gustaf Aulen is specially concerned with the problems of sacrifice and real presence in so far as these relate to the eucharistic rite. His work is biblically based, historically buttressed, and ecumenically orientated. He begins with an examination of emergent thought within the ecumenical movement, from Edinburgh 1937 to Lund 1952, but is careful to fill out this discussion by reference to important independent Roman and Anglican contributions. Though most of this will be famliar ground to those who know anything of the modern debate, yet it is extremely valuable to be so forcefully reminded of the shift of interest and attention from real presence to sacrifice that has taken place, and of the unsolved issues thus left behind. The treatment of Reformed thinking that follows is almost exclusively concerned with Luther and the theology that stems from him. It merits high praise for its concentration upon the *Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament* of 1519, which gives us the thinking of the great Reformer before polemical considerations weighted and distorted emphasis and interpretation, for its careful and acute evaluation of the sacrificial motif in Luther's understanding, and for its devastating if indirect attack upon the still prevalent idea that the Lutheran watchword was consubstantiation.

---

[4] *Eucharist and Sacrifice,* by G. Aulen. Oliver & Boyd. 18/-. 1960.

From these limited historical enquiries certain questions emerge with regard to sacrifice and real presence which may rightly and necessarily be brought to Scripture and posed for biblical answer. Dr. Aulen's touch at this point is delicate and perceptive. He does not bring his conclusions with him, and he knows how to draw the lines between christology and eucharistic theology. It is therefore with hands judiciously laden that he arrives at his final chapters, where conclusions are offered, clarification attempted, and construction essayed. If he is right in thinking that we are at an ecumenical impasse, he may fairly claim to be signposting some promising tracks along which we may yet advance.

It is of course true that the emphasis in contemporary discussion has moved from real presence to sacrifice, and that basic divergences of belief and understanding may well have been masked by the restatement of old problems in ambiguous new language. Certainly statements concerning the eucharistic sacrifice are not renowned for clarity and precision. There is need for continued thought and study, which this book will surely stimulate and guide. Perhaps the key question will relate to the nature of the eucharistic offering. And perhaps the beginnings of the answer will be revealed to those who are prepared to locate the essential offering not in Offertory Procession but within the Eucharistic Prayer itself.

The desire for unified pattern is deep-rooted in the questing mind of man. The theologian cannot rest content with the ordering of his own thinking, but remains dissatisfied until the scattered thoughts of his fellow have also been pressed into synthesis. And just here lies one of the tantalising problems that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, by his untimely death, bequeathed to the Christian world. Professor Godsey has bravely faced the task.[5] Since he, like his hero, shares the preoccupations and emphases of the modern theological scene, we are not surprised that the golden key turns out to be christological. Inevitably argument falls short of complete demonstration. But the verdict may well be true.

The writings of the German theologian are distributed within three periods, distinguished in terms of "foundation," "application," and "fragmentation." The years 1927-31 saw the appearance of *Sanctorum Communio* and *Act and Being*, and witnessed an overriding concern with Christ-in-the-Church. 1932-39 is marked by a shift from systematic theology to biblical exposition, by a new emphasis against the background of the Hitler régime upon the Lordship of Christ over the Church, by the production of *Creation and Fall, The Cost of Discipleship, Temptation, Life*

---

[5] *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, by J. D. Godsey. S.C.M. Press, Ltd. 25/-. 1960.

Together. 1940-45 betrays a tremendous concentration upon Christ as Lord of the world, and gave us the fragmentary *Ethics,* and the *Letters and Papers from Prison.* All this diverse material is worked through and summarised by Professor Godsey; and an evaluation of his stimulating theology is offered by way of conclusion.

Perhaps the most valuable thing about this expository study is that it sets before us, so far as the possibilities allow, the complete Bonhoeffer. Contemporary interest and attention has naturally been focussed upon the final phase of his theological reflection. But the longer and wider view is needed if misinterpretation is to be avoided. It is difficult enough to know where the young martyr was heading. If we ignore the points from which he came we shall needlessly complicate our remaining problems.

But still the fascinating obscurities abide. If only the *Ethics* had been completed! If only the book projected in the prison cell could have been written! Even so we have enough to set the mind thinking significant thoughts about God and the world which could, in due time, foster creative ways of Christian obedience. Professor Godsey is a reliable guide, and is fortunately not an uncritical recorder. He knows that Bonhoeffer did not get the existentialists, the psychiatrists, and Karl Barth quite right—and he tells us so. He also affirms the true significance of what is certainly a theology for our times.

