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THE  
CHURCHMAN

FEBRUARY, 1901.

ART. I.—THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY  
SINCE THE RESTORATION.

FREDERICK CORNWALLIS.

JOHN CORNWALLIS, ancestor of our present subject, was Sheriff of London in 1377. He had a country seat, Brome Hall, near Eye, in Suffolk, which his descendants continued to hold, some of them from time to time representing the county in Parliament. Frederick Cornwallis was a loyal supporter of Charles I., and followed his son into exile. The former made him a baronet, and the latter on the Restoration raised him to the peerage by the title of Lord Cornwallis of Eye, and the family continued to prosper through fortunate marriages. The fifth Baron was created an Earl. He was the eldest brother of Frederick, the subject of the present memoir, who was born on February 22, 1713, and had for twin brother Edward, afterwards General, who was so like him in appearance that when they were boys together at Eton "it was difficult to know them asunder." The eldest brother, Charles, married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Townshend and niece of Sir Robert Walpole, and we need not hesitate to assume that it was owing to this marriage that the Baron became an Earl and that his brother became a Bishop, though Walpole had died before the latter appointment.

Frederick Cornwallis proceeded from Eton to Christ's College, Cambridge, took his B.A. degree in 1736, and became a Fellow. He was very popular at the University, and bore a high character, but towards the end of his residence he had some paralytic affection which took away the use of his right hand and obliged him from that time to write with his left. In 1740 he was presented by his brother to the rectory of Chelmondiston, Suffolk, with which he held that of Tittles-

hall St. Mary, Norfolk. Then he was appointed successively King's Chaplain, Canon of Windsor, Prebendary of Lincoln, and on February 19, 1750, was consecrated Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. In 1766 he was nominated Dean of St. Paul's. We have already seen more than one case where a poorly endowed bishopric was thus supplemented in the way of income.

Probably the Church of England was never more sleepy than at that moment. The Nonjurors, who had furnished a real element of piety among the upper and middle classes, were dwindling away. Country squires, whose fathers had been Jacobite, so far followed in their steps as to drink "the King's health over the water," but really cared no more for the Stuarts than they did for the Ptolemies, knowing that the Stuart cause was hopeless; but the old High Churchmen still held Puritanism in abomination, and, as far as they knew how, kept up the Laudian ritual. But Whiggism in politics had gone steadily on, and the main tenet among the clergy was: "Live an easy life, and let things alone." Mark Pattison, in his "Essay on the Religious Thought of the Eighteenth Century" ("Essays and Reviews," No. VI.) well sums up the characteristics of the time in the following words: "It was a period of decay of religion, licentiousness of morals, public corruption, profaneness of language—a day of rebuke and blasphemy. Even those who look with suspicion on the contemporary complaints from the Jacobite clergy of decay of religion will not hesitate to say that it was an age destitute of depth and earnestness; an age whose poetry was without romance, whose philosophy was without insight, and whose public men were without character; an age of light without love, whose very merits were of the earth earthy." Theological writing was confined almost entirely to scepticism on one side and the "evidences" on the other. To quote Mr. Pattison once more: "Dogmatic theology had ceased to exist; the exhibition of religious truth for practical purposes was confined to a few obscure writers. Everyone who had anything to say on sacred subjects drilled it into an array of arguments against a supposed objector. Christianity appeared made for nothing else but to be proved; what use to make of it when it was proved was not much thought about. The only quality in Scripture which was dwelt on was its *credibility*." But even now things were on the turn for the better. Wesley in 1738 had begun that incessant round of itinerant labours in every part of the British Isles which ceased not for fifty years. And at the moment at which we are arrived his preaching, as also that of Whitefield, was beginning to tell. Wesley had profoundly moved great

masses of the miners and manufacturers in great towns, and the Londoners were also beginning to feel the enthusiasm. Still, it was as yet a dull period. To judge only by the Episcopate, as one looks down the list of Bishops in the year of Cornwallis's consecration, there are only three whose names are even remembered to-day. Of Secker I have ventured to speak highly. Joseph Butler was appointed Bishop of Durham the same year that Cornwallis went to Lichfield. This great man, it is true, wrote on the "Evidences," of which Pattison speaks somewhat lightly. But then he did so with the most deep and profound conviction of the moral and spiritual power of Christian religion. All his life the man had a profound faith in God, and therefore his "Analogy" does not impress us so much as being an argument for the credibility of religion, but as a work impelling the energy of realized conviction. One other name just survives—that of Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester. He wrote a respectable Commentary on the Gospels and Acts, some portions of which may still be found imbedded in the dreary Commentary of D'Oyly and Mant. But, for the rest of the list, who knows anything of Edward Willes, Sir W. Ashburnham, Lord J. Beauchamp? They are but a few of a list, respectable, I suppose, but quite forgotten. "*Omnes illacrimabiles urgentur, ignotique longâ nocte.*"

Cornwallis, however, let it be said, was highly esteemed for his personal character. The Prime Minister, George Grenville, said to Bishop Newton in the most naïve way that such bishoprics as Lichfield were sees of ease, where little work had to be done, and therefore such as ought to be specially reserved for men of family and fashion. He seems to have filled the see with credit and to have shown zeal and wisdom in the administration of it. He was at this time a moderate Whig, and proved himself tolerant to Dissenters and appreciative of the good work of Wesley and Whitefield. He was not a brilliant man, but he had plenty of good sense, of candour, and of hearty, kindly feeling. During his Lichfield episcopate he married Caroline, granddaughter of Lord Townshend, but had no children. She survived him twenty-eight years.

