

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*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 *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jts-os\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article]

## THE LIFE OF EDWARD WHITE BENSON, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

NO one can doubt that this is a fine record of a noble life. And the character of the man portrayed justifies the fact that the portrait should be drawn by his son. For nothing is more noticeable than the paramount interest, throughout the record, of the personal equation.

Of course the more positive and objective elements are important enough. We are taken up into great affairs; we move through momentous crises. All his life long he was doing work of a large and influential type. The period through which he passed was crowded with public incidents and with profound intellectual changes. Into the thick of them he was thrust. He had to think, speak, act, in a way that determined the course of events. But, after all, it remains that the *man* himself is more vitally interesting than anything that he ever said or did. The book reveals him; and in that lies its strength and its charm. The incidents are but the material through which the personality emerges. From cover to cover this dramatic display of individual character holds all the attention. The son's sure and skilful hand is excellently employed in achieving such a result.

And the man, so revealed, has something about him which entralls. That is not too strong a word. He entralls by his intense and vivid vitality, alert, dramatic, energetic. Wherever he is you feel the vibration of his presence. He is always electrical, sensitive, radiating, forceful. Sparks crackle and dance, as he is touched. In his earlier days this characteristic is excessive, nor was it ever without its alarm. And here, perhaps, the affection of a son whose reverence can afford to be candid has almost over-emphasised the terrors. Mr. Arthur Benson knows so well the beauty and the tenderness of his father's heart that he seems now and again to parade the frankness with which he can

note defects of temper. He is too anxious to show that he is not afraid to be honest. He gives instances of vehemence or of harshness which no doubt take their proper proportion in his own intimate perspective, but which, when taken out of the perspective and thrown into prominent relief in the cold nakedness of print, leave on those who have no personal intimacy to mellow down the bluntness of the record a more unpleasant impression than they are really intended to convey. One or two of the stories told sound simply rude or cruel.

However, a hasty masterfulness there certainly was; and he could terrify; and he did not allow for certain weaknesses; and he had the power of anger. But his life is the story of a gradual victory over this vehemence. The change that passes into him after he has left Wellington is distinctly felt in the book. He himself became profoundly aware of the perils that beset anger, however righteous. He had trusted it as a weapon of God, and had found it break in his hand. What man is fit to wield God's wrath? Anger, he would earnestly plead, is not part of the Christian's true armoury. The work that it may do for God can always be done better, even if at the cost of more time, without it. I can vividly remember the personal intensity with which he urged this plea in Retreat, as out of the living experience of one who could speak of what he had tried and known. Still, to the last the restraint of equal debate tried him sorely: and his sense of the strain that it imposed upon him withheld him, it would appear, from much open converse with men who differed from him, and seriously hampered him in the House of Lords.

What it cost him to conquer this masterfulness of temper comes out in a touching note to his wife, July 14, 1878:

'So this is my birthday. Nine and forty years, like the knights and squires of Branksome, but not of name or of fame. Only of work, such as it is according to my very poor notions of working, and service according to my very poor notions of service. . . . I think the most grave and altogether best lesson which I have learned in nine and forty years is the incalculable and infinite superiority of gentleness to every other force, and the imperious necessity of humility as a foundation to every other virtue. Without this, it appears to me, the best characters and noblest have to be taken to pieces and built up again with the new concrete underlaid—and without gentleness things may be done, but Oh, at what needless cost of tears and blood too' (ii 736).

This transformation, this enrichment, of character is the key to the life. The force, the nobility of type, the swift passion, the glow—these are all there from the start. But they have something yet to gain, all through the Wellington time. The gifts overwhelm rather than win. His exquisite power of translation, and his passionate delight in the delicacies of language, thrilling as they were in their effect upon those whom he so loved to teach, must have swept them like a storm, under which they bent and shook. What his power as a great schoolmaster was, is given by Dr. Verrall on p. 215 of the first volume, in a memoir of singular beauty and insight, every word of which is worth reading. Dr. Verrall has not spared himself or his own boyish infirmities in the brave desire to exhibit perfectly the full moral force of his headmaster, brought to bear upon him with such compelling strength, yet with such subtle attention to the involution of a boy's intellectual growth. It is a splendid picture. 'His grave is now as the grave of our father. We learned from him the power and the weakness of language, the beauty and the courage of life.' So the reminiscence closes: and the tribute is absolutely sincere. Yet, as Mr. Arthur Benson notices, it needed a sensitive and gifted boy to receive this vehement inspiration. To such

'He was the vivid, idealising master and leader, magnifying both opportunities and defects, seeing boundless possibilities in the simplest words and acts, both for good and evil, and with a vitality which rippled, to the extremest verge, the society in which he moved' (i 227).

But the power could not temper itself to 'shorn lambs'; it was unmeasured in its demands, and this lack of measure might justify a recoil, a refusal, a repudiation, in those whom it failed to spur or to enkindle, by the very extravagance of its hopes.

'Those who looked on life more coldly and impartially, thought that in his view there was a want of balance and proportion; those whose nature was small and poor saw in the richness and luxuriance of his nature, insincerity and exaggeration; those whose characters lacked force and purpose were frightened rather than inspired by the vividness and alacrity he required' (*ibid.*).

Nor was this effect confined to the unworthy.