I think, however, that a warning must be added. The publishers have included this book in their "Preachers' Library." That was either a very lazy or a very discerning decision. Clearly this is theology to be preached. It was forged on the anvil of proclamation and pastoral travail, fashioned amid the turmoil of this turbulent era. But the preacher had best make sure that he has some essential understanding of what it is that Bonhoeffer was really seeking, before he takes this out of his study. And if he starts haranguing his congregation about religionless Christianity and worldliness, he will court disaster. This is heady wine—a seductive brew. Yet it may become the water of life.

Let the preacher however take heart. Deeply theological studies of preaching are few and far between, and even the books and lectures that show awareness of profounder issues than those of method and technique seldom range sufficiently widely or lay the foundations at an adequate level. It may be that in this connection a heavy price has been paid for our specialisation in theological disciplines, and that the gulf that still exists between the systematician and the exegete, between the Old Testament scholar and the New, has gravely hindered constructive advance in crucial areas that overlap our boundaries. Certainly we shall be grateful for the translation of a substantial work[6] that nobly treats of the proclamation of the Word, presents a clear and consistent thesis, and at one and the same time argues widely, theologically, and at depth.

As might be expected, the impress of Luther is clear in almost every chapter; and the whole book reflects indirectly but faithfully the modern revival in Lutheran studies. Dr. Wingren rightly emphasises that the centre of the Gospel is not incarnation but death-resurrection, and interestingly works throughout with the theme of conflict and victory. Law and Gospel are expounded in their inter-relationship along lines which should correct popular ideas of the Lutheran position. Creation and redemption are firmly tied together after the manner of Irenaeus, with the inevitable and significant corollary that the work of Christ is seen in terms of making man not "religious" but truly human. And all the diversity of exposition and enquiry is unified with reference to the living Word of God, proclaimed between Pentecost and Parousia for the healing of the nations.

There are few sermon hints in this discussion—though the Christian Year comes under scrutiny and the preacher's use of Scripture is realistically examined. But something far more important is offered. It is nothing less than a vision of the magnitude of the herald's task, and of its true centrality when understood in terms of the fulness of the Gospel. The crucial theological themes are wrestled with tenaciously and profoundly, because this must be done if the minister is to understand his calling and the Church her destiny. The wise reader will sup slowly at this table; for the fare is rich, and some of it may have to be rejected. The polemic against Barth bears witness that this book was written at the close of the last war, and therefore not all of the arrows quite hit the mark of 1960. The understanding of Christian faith in terms of conflict between God and Satan and of the Christus Victor school involves large assumptions that not all will be prepared immediately to accept. The exposition of "body" and "conscience" in connection with the distinction between Law and Gospel raises hesitations for those who are not quite convinced that this is the biblical emphasis. But these are cautions rather than complaints. For Dr. Wingren has discharged his task magnificently. He does not mention Phillips Brooks. But I would hope that all his readers may agree that "truth through personality" should now be labelled "sunk without trace."

N. CLARK

---

[6] *The Living Word,* by G. Wingren. S.C.M. Press, Ltd. 25/-. 1960.

Reviews

Christianity among the Religions, by E. L. Allen. (Allen and Unwin, 159 pp., 18s.).

This book is clearly written, useful, and eminently readable, although it cannot be regarded—as might have been hoped—as a significant contribution to the great debate which Dr. Hendrik Kraemer opened up twenty-two years ago. Others have taken up Dr. Kraemer's challenge, though no consensus of belief is in sight. But Mr. Allen virtually by-passes the issues posed by classical doctrines of Christian revelation. Two quotations in which the matter is settled out of hand will suffice. "We have to choose between the two interpretations of Christianity that have been current since the beginning, one exclusive and the other inclusive. For the first, the revelation of God in Christ is confined to a single stream of history, that which rises in Israel. For the second, what is revealed in Israel and in Christ is a dealing of God in mercy with all men at all times. The crucial significance of Christ is maintained on either view, but in the second case he is the point at which God so discloses himself that it can be seen that he is present at every point. For myself, the inclusive interpretation is the only possible one." (p. 119). That "all religions are false save one's own . . . can surely not now be held by anyone who has some knowledge of the great religions of the East" (p. 120).

On the other hand, if certain premises are assumed, whether because others find them as self-evident as does Mr. Allen, or because they have their own basic arguments for this approach, then a well-developed thesis emerges of great practical value for the actual task of encounter with those for whom the great non-Christian religions are living and personal faiths.

