

The Princeton Theological Review

JULY, 1922

THE HEROISM OF THE MINISTRY IN THE HOUR OF CHRISTIANITY'S PERIL*

The reading of the Church Fathers is not infrequently a dreary and disappointing labor. One is forced to wonder how it came that the authors of these tedious commonplaces and pious irrelevancies rose to so high a place when they were alive and achieved so imperishable a renown when dead. This is true even of him who is reputed to have been the most eloquent of them all, Chrysostom. Yet in the conclusion to his homilies on the Letter to the Romans there is a passage which sustains any reputation which Chrysostom had for eloquence, then, or in succeeding ages. He says that of all the cities he loves Rome the most because there Paul died, there his dust reposes and there he will be raised up to meet the Lord. In his enthusiasm he prays that he might be permitted to throw himself about the body of Paul and be riveted to his tomb; "to see the dust of Paul's body that sowed the Gospel everywhere; the dust of that mouth which lifted the truth on high, and through which Christ spake the great and secret things, and greater than in his own person; the dust of those hands off which the serpent fell into the fire and through which the sacred writings were written; the dust of those feet which ran through the world and were not weary; the dust of those eyes which were blinded gloriously, but which recovered their sight again for the salvation of the world; the dust of that heart which a man would not do wrong to call the heart of the world, so enlarged that it could take in cities and nations and peo-

* An Address delivered at the 110th Commencement of Princeton Theological Seminary.

edge does not spring from faith or grow out of the Christian consciousness; it is given to faith by an objective revelation. The fact that faith rests on an external authority does not in the least conflict with the fact that it is a trust which springs from the heart and not mere intellectual assent, as these theologians suppose. Faith springs from the heart; its centre is trust; but as a mere subjective attitude it would be empty of any content of knowledge. Its knowledge is given to it. We cannot trust in God or Christ without some knowledge of them which is given by revelation. If every intellectual or doctrinal element is excluded from the idea of revelation, and if revelation is reduced to the arousing of life in us by God, then we have no distinctively Christian knowledge of God. Our ideas of God must come from revelation or reason, because feeling and life do not produce knowledge, but depend on it. The fact that the subject of religious knowledge must be renewed in heart and enlightened in mind in order to trust from the heart, does not alter at all the fundamental epistemological fact above stated. This means that the contrast between religious and theoretic knowledge is one that is determined by the contrast between sin and grace, between the natural religious consciousness and the regenerate consciousness; it is not the fundamental dualism in the Kantian and Ritschlian sense, such as would make all our religious knowledge subjective. The modern subjective theology goes back to Kant and not to Luther and Calvin as it claims to do. No one has set forth more clearly than Calvin the necessity for a renewed subject of religious knowledge, but no one has realized more fully than he the objective character of that knowledge and its source in supernatural revelation. Modern theology asserts that these two ideas are in conflict, but it has not proven its assertion. In saying all this, however, we are not criticising Stephan's book in particular, but the whole theological movement which it represents, and of which it is one of the best and most thoughtful examples.

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PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Painted Windows. Studies in Religious Personality. By A Gentleman With a Duster, Author of "The Mirrors of Downing Street." With an introduction by Kirsopp Lake. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Under the disguise of helping to a new and stronger conception of Christianity, this book is written with the evident purpose of casting discredit upon the Christian Church. The method pursued is that of a series of sketches of leaders in the English Church—State, Roman Catholic, and Non-Conformist. In the discussion of these leaders he seeks to "discover a reason for the present ignoble situation of the Church in the affections of men." The anonymous author, although

speaking of the "wonderful devotion, sincerity and almost boundless activity of the modern church" weakens his indictment of the Church by the very extravagance of his language. Instances of this are as follows: "It is curious if Christianity is from heaven that it exercises so little power in the affairs of the human race." "The successors of St. Paul are not shaping world policies at Washington; they are organizing whist drives and opening bazaars." "So deep is the pit into which the modern minister has fallen that no one attempts to get him out. He is abandoned by the world." But if the case is really so bad with the Church and the ministry, one wonders why the institution persists, or why men pay three dollars for a book which tells them that this is the case with the Church. If it is so, they must all know it without any book. Yet the book has been a great seller. It must be because the Church is not quite so decadent as the author would intimate.