'It was always somewhat difficult, even to those who admired and loved him best, to move without affectation in the high atmosphere

both of thought and emotion in which my father naturally moved. I can recollect being paralysed as a child by having my meagre conversational stock criticised, and by being required to produce from my lessons or my reading something of more permanent interest. I still think this is a mistaken view of the parental relation, but for the mental stimulus it gave me I am grateful yet. Later, when travelling *en famille* with my father, worn with heat and dust and railway-trains and the *dura navis*, his own fatigue would take the form of indignant exclamations that we did not gaze with more avidity on what we could see of Paris through the door windows of a crowded omnibus.

Yet of this high pressure of thought and emotion he was certainly not conscious. He thought that all were made of the same fire and dew as himself. It was always a certain strain to be long alone with him, to converse with him, however much interested in the subject one might be. What was natural to him tended to be affectation in another, and his forceful temperament demanded companionship without allowing intuitively for strain' (*ibid.*).

That is as admirably as it is frankly said. Nor would the criticism have been unjustified even to the day of the Archbishop's death. Only there is felt to be, after Wellington, a power at work within him which mellows and sweetens and spiritualises this tendency to overbear.

The very face bears witness to the change. Framed as it was always on such superb lines, it gains immeasurably in beauty as the years pass over it. The best witness in the world to such a change notes its reality and its depth in a most delightful bit of memory recorded on p. 587 of vol. i.

'My mother writes: "There was nothing in its way more remarkable than the development of the beauty of his face as time went by. As a young man it certainly gave good promise, but eagerness and vivacity were the chief things that his face then expressed. A photograph of him taken at 30 bears scarcely a trace of resemblance to the last one taken by Elliott and Fry. It is impossible even for those who knew him well to trace the course of the development. With most faces there is a great change, but though in many cases new lines of power, or thought, or softening can be seen, it is seldom that the absolute beauty develops so markedly. He had always very rich curves in the mouth. In fact it was scarcely like an English mouth at all, but more Italian in its beauty. The nose was always fine but the sharp delicate *receding* cut of the nostril seemed to get sharper and finer as time went on. The brow developed extraordinarily, large bumps

grew over the arch of the eye, specially during the last 14 or 15 years of his life. He took to growing his hair longer of later years, which increased his likeness, often noticed, to John Wesley. When he first came to London the artist world was much excited about him, and more than one wanted to paint him. At the first Academy soirée at which he was present, one who was there told me that groups as he passed would eagerly turn round to look at him. I used to be afraid that when his hair grew whiter it would not furnish a strong enough background to the marked features, and I think Herkomer felt this. When we asked him seven or eight years ago to paint the portrait which according to immemorial custom each Archbishop had to leave at Lambeth, he urged speed. 'I can wait,' he said, 'but the subject cannot.' Yet this proved not to be so. It is seldom, I think, that the growing development of a face strikes the members of the family—yet of late years we have often talked to each other of the changes which seemed to us all very rapid.

One cold day at Milan, on our way home from Florence, we were standing just outside S. Ambrogio—he was wearing a large black cloak and had flung it round his shoulder in an Italian manner and was looking up at the façade of the church. A woman who was passing caught sight of him, stood still to look and exclaimed, 'Che bel prete !'

I shall never forget one night in the summer of 1894. I had been ill, and was still somewhat of an invalid and was unable to go away with him to pay a visit to which we were both looking forward. This depressed him a good deal, and we had various other anxieties just at that time. He used always to work late, and this night he came into my room about 12 o'clock, leaving his door open. My room was dark and as he stood talking to me the light from the other room streamed out on him. He was deeply depressed: 'I feel as if it were all closing in,' he said. I tried to take the points one by one and show that they were not so very bad after all. He stood silent for a few minutes, and I could not think of the anxieties or of anything but the extraordinary beauty of the picture. He was in a purple cassock, and the light caught the colour. There was a warm tint on his face from the inner room, and his white hair shone and sparkled like frost. His features were grave almost to gloom and the splendid lines of his profile were thrown into relief by the strong light and deep shade."

And what is the moment at which the transformation begins?

Certainly, the chancellorship at Lincoln. It is at Lincoln that the spirit in him takes a deeper tone. He passes out of the narrow Academic limitations into touch with the life of the Church as a body. Not, indeed, that he had not been a Church-

man before this. On the contrary, his innermost devotional ardours had been, from his very boyhood, set Churchwards. They were pronouncedly ecclesiastical. Few things are more interesting in the Life than the record of the affectionate intimacy of himself and Lightfoot, knit by the bond of the Canonical Hours. The letter to J. B. Lightfoot on the formation of a small society for holy living, headed with its *Non nobis Domine*, admits us into the innermost secret of a young life inflamed with the ardours of catholic devotion. The sacrificial effort of the confederated lives is to rest on nothing which they are not as Christians already pledged to do. 'At Baptism, you and I, before the Blessed Trinity, before all Angels, and the whole Church in heaven and earth, made three solemn vows.' It is these vows which they will set themselves to keep.

'We promised to renounce . . . the vain pomp and glory of the world. Have we even attempted this? Again, . . . the Kingdom of God was for the *Poor*. . . . Let us league with all our souls and hearts, and powers of mind and body, that it may be no more God's witness against us, "My people perish for lack of knowledge." Let us determine while our hearts are still warm, and unchilled by the lessons of the world, to teach the *Poor*.'