The first seven chapters give a very useful history of Christendom's growing recognition of religious and ethical truth to be found in non-Christian religions. "It was in the 13th century that Western Christendom began to be shaken in the conviction that it possessed the absolute truth." Christians from Europe came face to face with Islam, then with Chinese civilization, and later with Buddhist and Hindu religious philosophy and literature. Mr. Allen gives a history of ideas, not of those embodied in these non-Christian religions—for there is hardly a quotation from Eastern literature—but of those successively put forward by a long line of great thinkers from the 15th to the 20th centuries, as they reflected upon the significance for Christianity of this fact of truth discovered in other faiths.

In his eighth and ninth chapters, while recognising the complexity of traditions in both hemispheres, Mr. Allen shows how

East and West genuinely differ in the fundamental presuppositions governing their everyday thought and action. He then illustrates, from various Western thinkers, the four different attitudes which may be adopted towards these rivals for men's spiritual allegiance—neutrality, assimilation, hostility, or understanding.

The final three chapters embody Mr. Allen's constructive contribution. One by one he considers five different relationships between Christianity and the other great non-Christian religions, from the standpoint, not of theology, but of the philosophy of religion. "The finality of Christianity is not the initial assumption. . . . While the approach is from a Christian standpoint, the Christian allegiance of the writer is, as it were, held in solution throughout." Mr. Allen follows Troeltsch in pointing out "the fallacy of supposing that one has demonstrated Christianity to be absolute or superior when one has assumed as much as the outset by taking a Christian standard as absolute or superior." An absolute religion, he maintains, is a contradiction in terms. He does, however, admit that "the absolute is that which claims me personally here and now . . . this is a matter of personal commitment arising out of personal discernment, and not something that can be demonstrated."

Mr. Allen quotes Professor Zaehmer that "the religions differ, not because they give different answers to the same question, but because they ask different questions," and agrees with Professor W. E. Hocking that "the religions may not be dissolved into general ideas; their strength lies to no small extent in what marks them off from each other." With Karl Jaspers he therefore sees "the will to boundless communication" as the one way forward. "I must regard my neighbour's truth as challenge and opportunity. In open communication with him, I shall either (*a*) come to hold my truth more firmly, or (*b*) abandon it because I have seen that it is not true, or (*c*) recast it in the form of a fuller and richer truth." Thus alone can the Christian "serve that Kingdom of Christ whose triumphs are only those of truth and love."

English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State (1878-1908) by Ruth M. Slade. (Published non-commercially by the Académie royale des Sciences coloniales, 80a rue de Livourne, Bruxelles 5).

Miss Slade is to be congratulated that it has been decided to reprint this thesis, for which she gained her Ph.D. degree from London University. It was first published in 1959. The granting of independence to this new nation, subsequent turmoil and uncertainties regarding the future, and the heartfelt interest and concern of British Baptists for the Church of Christ in Congo, in no small measure planted and nurtured by missionaries of the B.M.S., all make this study of topical importance and lasting value.

During the period 1951-1959, when the writer of this review served at B.M.S. headquarters, Dr. Slade was intellectually the most brilliant young woman who came before the Society's Candidate Board. Her offer of service, however, had to be withdrawn before she had completed her training, as she had come to accept the claims of the Roman Catholic Church. Her thesis, if in any way affected by this change of allegiance, is improved rather than impaired; it breathes a proper spirit of historical objectivity, while manifesting an understanding of both Protestant and Catholic work. In accordance with her limited subject, Dr. Slade states that her study "attempts to estimate the contribution which Protestant missionaries have made to the history of the Congo, during the period of the Congo Independent State and the early years of Belgian colonial rule. . . . In general, Catholic missionaries have only been mentioned when their work provides a parallel with that of the Protestant missions, or an illuminating comparison with it."

Dr. Slade is indeed a historian of promise. Her style is limpid and her narrative unfaltering. But she is first and foremost a capable and conscientious research worker. Her very interesting introduction, together with a select bibliography, report the materials through which she worked. Her use of archival sources was supplemented by extensive perusal of missionary society periodicals; in these she found much of value, though she is under no illusion as to their limitation for historical purposes. "An examination of minute-books, where these exist, has been particularly valuable for tracing the development of the official policy of the missionary societies towards the Congo reform campaign; especially in the early years, little hint of this was allowed to appear in the missionary periodicals." Even more can be discovered when archives permit one to get behind official minutes!