As for the author's own idea of what Christianity is, he gives us a curious mixture of gleanings from the psychological laboratory and the old, old story about Jesus being just a teacher. The author's profound aversion for New Testament Christianity is everywhere apparent. For example, in the conclusion he says, "Is it not possible that the Church might see the trivial unimportance of all those matters which at present dismember her, if she saw aright the supreme importance of Christ as a Teacher? Might she not even come to behold a glory in that Teaching greater even than that which she has so heroically but so unavailingly endeavored to make the world behold in the crucified Sacrifice and Propitiation for its Sins?"

The book gives a sketch of twelve of the supposed leaders of religion in England. Of those treated, Gore, Inge, Jacks, Royden, Booth, and Orchard are well known to American readers; but such men as Father Knox, Canon Barnes, and Bishop Temple are not even names on this side. If the sketches reflect the views of the Christians of England, then, without doubt, a state of chaos reigns in English churches. Bishop Gore is placed "head and shoulders above all the religious teachers of our times." His popularity as a preacher when Canon of Westminster is commented on with the observation that "the Abbey has never since recovered its place as a center of Christian teaching." Starting as modernist Bishop Gore has ended as dogmatist and Anglo Catholic. The author thinks the Anglo Catholic party about played out and predicts its end when the great influence of Gore is withdrawn. Gore's loss of influence in national life he attributes to his allying himself with the Anglo Catholic party, "the spendthrift heir of the Tractarians, with little of the intellectual force that gave so signal a power to the Oxford movement." Gore's refusal to accept the miracle of Transubstantiation makes him unacceptable to many in his own party. He tells us that Gore has lasting admiration for the sermons of Charles Spurgeon, but the "turgid rhetoric" of Jeremy Taylor wearies him. The supposed conflict between religion and science does not, Gore thinks, bother the people, who long for a message. But

he views with concern, the fact that a large, learned and important body of men in the Church holds views which are "directly subversive of the Creeds," and declares that the defenders of evangelical Christianity must not be content to appeal to authority. "We must teach, fully teach, and reteach the truth on grounds of Scripture, reason, history, everything, so that we may have a party which knows not only that it has got authority, but that it has got the truth and the reason on its side."

Americans who have heard of the lights, candles, changing of vestments and other ritualistic trappings in Dr. Orchard's Congregational Church in London will read with interest the author's sketch of this eccentric minister. To many persons he says he is a ludicrous figure, presenting the "spectacle of a sparrow stretching its wings and opening its beak to imitate the eagle of catholic lecterns." He calls him a "ritualist in the midst of non-conformity; the first Free Churchman, I believe, to entertain exalted ceremonial aspirations, and to kneel for his orders at the feet of an orthodox bishop. One might almost hazard the conjecture that he remains in the Congregationalist Communion, as so many Anglo Catholics remain in the Establishment, solely to supply the fermentation of an idea which will shatter its present constitution. One thinks of him as a repentant Cromwell restoring 'that bauble' to its accustomed place on the table of tradition."

The introduction by Kirsopp Lake divides the Liberals into two wings, the Left and the Right, and says that the Right Liberals hold the same radical views as the Left but are concerned with safeguarding the unity of the Church. "They endeavor to do this by using the old phraseology with a new meaning, so that, for instance, members of this party feel justified in stating that they accept the creed, though they do not believe it in the sense which was originally intended. This is technically called 'reinterpreting' and by a sufficient amount of 'reinterpreting' all the articles of the creed can be given whatever meaning is desired. The statement that God created the heavens and the earth becomes in this way an affirmation of evolution; the Virgin Birth affirms the reality of Christ's human nature; and the Resurrection of the Flesh affirms the immortality of the Soul. Performed with skill, this dialectical legerdemain is very soothing to a not unduly intelligent congregation and prevents any breach in the apparent continuity of the Church's belief. It also prevents any undue acrimoniousness of theological debate, for debate is difficult if words may be interpreted to mean the opposite of their historical significance. The danger is that the rising generation will refuse to accept this method and that it will lead to deep and irretrievable intellectual confusion."

Current literature will be searched in vain for a better exposé of the ultra liberal theological position which yet clings to the old terms. We are indebted to Kirsopp Lake for stripping the mask from this sort of deception, and greatly prefer his own outspoken repudiation of historic Christianity.

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