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results hitherto reached by the criticism of the Pentateuch (the so-called Wellhausen school)."

In the face of such statements by a scholarly archæologist of Dr. Hommel's eminence, the sober observer of whom he speaks—in this country no less than abroad—will be justified in declining to believe that any such assured results as Dr. Driver speaks of have been reached, in opposition to the substantial truth of ancient tradition and belief on the subject. There is, in fact, too much reason to believe that—since the time of Wellhausen, at all events, and perhaps much earlier—the criticism of the Pentateuch has, in the expressive French phrase, made *fausse route*, gone on an entirely mistaken tack. At all events, in the face of such confusions and contradictions as have been here illustrated, it would seem that the promoters of the recent Declaration are singularly unfortunate in suggesting that the results of Old Testament criticism, up to the present time, encourage us to look for satisfactory results from an application of similar methods to the New Testament.

On the latter subject, it would seem enough for the present to say that, by consent of the leading scholars both here and in Germany, the belief of the Church as to the dates and authorship of the books of the New Testament has been substantially vindicated; and if so, we have, at all events, the testimony of contemporaries, to the facts narrated in the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. That simple fact, apart from the question of the inspiration of the writers, might alone suffice to reassure believers. It is difficult, for instance, to see how modern criticism can invalidate the testimony of a writer who has been proved to possess the careful historical capacity of an educated physician like St. Luke. Nothing, it may be safely said, has yet been established which invalidates the historical truth, in all essential points, of either the Old or the New Testament; and we may safely rest in the old faith while critics like Dr. Driver and Dr. Hommel are settling their differences.

HENRY WACE.

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#### THE POET-PARSON OF MORWENSTOW.

IN a remote valley on the North Cornish coast, half-way between Bude and Clovelly, stands the ancient parish church of Morwenstow. It is interesting alike in its history, its architecture, and its situation. It nestles under the huge hill which ends in Hennacliff, the grandest rock in Cornwall, and—with the exception of Beachy Head—the highest perpendicular cliff in England. There are few

houses round it, and not much cultivation. The beauty of the situation is the work of Nature alone. The church is a very interesting building. It is said to have been founded by St. Morwenna, the Welsh virgin-saint, on a piece of ground given to her by King Ethelwulf, A.D. 840. Three of the arches of the nave are old Norman, as is the south door. In the chancel is that very rare feature a Norman piscina, but the most remarkable thing in the church is the very old Saxon font. This may well be as old as the time of Morwenna, even if the existing church is of later date. If the traditional date is correct, Morwenstow must be one of the oldest churches now existing in England. In any case, it is almost certainly the oldest in Cornwall. It contains a splendid complete collection of carved seats. These are common in North Cornwall, and are an object of general interest to antiquarians; but in most cases some of them have been removed or mutilated. Morwenstow is the only church, as far as the present writer is aware, in which there is *no* seat later than the sixteenth century.

For these reasons alone Morwenstow would be well worth a visit; but its chief interest is as the scene of the life and labour of Robert Stephen Hawker, one of the notable characters of Cornwall in the last generation, with whose memory Morwenstow will ever be associated. He was its Vicar from 1834 till his death, in 1875. His abilities and eccentricities attracted wide notice and brought many visitors to Morwenstow. Much more than local interest was excited by the report that on his deathbed he joined the Church of Rome, and a vehement controversy waged for some time on this point. Two memoirs appeared soon after his death—one by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, the other by the late Rev. F. G. Lee. Mr. Baring-Gould's book has hitherto been the chief source of information about Hawker, and has made his name widely known both in England and America. Interest has lately been revived by the recent publication of a new "Life," by Mr. C. E. Byles, his son-in-law, containing a great deal of new information. It is too long and much too expensive, and is not always accurate in its description of persons and places; but it is extremely interesting, and gives such a picture of Hawker as cannot be obtained elsewhere. I have followed it for the facts referred to in this paper, which I propose to supplement by a few personal reminiscences. For the sake of those who have not read the new "Life," or the older ones which it largely supersedes, I give a very short summary of its chief events. But Hawker was a man who made much more impression by his *personality* than by his *work*, and it is with the object of recording the impression

that he left on me in boyhood, rather than of offering any comment on his life or works, that these lines are written.