No complete history of the Congo Independent State has yet been written. This book makes an important contribution to that wider task. After dealing with the early introduction of Christianity into Congo by the Portuguese, the signal stimulus provided by Robert Arthington, and the opening of their pioneering work by the B.M.S. and the Livingstone Inland Mission, Dr. Slade unfolds the expansion of the missionary enterprise, studies the methods employed, and relates the campaigning which culminated in the settlement of 1908. The interaction of political and missionary motives and moves afford a fascinating and illuminating study. The author proceeds with sure step in a field long obscured by polemic. In spite of the thesis title, in her last chapter Dr. Slade moves to more recent years; her last few pages indicate certain assessments of the situation to date, although for the most part she has left her readers to make their own appraisal of the story presented.

The reviewer would like to raise two points. Dr. Slade refers to Dr. Latourette's judgment that "in the three decades after 1914 the increase in the number of Christians in the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi was among the most impressive of any in Africa, or indeed in the world." What factors essentially led to this church growth? By 1950 there were over 300 African ordained Protestant pastors, but none of these had had as full theological training as their European counterparts, whereas only about 200 had been raised to the Roman Catholic priesthood, yet these had received training as exacting as any in the world. This leaves which Church in a stronger position today?

VICTOR E. W. HAYWARD

The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation, by R. E. O. White. (Hodder and Stoughton, 1960, 30s.,, pp. 374 plus indexes).

This book offers a more comprehensive treatment of the subject of Baptism than is to be found elsewhere in recent theology, and the relevant literature available in English is put to good use. All readers will acknowledge the smoothness and speed with which the argument flows, and some its irresistibility. Many things in the book will immediately command the highest respect, such as the solid beginning made with the divine covenant, the affirmation of the wholeness of man and the associated wholeness of the effects of Baptism, the reiterated distinction between theology and exegesis, the importance of catachesis alongside Baptism, and some things said in the discussion of symbol. The book exhibits acuteness of argument, for example, in discussing "vicarious Baptism," wide acquaintance with what paedo-baptists say (admittedly often irreconcilably with one another), good sense in dealing with the dominical command to baptise, balance when it talks of the "two impaired baptisms" that presently operate in Christendom, vigour in refutation (e.g. of the Church of Scotland Report, p. 281, note 1), and at some points boldness quite undaunted by the undoubted strength of the opposition (e.g. p. 101, note 1).

The key to the book seems to lie in five words. They are apparently innocent and acceptable enough, and they occur on p. 31: "Inwardness and individualism go together." The author uses them to indicate a turning point in the development of Old Testament thought, as the new covenant of Jeremiah is conceived and proclaimed. The reader on the other hand can hardly fail to see them as indicative of a position which dominates the entire book. The thought in general is that at this point in Israel's history the decisive step is taken of repudiating the idea of covenant based on birth and race; participation in the covenant-relationship is now a moral and spiritual matter; and " the centre of gravity in religious experience is shifted from the nation to the individual." This replacement of nationalism by individualism is not the only reading of the Old Testament facts. For while nationalism and individualism are indeed opposed and perhaps irreconcilable, neither is opposed to the idea of the people of God, and this single strand continues unbroken throughout both Old and New Testaments. This people of God is always primarily constituted by God's gracious choice. It is composed of the elect, not of the electing. The fact that inwardness supplements outwardness no more implies individual units who must aggregate themselves to form the people of God than the fact that each person must *singilatim* be circumcised atomises the idea of nation. On the other hand, if early Old Testament nationalism is regarded as being simply displaced by individualism, almost everything else in the book follows as a matter of course. Unresolved tensions are discovered in Jeremiah and Ezekiel; personal decision becomes a matter of primary importance; the people of God becomes a voluntary association; it is right to talk of " spiritual qualifications for Baptism," of " terms of salvation " and of faith paving the way into the Kingdom; and of course there can be no infant Baptism. Readers of this journal will not wish me to conceal what I think here: I regard the virtual identification of inwardness and individualism in Jeremiah's revision of the covenant idea as not the result of a difference of opinion but as an error of fact.

So we come to infant Baptism—and it is certainly not easy to see an early end to disagreement about its legitimacy. It is a pity that the last word the book has to offer on the subject is a quotation from H. Wheeler Robinson: " modern explanations of infant Baptism . . . are simply attempts to explain an existent practice by those who repudiate its original meaning." Of course the statement is true enough of some of the more trivial apologetic offered in modern days; but acute controversy always generates such peripheral argumentation. The serious arguments attempt to do justice to whatever it was in its understanding of Baptism that induced the New Testament Church (if one accepts J. Jeremias: *Die Kindertaufe in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten* 1958, and of course others), or (if one does not) at least the early Church, to extend in changing circumstances the ministration of Baptism to infants, believing that it was the same rite that was being extended and not a new one being invented. And, it is to be feared, the argument from results discernible in recipients of Baptism is a weapon with too dangerous a recoil to be used by either side with safety.