On the death of Secker in 1768 Cornwallis was translated to Canterbury, and though he did nothing brilliant and published nothing but four sermons, he filled his archiepiscopal throne with dignity and won the respect of his contemporaries. Hasted, the historian of Kent, who was his contemporary, speaks in very high terms of him for his "affability and courteous behaviour, so very different to his contemporaries." It was specially noted that from the time

of his taking up his residence at Lambeth the Archbishop's chaplains sat at the same table with himself instead of being placed at a separate one. And his hospitality was always most bountiful. Some pleasant features mark the period of his primacy. In the first place, the character of George III., notwithstanding his obstinacy and narrow-mindedness, was a distinct and marked improvement upon those of his predecessors. He was a genuinely religious man and desirous for the moral improvement of his people, and this was telling strongly upon his Court and those who frequented it. The Deistical spirit was dying out, at all events as far as Churchmen were concerned; the Methodist revival was telling with considerable force upon the clergy, even upon those who held aloof from its peculiarities. Benevolent agencies had been set on foot and flourished. The Christian Knowledge Society was busy and well-conducted. Howard was rescuing prisoners from their heathenism to a sense of Christian manhood. And with this there came a wider spirit of tolerance. There had been a plea for it made by the Whig party, but the main response to their appeal had come from the sceptical and the indifferent. It was now finding a place in the hearts of the earnest and pious, though there were drawbacks and hindrances. The friends of the wider views were denounced by some earnest people as indifferentists; as they looked back upon past troubles, the one side identified Nonconformity with disloyalty and the other side regarded staunch Churchmen as foes to liberty and upholders of despotism. We have seen how this operated against the proposals for the American Episcopate. They were opposed because men said it would militate against the liberties of the colonists in preaching up unlimited obedience to the King. Still, the advance of toleration continued. Dissenting teachers had hitherto been required to assent to the Thirty-nine Articles. For this in 1779 was substituted a profession of Protestantism and of belief in the Scriptures. Hints were even given of the desirability of repealing the Test Act, which imposed a sacramental test on those who held posts under Government. Cowper, who was a Whig in politics, wrote sternly against it:

“Hast thou by statute shoved from its design  
 The Saviour's Feast, His own bless'd bread and wine,  
 And made the symbols of atoning grace  
 An office key, a picklock to a place,  
 That infidels may prove their title good  
 By an oath dipped in Sacramental blood?  
 A blot that will be still a blot, in spite  
 Of all that grave apologists may write;  
 And though a Bishop toil to cleanse the stain,  
 He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain”

(“Expostulation,” 375-385).

The Bishop here reflected on is Warburton, who published an essay on "The Necessity and Equity of a Test Law." A few years later the whole idea of repeal was thrown aside in the reaction against the principles of the French Revolution.

But there was another cause which retarded the growth of the principle of toleration, namely, the dread of Popery. The old statutes against it had never been repealed, but they had fallen into abeyance. Wake, as we have seen, had entertained hopes of reunion, but these had faded away. The Roman Catholics, hoping that they would find no further opposition, had come out of their retirement, for some of the prominent men of the day had spoken kindly and favourably of them. Dr. Johnson had done so in 1769, as Boswell tells us very emphatically. Even the evangelical John Newton had freely declared his belief in the genuine Christianity of Fénelon and Pascal. Cowper, who had written severely of Romanism in his first published volume of Poems, cancelled the leaf on the very eve of publication. Wesley had wavered, and from time to time had used contradictory language on the question. The moderation of Gallicanism had declared against the opinion which had once been held, that the Pope had the power of absolving subjects from their allegiance to the King, and of declaring them deposed for their heretical opinions, and this had led to a similar declaration of English Romanists. And as a result of this a Bill was passed in the Irish Parliament in 1774 which admitted the members of the Roman Church to be accepted as loyal citizens on taking an oath that the Pope had no temporal power in this realm. In the same year it was enacted that in Quebec, where there were 150,000 Catholics and only 400 Protestants, the majority should have freedom of worship conceded to them. The English Bishops supported this Bill, and incurred much obloquy in consequence, even from Lord Chatham amongst others. In 1778 the English Romanists, who had had a new chapel demolished in Bristol, Bishop Newton abetting the deed, approached the Throne with a loyal address, and in consequence a Bill was passed allowing them to worship in their own manner without incurring the penalty of high treason, on condition that they took the oath of loyalty. Their children were not precluded from succeeding to their fathers' estates. But hardly had the Bill passed when an outcry was raised. Protestant Associations were formed all over England and Scotland. The King was declared to be a Papist, and his confessor entrusted with the direction of all political doings. A demand was made that Papist blood should run in every gutter. And hence came the Gordon riots of 1780. Let it be recorded to Cornwallis's honour that he very