Robert S. Hawker was born at Plymouth on December 3, 1804. His father left that town a few years later, to become Curate, and subsequently Vicar, of Stratton, a little town in the centre of the district in which Morwenstow lies. It was here that young Hawker played those boyish pranks which are still recounted with much amusement in the neighbourhood. In 1823 he matriculated at Pembroke College, Oxford, but migrated to Magdalen Hall in consequence of his marriage. This was the romantic event of his life. His wife was Miss Charlotte Fans, a lady of some means and much character, who was more than twenty years Hawker's senior. In spite of this disparity of age, the marriage was an extremely happy one, and when Mrs. Hawker died in 1863, her husband was nearly broken-hearted. But in less than two years he married Miss Kuczynski, a Polish lady just forty years younger than himself. His only distinction at Oxford was winning the Newdigate Prize with a poem on "Pompeii" in 1827, but he was a well-read man and a good scholar. He was ordained in 1829 to the curacy of North Tamerton, and was appointed Vicar of Morwenstow in 1834. He hardly ever left the immediate neighbourhood, and only twice in his life visited London—once for his second marriage, in 1864, and ten years later for medical advice. He spent his first wife's money freely on the parish, building the vicarage and school, and restoring the church. He exercised a profuse hospitality of his own kind, and visitors from all parts of the county were welcomed at Morwenstow. By a strange accident he died in the town of his birth, having been received into the Church of Rome on the last day of his life, while he was unconscious. Mr. Byles wisely refrains from entering into discussion of this event, and I shall follow his example. It is enough to say that recent inquiries on the spot confirm the opinion at which most of his friends arrived at the time—that the reception was not due to his own initiative, and that there is no reason to suppose that his sympathies were ever with the Church of Rome.

Hawker is now known to the public as a poet and preserver of local traditions. In his own neighbourhood he is mainly remembered as an eccentric character. Such he certainly was—his habits, his speech, his surroundings were eccentric. His clothing has often been described. It included a brown coat, with claret-coloured lining, and a tight blue sailor's jersey, with a red cross on it, and ended in Hessian boots. Thus clad, he appeared at his front-door, holding a long stick surmounted by a cross, bare-headed, or with a hat to match his coat. He then welcomed his visitors, and invited them

into the house. The sitting-rooms were filled with old furniture and a quantity of china, collected from the country round. Among the china was a set of teacups without handles, in which tea was served to specially honoured guests, who, as the tea was always hot and the cups thin, found it difficult to partake of the one without breaking the other. Once when the post-bag came in during mid-day dinner, as it then did in that remote district, he uttered over it a prayer (I think in Latin) against bad news. This was not on any special occasion, and probably was his regular practice. There was generally a symbolic, and often a religious, side to his eccentricities. His quaint dress had its symbolism. He thought black a wrong colour for the clergy to wear, and the sailor's jersey was the fitting dress of a fisher of men. What the teacups without handles signified I never found out.

Another of his characteristics was his free use of Scripture in common conversation, and in support of his particular views. At least two instances of this came under my notice which have not been in any of the published accounts of his life. He was once showing a party of visitors round Morwenstow Church. My dog followed us unobserved, and came into the church. I was about to turn it out when Mr. Hawker said: "Don't turn the dog out—there were dogs in the Ark!" On another occasion three boys had gone over to Morwenstow, and were there at the time of the daily evensong. I had never seen Mr. Hawker officiate, and expressed my desire to accompany him to the service. He waited till long after the regular time, and then went to the church. It was getting dusk, and when he read the lesson he took a portable candlestick from the chancel, and held it over the lectern while he read. The congregation consisted of the caretaker, Mr. Hawker's young daughter, and ourselves. On our return to the vicarage one of the party—not the writer of this paper—had the temerity to say: "Mr. Hawker, is that the sort of congregation you generally get on week-days?" He was promptly rebuked by the Vicar in the following terms: "My young friend, I never count my congregation. David was punished for numbering the people."

