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THE

# CHURCHMAN

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## ART. I.—BIBLE STUDY IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.

NO ancient Church writer coloured the Reformation theology so deeply as St. Augustine. Without enlarging on this obvious fact, it may be assumed that the Reformers generally must have been assured that they and the illustrious Bishop of Hippo stood on the same common ground. If the central principle of the Reformation in all countries was that of our Sixth Article, the absolute and sole authority of Holy Scripture in all matters of faith, it must have been felt that St. Augustine's voice was in unison with that dominant note. Otherwise, no occasional agreement on points of detail, no mere sympathy with his doctrines of predestination, or other favourite dogma, could have made him the great teacher, which he undoubtedly was, in the eyes of the Reformers. To read his treatise, *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, is to have this fact brought before us in the most vivid manner. His critical methods may often be crude, his knowledge of science imperfect or incorrect, but he is absolutely at one with the great schools of Protestant theology as to the duty of all Christians to search the Scriptures. He knows no bondage in its interpretation but the restraint of its own analogies and harmonies, and bids his disciples search freely into the critical history of the individual books for a full assurance that each of them is of divine origin, and belongs to the genuine Canon.

If this be so, it follows that St. Augustine is on the Protestant side of the great dividing line which intersects the Church. Beneath all controversies must lie the yet deeper question of the authority which is to decide them. Among Christians who have a dogmatic system only two such authorities are known. They may be confused by unskilful or artful handling, but Church authority and Bible authority are the two rival powers. The

one is Romanism, the other is Protestantism. We need not be ashamed of the results of three centuries of Bible study. It may have produced some strange vagaries occasionally; but the great Protestant Schools from Luther downwards have been marvellously steadfast, while the Schools of Authority have developed the strange monstrosities of the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility.

The second and third books of the treatise of St. Augustine, *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, contain his instructions on the Study of Holy Scripture. In reviewing those books two main points of view will continually present themselves. First, his attitude towards Scripture; second, his technical methods of interpretation. With regard to these last mentioned his position is more akin to our own than that of his great contemporary Chrysostom. For his mother-tongue was Latin. The book he usually read, and from which he discoursed was, therefore, a Latin translation. The original tongues were to him foreign, and could only be a subject of study, even as they are to ourselves.

If there is one thing more satisfactory than another in the history of all ancient Churches, it is their care to provide their people with the Word of God, "in their own tongue, wherein they were born." Where, for at least 500 years, can we find a Church without a translation, or even several translations, of Holy Scripture? This fact meets St. Augustine at the commencement of this part of his subject (v. 6):—

> Holy Scripture, written at first in one language, had been translated into various tongues, had been spread far and wide, and thus became known to the nations for their salvation. In reading it men seek to discover the mind and will of those by whom it was written, and through these to know the will of God, in accordance with which we believe them to have spoken.

Obviously, nothing short of the free translation and circulation of the Word of God, as the life of missionary effort, is present to the mind of Augustine. Moreover, we begin with the distinct recognition of the fundamental principle already stated. The will of God is set forth in Holy Scripture. To discover that will we must study the meaning of the Sacred writers, who spoke under divine guidance.

But the principle, thus broadly and without hesitation set forth, brings us at once to the perplexities of varied interpretations. While we may demur to the critical accuracy of some of Augustine's methods and solutions, nothing can be more instructive than his absolute fearlessness about consequences. Unbelief and misbelief were as prevalent in that age as in any other.

Heathen, Manichee, Pelagian, or ignorant believers, might

reject or misapply, or diversely understand many things; Augustine none the more flies to some traditional prescription, or some infallible interpreter. The Word of God is to him a garden, within whose enclosed space flowers and fruits are abundantly growing. The very diversity which it presents to different minds only fills him with the more admiration. Hence (c. vi. 7) he suggests reasons for the "manifold obscurities and ambiguities" of Holy Scripture. Pride must be lowered by discovering what labour is needed for unfolding the deep things of God, while the mind is aroused to put forth all its powers to discover what has been invitingly hidden. Thus the spiritual search meets with continual reward, and no satiety can be felt in a pursuit which presents everchanging interest. The illustration given of this peculiar delight may seem to many to be drawn from a grotesque interpretation. It is the following. We may rejoice to be told in plain prose of a true servant of Christ, coming from the baptismal font, filled with the twofold love of God and man, and thenceforward useful in the deliverance of others from the bondage of superstition and vice. But with a peculiar charm do the words of the Song of Songs (iv. 2) come home to us when we read the same meaning there. "Thy teeth are like a shorn flock which came up from the washing; whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them." The shorn fleece is the worldly burden which the converts have laid aside. They come up from baptism bearing the twin commandments of love, and "none is barren in that holy fruit." Then they become the teeth of the Church, biting men away from their errors, and transferring them softened into her body. Whatever we may think of the interpretation, we can sympathize with the pious ardour with which the mind of God is thus sought, and with the admiration of that higher wisdom with which "the Holy Spirit has so ordered the Holy Scriptures that the plainer passages obviate hunger, while the more obscure stimulate the appetite."