'We may begin this work now. Let our prayers rise up a continual incense before God, for the extension of His Kingdom, and the revival of the Church in our day; many outward ordinances want amending, a whole order of ministers in the Church has become extinct. Fasting and other spiritual helps are cast aside' (i 51, 52).

So the passionate outburst pours on, in the blessed hopefulness and thoroughness of a youth that has consecrated itself to God; and every syllable tingles with the spirit of the Church, down to the closing cries of entreaty *Ora pro me. In Christo salus. ORA. ORA. ORA PRO ME MISERO*. So again to his friend from boyhood, J. F. Wickenden, in September, 1849, he is on fire with his first discovery of the Prayer for the Dead in the Alexandrine Liturgy of St. Basil:

'Remember, O Lord, all those who are already at rest. Grant rest to their souls in the bosom of our Holy Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; gather them together in a green pasture and lead them forth beside the waters of comfort in a paradise far from all grief, sorrow, and mourning, in the glorious light of Thy Saints.'

And, after several other quotations, writes:

'May be I am rather rash in sending you these now, while I am hot about them ; however I have not used them yet, nor do I intend doing so until I have thought a good deal more coolly about them than at present. However I want to hear your opinion about them ; that they are beautiful is beyond doubt, though there are some expressions which we should both, I fancy, agree to alter ' (i 82).

This instinctive delight in the ancient catholic mould of prayer determined his devotional life from first to last, even when he was most vehemently severing himself from that Tractarianism which was filled with the same spiritual delight as he in our rich heritage of liturgical devotion. It shows itself with singular humour in the sharp criticism of the Presbyterian Service to which he had been taken in Scotland.

All this was in him, then, from the days of these earliest ardours, when his boyhood kindled into worship. But it remained for Lincoln to set currents free which had been hitherto hard-set. His soul opened, the harshness relaxed, the character was enriched, and a certain warmth and graciousness are felt where before there was terror.

Two influences seemed to have specially conspired to work the change. First, the old Bishop of Lincoln showed to him the wonderful treasures of tenderness, of generosity, of spiritual sincerity, of high sacrifice, of intrepid single-heartedness, which could be consistent with the intense ecclesiastical conservatism of a man who could be the very heart of the antagonism to Dr. Temple's appointment to the bishopric of Exeter. Benson had himself put out in the *Times* the noblest and most passionate appeal that was made on behalf of the great chief whom at Rugby he had adored. Yet his whole heart loved this Christopher of Lincoln—loved him for his splendid capacities of spiritual heroism, for his personal sanctity, for his intensity of purpose, for his utter surrender to God. A Churchman in every fibre of his being, he was also the very soul of chivalrous honour and of undaunted faith, with the touch of a prophet upon him, giving dignity to what might have been otherwise pedantic and bookish in a mind so remote from the culture and temper of the age in which he lived. Generations of old dead ecclesiastics lived again in him. He was a living example of what their greatness had been, even if he illustrated also, with equal vividness, their pro-



verbal limitations. It was a splendid type of consecrated scholarship: and then round about it was the family with that unmistakable force which is characteristic of the Wordsworths—a force of their own, totally unworldly, unaffected by circumstance, with a childlike incapacity for fear, untrammelled by the shadow of self-consciousness, with the large freedom that belongs to natural things. Into the full pressure of this force Benson passed. He revelled in the keen intellectual vigour of a family so devotedly and affectionately domestic. This combination was exactly what he delighted in. The influence of Riseholme passed into his life: and the letters to Elizabeth Wordsworth are a delightful record of the passage.

Secondly, Lincoln brought him into touch, not only with the Apostolic man at the top of the hill, but with the working man at the bottom. In that great Bible class of his he set free his human and pastoral impulses, unfettered by scholastic formalities. He met men face to face: he spoke from soul to soul. It was a novel experience to him to find himself handling life in the rough, moving in an atmosphere where independent and crude common-sense worked out its modern problems without any regard to the traditions of culture. He felt the force of the appeal made by the simplicities of elemental manhood. His shrewdness set itself joyfully to cope with theirs. He let himself go with an abandonment that won their hearts. He never got nearer to the flesh and blood of average men than he did in those few years at Lincoln. And this told on him. It opened fresh doors. It taught him his powers. It softened and enheartened him. The famous class of great ladies, for which he did so much in later days at Lambeth, could never have been what it was if it had not been for the earlier class of artisans at Lincoln.

The spiritual transformation that was begun at Lincoln was completed at Truro, sanctified as that time was by his lifelong sorrow over the loss of his eldest boy, Martin. And here I have my one serious complaint to make against the author of the book. I cannot for a moment allow that enough is made of the five years in the Cornish bishopric. It appears merely as a bright and happy interlude before the main work of his life came to him. And, in a sense, it can wear this character. It was so quick: it