Sometimes his characteristic sayings expressed suggestive and even striking ideas. Some of these are recorded by Mr. Byles. One of the best of them was addressed to myself, and has not yet found its way into print. I was walking with him on the grass terrace above Morwenstow Church, on whose antiquity Mr. Hawker enlarged, as he often did. I remarked that the population was small enough then, and must have been much smaller when the church was built. Mr. Hawker

said: "There was no population at all. The church was the first building in the parish." I innocently remarked: "I wonder how it occurred to anyone to build a church in this out-of-the-way place when there was no population to serve." The Vicar at once addressed me with his usual formula of reproof: "My young friend, in those days churches were not built to accommodate congregations. They were built *ad Dei gloriam*, and restored *ad majorem Dei gloriam*." In this he gave the explanation of the beauty of medieval architecture.

Hawker was, in fact, much more than a mystic or a character. He was a man of strong feeling, original ideas, and most attractive personality. His antipathies were strong, and often quite unreasonable. Few thinking people will endorse his sweeping condemnation of Milton and Wesley. Some of the most scathing comments on Dissent ever heard even in Cornwall were uttered by him, and are recorded by Mr Byles. Yet he was as much liked by his Nonconformist parishioners as by Churchmen. It will be new to many who know him only by his writings or the stories of the countryside to learn how diligent and earnest he was in his parish work. Yet he was one of the pioneers of some reforms that have now become nearly universal, one of the first clergy in Cornwall to introduce weekly offertories, and, as Rural Dean, to revive ruridecanal synods. And he completely altered the attitude of his parishioners towards shipwrecked sailors. These had hitherto been regarded as the lawful objects of pillage. Hawker made his people as keen to succour, as they had previously been to rob these unhappy victims of the sea. When rescue was impossible, he made it his business to give to each body a decent and honourable burial. The effect of this on the *morale* of Cornishmen can hardly be overestimated.

It is not my purpose now to discuss Hawker's merits as a poet. They were no doubt considerable. I cannot quite agree with the very high estimate that has been formed of his masterpiece, "The Quest of the Sangraal." It is a piece of true poetry, and certainly contains some beautiful passages; but to rank it, as some critics have done, with the poems of Tennyson, seems to me entirely to exaggerate its merits. It is rather as a writer of ballads that Hawker will be remembered. One of these spirited compositions—"The Song of the Cornish Men," the Trelawny ballad—is widely known. Some others—*e.g.*, "The Bells of Bottreau," and "The Gate Song of Stowe"—are at least its equals, and will probably have a permanent place in English literature. And some of his prose compositions in "Footprints" will always be read with interest by students of Cornish folklore. On the whole, Mr. Byles has shown us that one who has long been known

as one of the characters of Cornwall was also one of its worthies. And the object of the present writer will be attained if he has given the readers of the CHURCHMAN some better idea of the picturesque personality of the Parson-Poet of the West.

BARTON R. V. MILLS.



## THE WORLD INTO WHICH CHRISTIANITY CAME.<sup>1</sup>

“Das Heidentum ist verchristlicht, das Christentum romanisiert.”—  
WERNLE: *Die Anfänge*.

IN order to understand any religious or social movement, it is important to get as clear a conception as possible of the condition of the society which it seeks to influence; for both the course and the results of any such movement will, to a great extent, be governed by the condition of the material which it struggles to affect. In the New Testament Christianity is likened both to a seed cast into the ground and to leaven placed in the midst of meal; and the lesson of our Lord's first parable is that the harvest will depend, not only on the nature of the seed, but upon the condition of the soil.

Christianity may be said to have been a seed containing the possibility of a new life planted in the midst of the great Roman Empire; and during the earliest period of the Church's history the Empire was practically the field in which it grew. What, then, was the social and religious condition of, say, Asia Minor, Greece, or Italy, and especially of Rome itself, during this period? What were the social, and ethical, and religious standards and ideals then accepted? and how far were these actually realized in various classes or grades of society? What, apart from Christianity, were the chief philosophical and religious influences which were moulding men's opinions and conduct? How far were such religious conceptions or convictions which had been influential in the past still of present power? and what new religious ideas, or forces, or forms of worship, apart from Judaism and Christianity, were competing for the attention or acceptance of men?

An answer to all these questions cannot fail to be very helpful to the student of early Christian history, and especially if the answer be evidently based upon very adequate

<sup>1</sup> “Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius,” by Samuel Dill, M.A. London: Macmillan and Co., 1905.