In the end the book hardly makes it clear enough (at least to a non-Baptist) how Baptism as represented in it is real initiation at all. Baptism in the view of non-Baptists may involve problems, but it is essentially simple. It admits men to all Christian privilege and responsibility. A profession of faith is *not* required of infants because in their case Christian life makes an absolute beginning with Baptism; a profession of faith *is* required of adults because Christian life has in their case to make a start with a renunciation of the un-faith or the other-than-Christian faith that preceded it. But in every case, Baptism is the beginning of Christian life and faith. It is difficult to see how any beginning is made with a Baptism that is just " the appointed and appropriate expression of the faith." If it only " *marks* the entrance of the convert upon all the privileges, responsibilities, opportunities and enjoyments which the Gospel confers," it is not a real beginning; but how, on the other hand, *can* it be said to *begin* all this, since faith can hardly be thought to arise and come to the point of profession unless it be nourished by just such Gospel gifts?

Christians other than Baptists always find this puzzling—and perhaps some Baptists do so too. But it is at all events clear that Mr. White has done all the Christian Churches a real service in thus forcibly bringing so many old issues to the forefront of attention and so many new ones to light. J. K. S. REID

The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility, by Richard M. Fagley. (Oxford University Press, 260 pp., 28s.).

The key to this important book is found on page 94. In the first six chapters, Mr. Fagley has been explaining the reasons why family limitation is of crucial importance to the health and welfare of people in the underdeveloped areas. He now says that the actual requests of governments of the densely populated societies in Asia are " adjusted to the intimations from assisting governments as to the kinds of aid they are prepared to extend." He points out that no such intimations are forthcoming in the field of family limitation, and says " the only discernible reason is the fear lest religious controversy be engendered." This is certainly a striking and challenging statement, which if true should cause us to redouble our efforts to think and work ecumenically in the study of these problems. Mr. Fagley, executive secretary of the Churches Commission on International Affairs, has worked hard to discover and even to achieve some consensus of opinion among the non Roman Churches on the subject of family limitation and the appendix (pp. 225-234) gives us the report of an international study group convened in 1959 by the officers of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. This report states that "companionship and parenthood are established together" (in the Biblical faith) "as the purposes of marriage from the beginning, with sexual union as the ordained servant of both."

While, therefore, non-theological factors have led to the Protestant awakening on the subject of family limitation, the fact is that a solid theological foundation can be laid for the view that procreation is not the only aim which may be envisaged in sexual intercourse. In other words, the report comes down firmly on the side of family limitation by scientific contraception, provided any such course of action is the responsible decision of both parties.

In the first part of his book, Mr. Fagley has no difficulty in justifying the title "population explosion." Whereas the nineteenth century growth of population in the west *accompanied* the industrial revolution, in these twentieth century areas of rapid social change the population increases are unfortunately *preceding* any large scale economic and social development. He draws attention to the growing proportion of young people in these areas. It appears that no less than 45 per cent of the Chinese population is under 18.

In the second part, Mr. Fagley deals with the Biblical and ecclesiastical attitudes to parenthood and in a concise and helpful manner. He has chapters on the early Fathers, and the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant viewpoints. He pays a well deserved tribute to the pioneer work in this field of Anglican scholars set out in the Lambeth preparatory volume "The Family in Contemporary Society." He quotes the view stated by Thomas Aquinas that marriage is for common life and mutual aid as well as procreation and finds evidence in the statements of Pope Pius XI that the Roman Catholic communion may be able and prepared to re-think the application of their doctrine of marriage and parenthood, for instance, by a more scientific understanding of periodic continence as a method of family limitation. However, it is encumbent upon the non Roman Churches to press for an enlightened population policy by governments, and an educational campaign among citizens about responsible parenthood.

The Baptist Union of Denmark is quoted as an example of a body with a sense of responsibility over the population question. A paragraph written by Mr. J. E. T. Hough for the Citizenship handbook was presented to the international study group as representing a probable consensus of opinion among British Baptists. Unfortunately, the Baptist Union had made no declaration on family life or responsible parenthood. C. H. CLEAL