Who, then, shall be the most skilful searcher of the Sacred writings? There is no hesitation in the reply, no apparent consciousness that any different answer could be given. He it is, "who has read them all, and holds them in his knowledge, not all perhaps with understanding, but who has at least read them." Could the Bible be thrown open more absolutely for the study of the simplest soul?

But this answer leads to another question (c. viii. 12). How shall we know what books justly claim the august title of the Word of God? Is this great divine of the Fifth Century in possession of any key to this question other than we possess? Is there any Church decree, any authoritative decision of older tribunals, any contemporary utterance to which he refers us?

There is none. The student must gather his information for himself, and form his own judgment. He is advised to pursue his investigation into the Canonicity of the books which claim to be Scripture in the following manner. Those books which are received by all Catholic Churches he must prefer to those which some of them do not receive. With regard to those which fall short of this unanimous reception, he must both weigh and count the testimony of the Churches which accept them. There may be on one side Churches more in number and of weightier authority. Especially there may be some of apostolic origin, honoured with the reception of Epistles. On the other side there may be Churches fewer in number and of minor authority. In such a case the decision is obvious. Should, however, the improbable case occur, that a numerical majority of the Churches be on one side, and a minority of the higher authority on the other, the result must be held to be equally balanced.

To some, who have been taught that THE CHURCH somehow, and at some ascertained time, gave the Bible to her children, this frank uncertainty of the Fifth Century will be startling and disturbing. To the intelligent reader of the Bible it will present nothing new. He will at least have asked some simple questions, why (for example) he rejects the Book of Wisdom, and receives the Epistle to the Hebrews in his Canon of Scripture. The answer on which he will have relied may not be worded exactly as Augustine put it, but it comes to the same thing. It is simply because the vast preponderance of testimony requires such a decision.

While reading such sentiments as these we must feel to be, as in fact we are, removed by centuries from the modern conception of the papacy, and from the dogmatic arrogance of Trent, which requires a license for the possession or use of a Bible by private persons, and forbids even an unpublished interpretation of Scripture against the unanimous consent of the Holy Fathers.

When we turn to the prolegomena of Alford, or whatever other *apparatus criticus* we may be in the habit of using, what else do we find than the very process which Augustine recommends? How can we learn the verdict of these many Churches, but through their literary representatives? What else do those lists of quotations from ancient writers mean in dissertations on the canon of Scripture? What is the purpose for which the words of Clement, of Justin Martyr, of Irenæus, and all the other venerable names are cited but to prove how far within their knowledge this or that book was deemed Canonical?

Apart from details, it thus appears that the idea of Canonicity in the mind of Augustine was the same as our own. Was the

result of investigation the same? In the New Testament it is precisely identical, and it is noticeable that he attributes to St. Paul the Epistle to the Hebrews. But in the Old Testament he includes a considerable portion of the Apocrypha—Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and the Maccabees. How strongly Augustine was influenced by the authority of the Septuagint in this matter will be seen further on. His great critical contemporary, Jerome, came to a different conclusion, and pronounced those very books to be Apocryphal.

Our object, however, is not to investigate the Canon; it is to illustrate the ideas and the liberty of the Fifth Century. Having pronounced upon the Canonical books, Augustine repeats his admonition to search the Scripture (c. ix. 14) :—

> In all these books the pious reader seeks to know the will of God. He must know these books. Even if he does not understand them, he must read them, he must commit them to memory—anyhow, they must not remain unknown. The more he discovers, whether of the rule of life or of faith, the more will he find his understanding to open. As he becomes more familiar with the language of Scripture, he will be enabled to use the clearer passages to throw light on those which are more obscure. But this process requires a retentive memory well stored with Scripture. Failing this, such a fruitful work cannot be accomplished.

It may be permitted to pause for the instructive contrast of a modern utterance. "If the Bible is to be read in school without note or comment, it had much better be read in Hebrew." We need not search far to find other examples of such painful distrust of the Word of God, too freely uttered of late.