earnestly and sincerely stood his ground and defended the relief. He and Bishop Porteus adduced evidence that no harm had come of the granting justice to the Romanists, and were greatly reviled for doing so. In the same spirit he and Porteus had acted when a fresh endeavour was made for relaxation, by altering the Liturgy so as to make subscription easier. During the primacy of Secker this movement had been led, as we have already seen, by Francis Blackburne, an extreme Liberal, whom Hutton, while Archbishop of York, had appointed to the Archdeaconry of Cleveland for his Latitudinarian views. He had maintained them with unabated zeal, and in 1766 published anonymously a work entitled "The Confessional," in which he most strenuously denounced clerical subscription. Secker guessed the author, and was angry—probably his remembrance of Blackburne's gratuitous and slanderous attack on Bishop Butler increased his asperity—and bade his chaplain write against it. And so once more the book-shops were flooded with theological pamphlets. Cornwallis at this time was probably in favour of some relaxation. But after his appointment to the Primacy he declined to further it. His friend Porteus, who was afterwards consecrated by him Bishop of Chester (1776), had presented a petition for relaxation. The "Feathers Tavern Petition" was presented in February, 1772, signed by about 200 clergy, praying "to be relieved from the burden of subscription, and for the right of interpreting Scripture without being bound to any human interpretation." The Archbishop consulted his brethren on the Bench, and at length returned answer (February, 1773) that "nothing in prudence can be done in the matter." Nor was there, but we shall have the renewal of this subject during the next Archiepiscopate.

One passage in the Archbishop's life cannot be passed by. The celebrated Lady Huntingdon, founder of the religious body which bears her name, wrote to George III. complaining that the Archbishop held routs at Lambeth on Sundays; whereupon the King wrote an autograph letter of rebuke to the Primate, stating that he himself had always most carefully avoided such doings, and requesting him to cease from them.

Archbishop Cornwallis, in 1781, consecrated his nephew Frederick Cornwallis to his own former see of Lichfield, and he held the see for fifty-three years, succeeding his uncle as Earl in his eighty-second year. Archbishop Cornwallis died, after a few days' illness, on March 19, 1783. He is buried under the Lord's Table in Lambeth Church. There is a very good portrait of him in the guard-room at Lambeth by Dance, who painted several Bishops. And let it be mentioned to Corn-

wallis's honour that he gave copies of several of his predecessors to the Palace to fill up the gaps: Arundel, from the picture at Penshurst; Juxon, from Longleat; Sheldon, from Brome Hall; Sancroft, from Emanuel College, Cambridge.

W. BENHAM.

(To be continued.)



## ART. II.—THE WITNESS OF THE HISTORICAL SCRIPTURES TO THE ACCURACY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

### No. VI.

THE Book of Ruth, we may observe *in limine*, short as it is, displays traces of independent authorship at least equal to those which have just been pointed out in the case of Judges. But on this point I will not dwell in detail. The characters of Naomi and Boaz are just such as an honest and conscientious observance of the principles of the Mosaic law would tend to produce. In fact, the whole history is impossible unless the religion of the five books of Moses was, and had for some time been, fully recognised as a guide for conduct, for the four chapters now known as the "Book of the Covenant," apart from the rest of the Pentateuch, could hardly have produced such a social and moral tone as we find before us. The simple sketch of pastoral life seems to have been written at an early period in the history of Israel rather than that of the later kings, when cruelty, oppression, and licentiousness reigned supreme. The merciful conduct of Boaz toward the young gleaner implies the full recognition of the precepts in Deut. xxiv. and the supposed post-Exilic Lev. xix. The way in which the daughter of the stranger is welcomed in the land of Israel, in consequence of her pure, upright, and affectionate character, fixes the composition of the book at a time when the observance of the spirit, rather than the letter, of the law was in the ascendant. It was only after frequent and obstinate rebellions against God that a stringent enforcement of its provisions in the letter was believed to have become necessary. The institution of the *Goel*, or Redeemer (Deut. xxv.), is represented, not only as being in existence, but as having been so for a long time. This we learn from chap. iv. 7, where it is stated that in the lapse of ages some changes had taken place in the form of the ceremony. We must, therefore, assign the law in Deut. xxv. to a very early date. The genealogy with which the book