swung along with such a rush: it was followed by years of strenuous and vaster labour, in the searching light of the supreme throne. The enormous range of industry that is inevitable to the archbishopric involved the larger space that had to be allowed for its record. Yet, when all has been said, it remains that the spiritual value and significance of the Cornish period were unique. Never again, in the after-years, weighted by measureless responsibilities, was he able to give full fling to the joyous outbreak of all the strength and beauty that he had in him to give to the Kingdom of God. Down there, on that hidden headland, he could allow his exuberant energy of work free play, unhindered by the anxieties which encumber a great position under incessant criticism. His buoyant idealism was kindled by the poetic contrast between the thing that he found to hand and the thing that he meant to do. All his creative faculty of organisation was evoked, with its equal delight in the depth of the foundations to be laid, and in the perfection of the smallest detail to be foreseen. His warmth of feeling responded to the imaginative emotion of the Cornish. Strange memories, archaic visions, hovered mistily over uplands and hollows; the Past, in its fascinating shadowiness, in its weird oddities, met him at every turn of the road in the quaint form of suggestive aloofness which most appealed to his swift curiosity. Everything, that he undertook, went through with enthusiasm. He had all the joy of multitudinous beginnings; and he left before the drag had begun of seeing to the continuance of what had been begun, among a people who are quicker to welcome than they are stable to sustain.

Above all, Cornwall gave him the rare opportunity of fulfilling the dream which had been his from boyhood. He had been possessed by the ideal of corporate life in a cathedral chapter with a peculiar intensity: and lo! he was set not only to build the first new cathedral that had been built since the Reformation in England, but also to scheme and complete the first cathedral chapter that had to be organised afresh on the traditional lines, in view of the immediate needs in their modern shape which it was the primal office of a cathedral to meet. Has it ever before been given a man so exactly to face the very task which his entire being aspired to undertake? It is, perhaps,

a challenge from which most of us would flinch. Who would not shrink to whom it was suddenly said, 'Here is a clear field. Go forward, and prove the worth of your life's dream, without let or hindrance'? But Benson's splendid buoyancy rose to the challenge. Into the cathedral, and all that it embodied and involved, he flung his whole heart and soul. The extracts given in the book from addresses and sermons are alive with the passion of the hour. They give some impression of what his quivering personality meant to an outlying people, quick to catch fire, sensitive to the rarity with which a man of this calibre threw in his whole lot with them. The whole time was one prolonged rapture of welcome and of joy. Round him gathered a band of young men to whom he was an inspiration. We hear of one or two of them in the book who were specially dear. But there were others, in many directions, and of many types.

And, then, who can find words to tell of the depth of affection which she woke in Cornish hearts, whom I have forborne from mentioning, because it is so impossible to mention her without saying so far more than she would tolerate or forgive? Let it only be understood that those gifts of his wife, which are to those who know them incomparable in their charm, never verified their power more richly than in Cornwall.

And, then, there was the abundant call made upon his priestliness, upon his spirituality, upon his beautiful spirit of adoration, upon his pastoral love. The impulsive religiousness of the people touched him, drew deeply upon his resources. And there were the ordinations, with all their fertile intimacies of spirit. And there was the intense spiritual passion of his chaplain and successor, to stir and to free him. Everything combined to make those five years the sealing years of his character and life. They were to him like fairy-years, aglow with wonder. Did he ever expand so liberally, or grow so rapidly and vividly, as in the interval? The photographs before and after Truro bear the marks of the great change. Lambeth proved him to be, in some ways, a greater man than, perhaps, the conditions of Truro allowed for; but was he ever again so entirely himself at his very best? And was it not then that he became all that he proved himself to be at Lambeth? The Life is written to show us the *man*, not to record history. And it is in view of the man's

own revelation of himself and of his powers that Truro is no interlude, but of supreme importance.

Just at the close of the time he came to take a Retreat for Oxford Tutors in Keble College, and it is impossible for any who were there ever to forget the magical effect of his presence and of his teaching. We knew ourselves to be in the hands of a prince in the spiritual domain. Never had we heard the language of St. Paul and of St. James made to feel so like a 'living creature.' The salient words and phrases opened out unanticipated secrets. Every syllable became pregnant with some new inspiration. And then it was that he told us something of the story of his own self-mastery, and how he had learned the supremacy of love over power in Christ Jesus. Never again did I hear him teach, with such sure force and fascination, the deep things of God. That Retreat, we always believe, had its say in determining the offer of the primacy. For we were enkindled; and when, just at the crisis of decision, we heard that, after all, the profound respect felt for Bishop Harold Browne was rendering it impossible to pass him over, we wrote eager letters to the late Dean of St. Paul's, praying for this chief to be given us, who would place himself in the forefront of all the new spiritual movements expressed in Missions and Retreats, and would be the living captain of the younger men. The appeals reached the Prime Minister's ear at the moment when the fateful determination was being taken, and it may not be vain of us to think that they may just have made the difference in the final decision. However that may be, I am certain that the buoyant radiancy of his spirit was then at its height. And the height had been attained at Truro. Afterwards, masterful as he proved himself in many directions, one never quite missed the tone of fatigue in the voice and of anxiety in the spirit, which told of the awful pressure of great affairs.