Augustine has, on the other hand, a quiet confidence in the Word of his Father, that it cannot mislead, and that to know it and store it in the memory will before long bring light into the soul.

But if the Christian is thus led to the study of the Word, and if it contains figurative expressions and dark utterances, what special learning may come to his aid most effectually? To Augustine, as to ourselves, the original languages of Scripture were foreign tongues. Hence the acquirement of Greek and Hebrew is placed first as essential to the right understanding of Holy Scripture. That was an age of revision as well as ours, and with far more need. There was no authorized invariable Latin Bible. The transcribers of the Latin text were often acquainted with Greek, and introduced arbitrary emendations from the Septuagint as they wrote, so that the variations, says Augustine, were numberless. It is characteristic of his acute and fertile rather than exact mind, that he endeavours to point out benefits which may arise out of this very diversity. Still

he discerns that, in many cases, if we would know the very thoughts of the writer, we must be acquainted with his language, or at least make use of very literal translations, in order to judge of the probable meaning by the comparison of the varied renderings of words.

Otherwise he would prefer a more free translation, since the genius of one language is violated by forcing into it too literally the idiomatic peculiarities of another. But we need not dwell on the solecisms and ambiguities which Augustine found in the Latin versions current in his time.

One curious note we find which shows that a certain kind of conservatism was as rooted in the fifth century in Africa, as in the seventeenth in England. Ps. cxxxii. 13, ran thus, *Super ipsum autem floriet sanctificatio mea.* The more learned hearer would prefer the correct *florebit*, nor was there anything in the way of the correction excepting *consuetudo cantantium.* The "habit of the choirs" could retain the less perfect version of the Psalms then as now. From prejudice of this kind Augustine was wholly free, and insists strongly (c. xiv. 21) on the importance of a thoroughly emended text.

The disadvantages of a Bible Student in those days come out very clearly. The reader has met with words or idioms strange to him. What can he do? If they belong to foreign tongues, he must consult men who know those languages, or he must himself acquire them, or at least compare different translations. This involved committing to memory the doubtful word or phrase. He will meet with some one having the needful learning, or with some passage which may clear up the difficulty. He must read, remember, ponder, and wait. The solution will come some day. We should turn to our shelves. We should refer to our dictionaries, our concordances, our commentaries. Only, we observe again, here is no bondage of any kind to authority other than that of the Word itself. Full, free, patient investigation, is the rule of the Fifth Century.

Augustine's own power of textual criticism cannot be rated very highly. His knowledge of Greek seems to have been somewhat limited, and of Hebrew he was entirely ignorant. Hence he gives to the Septuagint an authority which almost places it on a level with the Hebrew text (c. xv. 22). He intimates that he is more than inclined to believe the story of the several translators of that famous version being enclosed in separate cells, and yet producing an identical translation. He may well ask—"If this be so, who would dare to compare, much less to prefer, anything to so great an authority?" Hence he thinks that the Holy Spirit may have so guided the translators as to have taught them that one rendering which would be most suitable to the Gentiles who should afterwards believe in

the Lord. Consequently, if the Hebrew text should suggest a different meaning, a devout Christian will hardly prefer it to that which the LXX. have taught him. Augustine will not find many followers amongst ourselves in this opinion. Nevertheless we may take shame to ourselves that we of the Church of England have fallen so far behind other Churches in this matter. The German or the Scottish minister feels himself bound to consult "the Hebrew verity" to a degree quite unknown in England. The criticism of the Hebrew text, with the parallel collation of the LXX. in its most suggestive testimony to very ancient varied readings, has found little encouragement, and remains almost to be commenced from the beginning. We shall not be real students of the Old Testament until all this is changed.

Passing to the interpretation of the figurative language of Holy Scripture we come to very debateable ground. There has always existed great difference of opinion as to the degree in which secondary, or typical, or spiritual meanings, may lie under the inspired language. Augustine, in common with all writers of his age, carried this to a dangerous extent. Lax and arbitrary interpretation of the Word of God led to much the same result as its neglect. The edge of the sword of the Spirit was turned as effectually by the interposition of the comment of human fancy as by unbelief itself. "Lord here be two swords," was warrant enough for coercive ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the mediæval mind. The Reformation may be truly enough described, in one important phase of its appearance, as a return to grammar and common sense in reading the Scriptures. So one regarded it to whom the English race owes more than tongue can tell. William Tyndale, in his "Obedience of a Christian Man," sweeps away at one stroke the figurative encumbrance. "They divide the Scripture," says he, "into four senses, the literal, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical."

> Thou shalt understand that the Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth, whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way. Nevertheless the Scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle, or allegory signifieth is ever the literal sense, which thou must seek out diligently. . . . . This blindness, wherein we now are, sprang first of allegories. For Origen and the doctors of his time drew all the Scripture unto allegories; whose ensample they that came after followed so long, till they at last forgot the order and process of the text, supposing the Scripture served but to feign allegories upon; insomuch that twenty doctors expound one text twenty ways. . . . . Yea,

they are come unto such blindness, that they not only say the literal sense profiteth not, but also that it is hurtful and noisome and killeth the soul. . . . . God is a Spirit and all his words are spiritual. His literal sense is spiritual, and all his words are spiritual. When thou readest (Matt. i.), "She shall bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for He shall save his people from their sins;" this literal sense is spiritual, and everlasting life to as many as believe it. . . . . Finally, all God's words are spiritual, if thou have eyes of God to see the right meaning of the text, and whereunto the Scripture pertaineth, and the final end and cause thereof. . . . . There is no story nor gest, seem it never so simple or so vile unto the world, but that thou shalt find spirit and life and edifying in the literal sense: for it is God's Scripture, written for their learning and comfort. There is no clout or rag there that hath not precious relics wrapt therein of faith, hope, patience and long-suffering, and of the truth of God, and also of His righteousness.

But in applying the Word Tyndale allows full, yet measured liberty. "When we have found out the literal sense of the Scripture by the process of the text," he says, "or by a like text of another place, then we borrow similitudes or allegories of the Scripture and apply them to our purposes: *which allegories are no sense of the Scripture, but free things besides the Scripture, and altogether in the liberty of the spirit;* which allegories I may not make at all the wild adventures, but must keep me within the compass of the faith, and ever apply mine allegory to Christ and unto the faith."

The modern use of the term *literal* may tend to obscure the words of the venerable translator. He does not speak of the bare grammatical meaning in its most meagre significance. He would enforce the direct absolute message of the pure words of Scripture. It may be that our age needs the repetition of the warning. Commentaries again appear laden with patristic fancies, which may or may not be in harmony with the true proportion of the faith. They may influence the minds of many; but even if substantially correct they must lack the vigour of the confident announcement, "Thus saith the Lord."

If Augustine himself was able to distinguish between the application which his own fancy brought into Scripture and the actual meaning which the Holy Ghost intended, it is certain that the ages which followed him lost the distinction, as Tyndale so vigorously declared. But we must return to the Bishop of Hippo. Whatever we may think of particular interpretations, there is generally breadth in his principles. He perceives that all knowledge may illustrate the Bible. Natural history may contribute from its stores.

The Lord says, Be ye wise as serpents. The serpent to protect its head will offer its whole body to its assailants. So for our Head, which

is Christ, we should willingly offer our body to the persecutors. Or, again, to free itself from its old skin, the serpent draws itself through a narrow hole, so shall we also "put off the old man," by entering through "the strait gate."

In like manner note that the carbuncle shines in darkness and some metaphors of Scripture become clear. Observe that the hyssop cleanses the lungs, and pierces rocks with its roots, and we may understand why it is said, Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

The reader may smile at the simple confidence with which such interpretations are hazarded. We fear, however, that he may be able without much difficulty to call to mind some equally startling Scripture elucidations which the pulpit or the religious press of this nineteenth century has poured into the startled ear of the more scientific auditor. "Verify your quotations," was the admonition of the veteran Oxford scholar. "Verify your supposed facts," should be the admonition to him who presumes to extract a meaning from the Bible with the aid of some scraps of natural science. Be sure the Bible is accurate. Be equally sure that science, even of the best, is often inaccurate; and that the second-hand science of the ill-informed is more mistaken still.

We shall not dwell upon succeeding chapters (c. xvi. 25). The mystic language of numbers is treated as equally clear with the multiplication-table to him who has mastered its inner significance. *Four* marks creation existing in *time;* for morning, noon, evening, and night embrace the day, while spring, summer, autumn, and winter compose the year. *Three* is the number of the Holy Trinity. *Seven* indicates the creature, because the life is threefold, including heart, soul, and mind wherewith God is to be loved; and the body is compounded of the four elements. Thus we understand why the number 40 is the period of fasting, since it is four times ten; and the true life that is in the knowledge of God has no delight in the things of time. How music may in like manner lend its aid, and how the fallacies of astrology and other Gentile vanities of false learning are to be put away, we need not here discuss. Nor need we show how with true discernment the use of history or the mechanical arts is assigned its place in reference to the interpretation of Scripture. Augustine is more at home when he discusses (c. xxxi. 48, &c.) the place of logical science in Bible interpretation. We recognize with some amusement the old teacher of rhetoric bringing out some of the examples of logical fallacies which he had no doubt used as illustrations in his lectures at Carthage and at Rome. He reminds us (c. xxxv. 53) that the science of definition, division, and arrangement is no invention of man. It is inherent in the reason. It is evolved from the mind, as it discourses on the things which God has

made. Like the science of numbers, it is discovered, not created by man. No man can vary the immutable truth that three times three are nine. Order, then, arrangement, definition must have their place in discussing the Word which comes from the same Eternal Mind.