The story of the Primacy is told at length in the book, and we can see there well enough the special directions in which his stress was laid—the pulling together of the forces of the Church; the emphasis on the missionary responsibilities of the Church as a body; the keen desire to secure reform in abuses of patronage, and in slackness of discipline; the insistence, not without wrath, on the attention due from the Bishops to their civil duties in the

House of Lords; the skilful energy put out towards the Church in the East, expressed through the Assyrian Mission, and so carefully considered in the matter of the Anglican Bishop *in* Jerusalem; the mingled subtlety and strength with which he worked out the ecclesiastical connexion between Canterbury and the colonial bishoprics. Perhaps the book might have brought out more prominently his direct reversal of the policy which had hitherto determined the relations between the Metropolitan and his Provincials. Archbishop Tait had ruled by diplomatic management and by a strong hand. The bishops were excluded, as far as possible, from consultation. Matters of policy were determined beforehand by the chiefs, and then were submitted for assent. The new Archbishop set himself at once to secure regular and systematic co-operation between the entire body of his Bishops. He drew them together for special days of Conference and Prayer; he aimed at concerted action; he had a statesman's eye for large policies, and deep were his complaints at the tendency of the Bishops to absorb their energies in diocesan business. The famous outbreak against the influence of Samuel Wilberforce has, of course, an ironical exaggeration in it. He does not really mean that we shall 'execrate his memory.' It is stupid not to recognise the intentional excess in the phrase; but he uses the irony of excess in order to express the intensity of his feeling against a diocesanism which, out of the very heat of its local energy, is liable to become as dangerous a vice as the parochialism of an energetic parish priest.

And then, of course, full and lengthy justice is done to the heroic moment of the Lincoln Judgement—'the most courageous act that has come out of Lambeth since the days of Laud.' Nerve, knowledge, skill, it most certainly showed. The severest strain on his personal courage lay in the decision to undertake the Trial. The success of the Judgement has blotted out the terrible uncertainties that beset this decision. It was a venture almost wholly in the dark; no one could foretell the result. Could a distracted Church, heated with passion, endure the strain of so critical an experiment? No one could exactly define the authority of the court, still less could they determine its relation to the secular courts. The Archbishop could only hope to be obeyed, if he judged the case freely, without subservience

to Privy Council decisions; yet he could only hope to see his Judgement legalised if the Privy Council could be found to be in accord with it. The pressure against the venture came from many whom he was most accustomed to trust. The indignity done to Bishop King by such a trial was enough to kindle a fire of indignation, and the mean and unreal character of the artificial attack justified its dismissal as contemptible. The Archbishop hardly seems to have allowed enough for this, nor for the misery to those who loved him of seeing a man like Bishop King submitted to so cruel a process by such unworthy means. And he is unfair to the suspicions entertained by the High Churchmen against the court—suspicions which were natural enough to those who knew and remembered how easily the judgements of secular courts could be palmed off upon them as of spiritual authority, because they were transmitted through spiritual organs. This is a peril from which we have not yet escaped; and it was always a pressing danger in the days of Archbishop Tait. They knew that nothing could be more cruelly deceptive than to have a Father in God claiming spiritual obedience for a decision in which they recognize, in spite of all disguises, the familiar voice of the Privy Council. How could they tell, then, of the subtlety which would enable the Archbishop to deliver a Judgement of his own, in spite of the decisions which had been given, or again, of the meekness which would induce the Privy Council to bow under an ecclesiastic's over-ruling? The Archbishop clung to his strong point—'if he declined jurisdiction, he might be compelled by a *mandamus* from the Queen's Bench to exercise it; if he exercised discretionary power to veto the case, he was assuming that he possessed jurisdiction, and this might on appeal be denied.' There is a capital sketch of ugly possibilities drawn up by him on p. 329:

'It would be an ugly chapter of Church History if it should run thus in the heading:—Abp declines to admit his own jurisdiction—Privy Council decides that Abp's jurisdiction is undoubted—Abp in exercise of his jurisdiction declines to hear the case—Privy Council again applied to, to compel Abp to hear case—Privy Council decides that Abp should hear the case—Abp hears accordingly and decides in two particulars against plaintiffs—Privy Council applied to, to reverse judgement of Abp—Privy Council reverses it.

[Postscript by the Archbishop]—

Of course nothing can stop *this*—they *would* apply.'

And again, on p. 337 there is an exceedingly clever list of reasons given him for dismissing the case :

'I am to dismiss the case because the complainants are unworthy of consideration.

I am to dismiss the case in order to use my "discretion."

I am to dismiss it because otherwise my Suffragans will be embarrassed by many complaints.

I am to dismiss it to save my reputation as a strong Archbishop.

— To dismiss it because the complainants went straight to my Court instead of going first to persuade the Bp of Lincoln.

— To dismiss it because I shall be thought to be influenced by lawyers.

— To dismiss it because the lawyers all think I ought to hear it.

— To dismiss it because it is an indignity to the Bp of Lincoln to hear it.

— To dismiss it because he himself will not plead if accused by such persons.

— To dismiss it because the Bp of Oxford refused to hear the case against Mr. Carter and his discretion was upheld.

— To dismiss it because all the High Church party will rally round me if I do.'

Probably now every one would agree that he decided rightly ; but, nevertheless, it is only in view of his extraordinary skilfulness in the Judgement that followed, that this agreement has been reached. It is the Judgement that has justified the tremendous venture. We are at this moment learning how the reverse result can damage the authority which has not the like skill to make good its risky claim.