Finally, on this part of the subject Augustine (c. xxxviii. 57) warns the disciple to make all things redound to the praise and love of God alone, otherwise "he may seem to be learned, but wise he cannot be."

But how (c. xl. 60) shall we regard the philosophy of the ancients? If they have spoken anything that is true and in harmony with the faith we may seize it as from unlawful possessors. The Egyptians had not only their bondage and their idols, but precious things. Israel, abandoning Egypt, left its abominations but carried away its treasures. So Gentile philosophy amidst its vanities possesses fragments of truth, gold and silver, dug (so to speak) from the mines of an ever-present Providence. These the Christian may appropriate and dedicate to God. So came forth from Egypt Cyprian, most delightful of teachers, and blessed martyr. So came Lactantius, Victorinus, Hilary, and Greeks beyond number. So came forth Moses, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."

Thus furnished—

> The student of Holy Scripture may enter on his investigations, but must ever remember that knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth. And so, whatever riches of Egypt he may bring with him, unless he has kept the Passover, he cannot be saved. Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, and to all the toilers in Egypt He gives the invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." After all, what was the store which Israel brought out of Egypt in comparison of the wealth accumulated in Jerusalem under King Solomon? What are the resources of heathen learning compared to the knowledge of Holy Scripture? There may be found whatever really useful has been read elsewhere; and there in greater abundance may be seen what can nowhere else be learned, save in the wonderful elevation, and the wonderful lowliness of the Scriptures.

Such, in brief outline, is the second book of Augustine on Christian Learning. If Europe, in succeeding ages had followed these precepts, instead of petrifying his doctrines, it is not too much to say that the history of Christendom would have been totally changed. The free, the full, the bold,—but the patient, the modest, the reverential, and submissive study of the Word of their Father, must be the portion of the Children. The appliances of scholarship, of history, of science, which the simplest scholar of our days enjoys, are manifestly far beyond anything which this great Father could command. Nor have

we discovered any advantage of traditional knowledge, or interpretative authority, which was his portion rather than ours. The Empire which he saw in its decay has vanished. The tongue in which he discoursed is no longer articulate among men. "But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever." The future of England, and of the English Church, is wrapped up in its submissive treatment of that Eternal Word.

T. P. BOULTBEE.

## ART. II.—JESUS LANE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE Jesus Lane Sunday School owes its name to the fact that for the first six or seven years of its existence it was held in a small building known as the Friends' Meeting House, situate in Jesus Lane, on the left-hand side as you approach Jesus College from Sidney Street. To what use this building was put from the year 1833, when the Jesus Lane Sunday School was moved into rooms in King Street, placed at the disposal of the Committee by the Governors of the Old Schools of Cambridge, until 1862, we know not; but in the latter year, this first home of the Gownsmen's Sunday School became the Sunday Schoolroom of the parish of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of which was in those days largely attended by undergraduates, who valued the ministry first of the Rev. F. J. Jameson, so early called to his rest, and then of the Rev. T. T. Perowne, now Archdeacon of Norwich.

When the Jesus Lane Sunday School was first moved into King Street in the year 1833, it was only allowed to make use of the lower schoolroom; subsequently, through the influence of the Rev. W. Carus, the whole building was made available, the school having outgrown the accommodation provided.

The Jesus Lane Sunday School is now held in handsome buildings of its own situate in Paradise Street, a quiet street running parallel with, and at no great distance from, the north side of Parker's Piece, but still retains its early name. It was during the superintendency of Mr. Pelly, 1861–63, that efforts were first made to obtain for the school this home of its own.

When in 1865 Mr. Leeke accepted the office of superintendent, he was charged by the Committee to take immediate steps to carry out the building project. A Building Committee was formed, on which the present Bishop of Durham, who acted as chairman, the Rev. T. T. Perowne, the Rev. G. W. Weldon, then Vicar of Christ Church, and other influential members of the University, consented to serve, and in October, 1867, the school