The famous Judgement revealed to an astonished public the superiority of the ecclesiastical expert who knows what he is handling, over the lawyer who deals with it from outside. It beat the lawyers on their own ground. It was obviously a finer and truer estimate of the case than any which they could form ; it was based on far more delicate and complete knowledge ; it brought instincts into play which were vital in determining the probabilities, and of which your lawyer, as such, is incapable ; it judged matters in their right historical perspective, and lawyers have no historical perspective. Yet the Book of Common Prayer

is above all things an historical, not a legal document ; it is a sealed book to any but to those who can estimate the process and the pressure through which it took its precarious form. Above all it asks to be considered in the light of that vast liturgical background to which it appeals, and to understand which is a science of itself. The Archbishop was in all this wholly beyond the criticism of the excellent gentlemen who brought to bear upon the delicate mystery of Christian Worship the temper and experiences of a law-court. He walked round them ; they had to let him alone.

Still it has to be confessed that this victory was achieved at the cost of some questionable subtleties. The Judgement, in deference to the lawyers, accepts practically the same rigid view of the Act of Uniformity which has of late caused such serious trouble, and which is, surely, rendered obsolete, morally and historically, by the total abandonment of all the conditions to which it was intended to apply, and of the principle which it existed to assert. The Act of Uniformity is the antithesis, the alternative, of toleration ; but we have all adopted toleration. It is in order to obviate the rigidity of this Act that the Archbishop has to press a theory of Ceremonies and Ceremonial use which is uncomfortably artificial, allowing the Chalice to be mixed, the Altar candles to be lighted, before the Office begins, so that thus there is no Ceremony introduced.

However, it saved the day ; it saved the position ; it broke up prosecutions ; it gave a valid ground on which men could agree and could act ; it shattered the reputation of the Privy Council, and the strange belief that the Church was not after all the best interpreter of what its own worship meant. Its value, its authority, to strong churchmen lay in this—that however intricate some of the conclusions, nevertheless the continuity of the Liturgical ritual before and after the Reformation was treated as absolute. The whole discussion was grounded upon this basis ; and this was the real matter at issue. Details were of little importance so long as the Eucharistic Action itself retained its inherent identity.

And it was unfortunate that the Archbishop should, in his Judgement, have suffered himself to minimise the dispute, and to declare that the points in question in no sense touched the



validity of the Sacrament. For however true in theory this might be, it was not true in fact. In fact, he was deciding, to a Church breathless with anxiety, the continuity of its life. This was the issue challenged under the minutiae of ritual. Did the use and custom of the historical Church have any bearing on the Rite, as it stood in the Prayer Book? Was there a past behind it? Did the Prayer Book record the purification of a Form, the structure of which was already determined by paramount and unchangeable conditions, or did it offer a new and isolated and complete ceremony, originated in the sixteenth century, and to be judged without regard to its spiritual pedigree?

That was an issue serious enough. It ran down to the very vitals of the Church. And the Lincoln Judgement was absolutely decisive on this vital issue.

But, able and impressive as his Primacy proved itself in many directions, it is still the man himself who holds our chief interest. And all the more because, throughout the Primacy, we are given the accompaniment of the diary on which the son has so largely and rightly drawn. It is as nearly perfect as a diary can be. It abounds with the very best that the man has it in him to put out. It is admirably free, spontaneous, fertile, and varied. It is charged with good matter and with brilliant phrasing. It has singularly few lapses of temper or of judgement, and no bitterness, though, now and again, it is angry. Above all, it lets us know, without any loss of dignity, his inner heart, in its fears and depressions, in its cries and humilities, in its cravings and prayers, as before God. It has beauty and pathos and passion, with much of the artist's emotion, and of the scholar's aspiration. It presents a portrait of the soul, such as one would desire the worst enemy of prelacy to ponder and weigh. I know nothing which I should be so glad to lay in the hands of any one who doubted what sort of man, and what sort of Christian, an Archbishop could be.

The personality is the dominant element in the book: and to say that, is to suggest the limitations of its value.

The character that emerges is so curiously individual that it fails to be representative. There is nothing typical about it.

It speaks for itself, and for hardly anybody else. It is built up out of a complication of experiences and interests which gave it personal peculiarity. It touched life on many sides, but the points of its contact are so individually unique that they do not explain themselves to others. Qualities met in him which did not account for their bond. He stood for a special and strange combination of capacities, generally found apart. This adds to the interest of his life, but it also detaches him somewhat from his kind. He is accidental, as it were. He is not the embodiment of what other men mean, or fail, to be. No men ranged themselves behind him, finding in him their natural exponent. Rather, men were a little puzzled. They could not trace the unity, the coherence, that makes a character intelligible. They could never tell how far he went with them, or where he would stop. He often appeared to fly off at a tangent from the main direction. His attitude was incalculable. He was apt to look strained and elaborate to the spectator who could not understand how he had arrived at this or that position. His treatment of life wore an air of eclecticism; it was too privately personal; it held together contradictory elements; it did not divulge the principle of its consistency. For, indeed, the consistency lay only in the exceptional idiosyncrasies of his character. No general principles would interpret it. This made him somewhat bewildering as a leader. In order to know what significance to give to his public utterances, you had to know him as Dr. Lightfoot, or Dr. Westcott, or Dr. Davidson knew him. Otherwise he would often seem to be giving familiar phrases an artificial meaning. He would use theological expressions, which were public property, in an esoteric sense.

This tendency was aggravated by his well-known love of Thucydidean complexities of speech. He delighted in packed epigrams, in forced allusions, in enigmatic antitheses. These were often individually brilliant; but there was no intelligible process visible by which they arrived, or hung together. They gave an appearance of incoherency. The reader, or the hearer, found himself leaping from one to the other as if he were crossing a stream on stepping-stones. As soon as he had got his breath on one, he had to jump to another, and generally at some strange angle. Progress, under these conditions, is intricate and uncon-

vincing. You may possibly get across with effort, but you cannot recall the stages, and you doubt whether you could do it again. This style left always an impression of over-elaboration, of a series of detached fragments of suggestive thought oddly brought together, rather than of a persuasive process of reasoning that had been willingly followed. It is most interesting to see, from the book, how instinctive this habit of intricate elaboration was, for it is at its height in the expressions of himself which are most private and most spontaneous: *e.g.* in the intimate notes of affection or chaff written by him to one who was his spiritual son, A. J. Mason. Here, where the absolute spontaneity is obvious, the allusive intricacy overlays the very humour, until it requires a commentary to elucidate it.

And then, with this curious natural tendency to complication and to elaboration, there belonged to his temperament the artistic delight in a situation as such, which made him take instinctively the dramatic attitude which it evoked. Dr. Verrall's invaluable *Reminiscence* has caught this phase of the character with admirable courage and precision:

'As a Headmaster and always, to my eyes, he was, first of all and above all, an unsurpassable actor of noble parts; and this he was by virtue of two qualities, first, the extraordinary range of his social and personal interests, and secondly, his high estimate of spectacular function as an index and monitor of such interests, a visible picture of society, directly corrective through physical sensation to narrowness, lowness, and selfishness' (i 216).

After describing the minute and punctilious arrangements for the Headmaster's entry into chapel, Dr. Verrall proceeds:

'So stately and beautiful was the thing to which they led, so ornamental to our common life, so full of a social and religious poetry, which, without knowing it, we felt . . .

In judging from what internal disposition this outward effect proceeded, we necessarily quit the limits of that which can be tested or proved. For myself I am convinced—and the Archbishop showed himself to me in every kind of unguarded intimacy during many years—that his grandeur in social function was simply the expression of his strangely, and in very truth incredibly, vivid interest in persons and their social relations to one another. He acted well the greatness of large human connexions, because he intensely felt it' (i 217).

That is perfectly intelligible if you had personal knowledge of him, to explain how much was due to the glamorous influence of his imaginative appreciation of the situation. But, of course, to the outsider, there could be no tangible coherence in these successive dramatisations. They were bound to look to him unreal, and a bit fantastic. Yet they were due to sheer natural instinct in the man himself, though often they did mean that he was more mastered by circumstance than he quite knew himself, and that he was tempted to let his imagination drape up unworthy conditions, until they assumed an unreal validity in his own eyes.

Perhaps this appears most in his intense conservatism. It is wonderful how fertile his dramatic power could work, in endowing with worth almost any public institution. True, he is acutely conscious of the spiritual callousness of the House of Lords, and of the hollowness of its support of the Church. He uses very strong language about this. The temper of the House is abhorrent to him, it paralyses his nerves. Yet nothing shakes his belief in it. To touch it, is to threaten the Church. All ancient institutions have one foe, whom they must unite to oppose, if they would hope to survive. Nothing can be funnier than his indignation at the effort to get rid of Addington, and to break up the territorial authority of the bishops. He sees in people like Lord Midleton and Mr. John Talbot, who favour some such policy, nothing but dangerous Girondists, recklessly flinging themselves into the van of the Revolution, which will then devour its own children. Do they not see that, by playing fast and loose with Episcopal properties, they are only teaching others how to deal with the estates which they now call theirs? Since then Addington has been sold, yet Peperharrow is still intact, nor has Lord Midleton's head rolled into the basket of the guillotine on Tower Hill.

This idealising faculty found characteristic expression in verse, with which he took infinite and delighted pains. Generally the outcome is overloaded, though there is great richness of mystic symbolism, after the Elizabethan manner. He loved the quip and phantasy of George Herbert: and so has buried his art. But there is a beautiful sample of verse written in a game, on the motto 'Whoever said so?' And one poem is simple enough

to go straight to the heart, with its exquisite tenderness, 'On the Martin' (i. 646).

There are some touches, chiefly in the diary, of delightful humour—such as the comment on the pressure put on him to attend this or that function by hinting that, if not, Cardinal Manning will be invited: it is like calling 'Pussy, Pussy!' in order to make a dog eat its dinner. Or again, that other famous criticism on your Roman friends,—that they talk so pleasantly and humanly until they suddenly drop a remark so strangely remote that you feel inclined to stop and say, 'Are you ill?'

He was vehemently anti-Roman: and this antipathy, perhaps, grew under the influence of Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln. It made it hopeless for him to respond to the efforts of Lord Halifax over the matter of our Orders, even if he had not been upset by the method in which he was approached. He had an acute perception of the possibility of being decoyed into a false position, and he felt how the resistance of Cardinal Vaughan would prevail in the long run over the simplicity of the Pope, who was only able to show himself benignly favourable through his astounding ignorance of the English situation. It is doleful to read of an opportunity missed, and one's heart bleeds for the disappointment of Lord Halifax, whose nobleness of nature and fervency of belief had put out all their force into a splendid venture for unity; but it is difficult now to say whether greater forwardness on the part of the Archbishop could have baffled the sinister influences that finally swept over the hopes raised by Portal and Duchesne.

There is one most remarkable blank in his interests. Living as he did through a period crowded with storms of revolutionary thought, he never appears to be even touched by them. There is no mental conflict whatever. There is no sign of his having ever been inside the philosophical atmosphere, or of his having experienced at all the problems of dialectical doubt. He never shows himself at home with them. He never has anything to say about them. All the currents of the intellectual movement were brought nigh to him through Henry Sidgwick, his brother-in-law and intimate friend. But nothing happens. He is unpenetrated, untouched. His fine scholarship delights in the

products of modern criticism, but metaphysical language hardly exists for him. His Faith never quivers. It is amazing that any one of his great capacity and keenness should have passed through the furnace of the mid-century without even the smell of the fire being upon him.

Naturally, the reminiscence of him given in the book by the late Professor Sidgwick, whose death is a national loss, is full of moral insight, excellently conveyed.

The conditions under which the Life has been produced have made it impossible to tell the extraordinary happiness of his home—the inimitable charm of a wife who unites the keen Sidgwick brain with inexhaustible warmth of heart; the poet son; the intellectual vigour of the whole family.

But one thing there is which the Life has lifted high—the intense spirit of worship which was the core of his entire manhood. From first to last, this never flags or fails. Prayer is the inspiration of boyhood, of youth, as of old age. And not only prayer, but out of his heart there break those special cries of humiliation which are known only to those who move close to the ranks of Saints. That utter abasement of soul, which is the secret of the true spiritual life from which the world is helplessly excluded, was his familiar experience. There is no mistaking its genuine language. It is poured out in the hidden silences recorded in the diary—language as of a soul prostrate in the dust at the misery of its own insufficiency. Whenever he is alone, unsolaced by the need of action, the melancholy of a profound self-distrust possesses him. Here is none of the complacency of success, the smooth satisfaction of the ecclesiastical dignitary. It is not too often that we catch on the lips of an Anglican prelate the ascetic speech of the Saints of God, so startling in its intensity, so alarming by its sincerity. On October 10, 1884, he writes in his diary:

‘How can one help perplexing oneself in such a place as this? I find in myself no fitness for it. I could not resist, I had no right to resist. If calls exist, called I was; against my will. An unfit man, not unfit in his humility subjective, but clearly seeing himself by God’s help as he is—yet called. Follows from that, that there is something unknown in God’s counsels for the Church and for His poor servant, whom He will not let fall to the ground for simply *nothing*, for His own love to the

least—something He means to have done by one unfit for the great place. Well then, he will be fit for the thing He wants to have done. Then *make* him fit—and let, O God, whatever it be, be good for Thy Church. It is in Thy Hand' (ii 33).

On April 24, 1885, again:

“Non est creatura tam parva et vilis quae Dei bonitatem non repraesentet.”

Yesterday I saw a girl of 12 or 13 turn out of a door and walk on before me—dirty, torn—her face was as if it had been pressed flat, and recovered itself a little. Her knee was weak so that she seemed to throw out her left foot as far as it would go, and pull it in again by way of walking—lilting out with half her body each step, to gain the requisite ponderance. She has to live a life out under these limitations—and there was not in her look any apparent effect of an ideal, or of a reliance, yet there is in her remaining organization, and I doubt not in her spirit, quite enough to show, quite enough to take in and give out the “Goodness of God.” It wants redemption—deliverance and clearance. And I doubt not that there is abundant *parvitas et vilitas* in me, who am unfettered bodily, and *have*, or think I have, an ideal, to make a still less fettered being wonder how in the world *my* limitations can possibly be got over. It can be only by *λύσις* and *λίτρωσις*; O to *see* and to be *free*' (ii 54).

On July 21, 1895, he writes:

‘My last evening at Lambeth, at least this year. Six months gone indeed like a shadow, and rather a dark one; gone yet abiding. A life with so much to do that none can be done *well* and so complicated with traditions of what is essential that much is not worth doing—and character and *ὁ ἕσως ἄνθρωπος*, what becomes of *him*? and what *is* to become of him; Miserere is the only word which can be written over this half year (and nearly *all* others)—Yes, Omnium annorum meorum, Domine, omnium dierum, miserere, miserere’ (ii 649).

The voice of the soul, as it first spoke through the Psalms, is speaking again from the throne of Augustine. He was curiously sensitive to the splendour of a great historical position, but no glamour of the world has hushed the true spiritual cry. The masterful vehemence of temper may be not wholly conquered, but the deeper experience is steadily making way, and sweetening and enriching the life that fell asleep so swiftly, in the House of God, on October 12, 1896.

In his own words, twenty years before, he sums up the change which had already then begun its work :

'The masterful feeling is quite gone, and one quite forgets how one used to think it was the work of one's own hands, and feels that for all that may have been good one was only the merest instrument moved by a power—which in the greatest things which really were within, one often rejected. All the unhappy feeling about the reminiscences is only due to want of Love. Oh, how little one knew the value of that. How little all those years one thought about Grace and graces. Strength and Finish seem to have been one's compassless aims. . . . But I can try that the coming years, if they are given, shall have the work of Love and Grace in them ' (ii 736).

HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND.