

# 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 Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bq\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php)



*incorporating the Transactions of the*  
**BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

## EDITORIAL

IN these days of ter-centenaries and ter-jubilees it is perhaps somewhat odd to refer to a twenty-first anniversary, particularly in the Editorial of a journal of an Historical Society. But the importance of something cannot be judged solely on how old it is, nor indeed is history but the remembrance of people and societies of bygone days. It is possible to see that certain events of recent days are going to the making of Baptist history and the fuller development of Baptist denominational life.

There have now been twenty-one meetings of the College Principals' Conference. To this conference come not only the Principals of our Baptist Colleges but also the tutors and, when possible, representatives of the Baptist Union and of the Baptist Missionary Society. Before we go on to comment on the significance of this event it may be as well to set down the outlines of the development of this important conference since its inception in 1942.

There was, at that time, a denominational body known as the United Collegiate Board which was concerned with College affairs. Its meetings were, however, infrequent and not well-attended and in view of a number of new problems regarding Ministerial training which were arising as a result of the war, and also of a recently-issued Report of a Polity Commission, the then secretary of the

Baptist Union, Rev. M. E. Aubrey, thought it would be useful if the Principals of the British Baptist Colleges could meet and discuss matters together. The suggestion was welcomed and the first meeting was held on January 7-8th, 1943. The Principals of the eight Colleges in England, Scotland and Wales all attended. By the wish of the Conference the Revs. M. E. Aubrey and P. T. Thomson (Chairman of the Ministerial Recognition Committee) were also present together with Dr. Sidney Cave (Principal of New College, London), who attended for a short time for consultation in connection with an inter-denominational plan for giving religious instruction to men in the Forces.

At a further meeting later the same year at Regent's Park College, Oxford, Mr. Aubrey was asked to canvass the possibility of convening a Conference of the Principals of the Free Church Theological Colleges. Such a Conference took place at Oxford in July, 1945, and it led to one or two others of a similar kind later on. But, after a short time, these meetings were abandoned for lack of support. The Conference of the Baptist College Principals, on the other hand, showed an encouraging vitality, and at its fifth meeting was enlarged by the inclusion of the members of the tutorial staffs of the various Colleges. On that occasion, the Conference was asked by a committee of the United Collegiate Board to consider the functions of the Board. The outcome was a recommendation to the effect that a new body should be set up which should be representative of all aspects of Baptist life, and which, by co-ordinating and advising upon the training of Baptist laymen and ministers, would render the continuance of the United Collegiate Board unnecessary. This recommendation was accepted and, in due course, the "Joint Advisory Council for Ministerial and Lay Training" was formed. But the new body proved to be less effective than the one already in existence, and it did not long survive. Meanwhile, the Principal's Conference in its enlarged form continued to demonstrate its usefulness, and has met regularly, usually in the Spring, at Oxford.

This is but a brief outline of the development of the Principal's Conference and much more could be written about its achievements. That it has amply justified its existence there can be no doubt at all. The Principal Emeritus of Regent's Park College, the Rev. R. L. Child (to whom we are indebted for much information on this subject) has, in a communication to the Editor, pin-pointed two substantial achievements. He writes: "The Conference has developed a tradition of frank and friendly discussion between the Staffs of the various colleges which has greatly facilitated their work, especially in dealing with matters of common interest and concern. And the Conference has brought together over the years a fund of information and experience regarding ministerial training

which is now at the service of the Denomination when required, and which is of particular value at the present time when Christian policy in Education of all kinds is being shaped to new ends."

There is one further point. There are many people who think of our Colleges solely as independent units each functioning alone with little reference to the others. The twenty-first meeting of the Principal's Conference reminds us that this is just not so and has not been so for many years. Even before the initiating of the Conference, there was in existence an arrangement by which men of Bristol Baptist College could go on to Regent's Park after completing their course at Bristol. This scheme has, over the years, developed to include students from the other Colleges also. So one could go on. But out of all this comes the inescapable fact that the Colleges are growing closer to each other in understanding and co-operation and that, perhaps just as significant, they are feeling part of the movement together of the different interests in Baptist denominational life within the life of the whole Baptist community. We await, with great interest, future developments of the relationship both of the Colleges to each other and of them all to the denomination.

\*

\*

\*

We regret the delay in producing the index for Volume XVIII. We hope to include it with the July number.

---

### OUR CONTRIBUTORS

R. L. CHILD, M.A., B.D.

Principal Emeritus, Regent's Park College, Oxford.

DOUGLAS C. SPARKES, B.D.

Minister, Waterlooville, Portsmouth.

J. D. HUGHEY, PH.D.;

President, Rüsçhlikon Theological Seminary, Switzerland.

N. CLARK, M.A., S.T.M.

Minister, Amersham, Bucks.

Reviews by :—G. FARR, A. GILMORE, D. R. GRIFFITHS, G. W. HUGHES, A. ELLIS MOLD.

## The New English Bible

THE appearance this Spring of the New Testament in "current English"—to use the publishers' phrase—marks the end of the first stage of an undertaking which has already engaged the energies of many scholars for nearly fourteen years, and is likely to continue to occupy them for a long time ahead. The event has aroused considerable interest all over the world, and it seems desirable, therefore, to place on record a fuller account than has so far appeared in Baptist circles of the origin and aims of the New English Bible, and the means taken to produce it.

The idea of a new and authoritative translation of the Scriptures into English has been in the air for a long time. As is well known, an attempt was made at the end of last century to revise the Authorised Version of 1611. This did not involve a fresh translation from the original tongues, for it was based explicitly on the twin principles that the alterations made to the Authorised Version should be as few as possible, consistently with faithfulness, and their expression limited to "the language of the Authorised and earlier English Versions." The result was not a success. For while scholars have found the Revised Version useful for a variety of reasons, the Church as a whole has never felt at home with the book, and in Britain, at any rate, it has won but meagre support, although in America the corresponding—though somewhat different—version (published in 1901) has been widely accepted and used.

Since then, although the Authorised Version still maintains its unique position as an English religious classic, the feeling has continued to grow that something more and something different is needed if the Word of God is once again to make its impact upon the English-speaking peoples of the world with living power. The reasons for this view are manifold. In the first place, Biblical scholars have long been unhappy about the state of the original text underlying our English Bible. The Authorised Version of the Old Testament was admittedly based upon a very early form of the Hebrew text. Yet, even so, this was fixed two or three centuries later than that represented in the Septuagint, which in many instances is now known to be more accurate. And in the case of the New Testament, the 1611 Version was largely based upon the late and corrupt mediaeval manuscripts used by Beza, notwithstanding the existence of more trustworthy material close at hand. A thorough re-examination of the textual evidence has therefore seemed to many scholars to be overdue.

This view is confirmed by the fact that in recent years many

fresh manuscripts have come to light, some of them of considerable antiquity, which have greatly increased our knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. This material has been further enriched by the discovery since the 1870s of large quantities of Greek papyri, the contents of which have thrown a flood of light upon the social and domestic background of the New Testament, and upon the Greek vocabulary and idioms in popular use at a very early period of the Christian era. During the last century, too, the study of ancient manuscripts and their systematic classification has become a major concern of textual critics all over the world, so that far more is known today than ever before of the origins and relationships of the various extant versions of the Old and New Testaments, numerous as they are.

These facts were bound to call in question not merely the trustworthiness of the texts on which the Authorised Version was based, but also the accuracy with which the translators then understood and conveyed the meaning of the Scriptural authors. In short, the arguments in favour of re-opening the whole question finally became irresistible, and in 1937 the International Council of Religious Education acting on behalf of the Churches of the United States and Canada, sponsored the preparation of a new English version of the Bible. This was avowedly intended to be a revision of the American version of 1901, and not a completely new translation. The Council wished the new version, in fact, to stay as close as possible to the "Tyndale-King James tradition," and directed that it should "embody the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and express this meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James version a supreme place in English literature."<sup>1</sup> The new version duly appeared in 1951 under the title of *The Revised Standard Version*, and it has deservedly met with a favourable reception in Britain.

The question still remained whether this new version did all that was required, and most British scholars thought not. They believed that the situation in regard to the Bible could not be adequately met by a further revision of the Authorised Version, however carefully undertaken, but that what was needed was an entirely new translation from the original Hebrew and Greek. It would seem, too, that expert opinion in this matter was in line with the wishes of a great many ordinary readers of the Bible also who, with little or no knowledge of the technical issues involved, were looking for something different. For one of the notable features of the life of the Christian Church in our day has been the reception given to translations of part or all of the Bible into modern English which have been prepared by individual scholars on their own initiative.

<sup>1</sup> *R.S.V. Preface*, vi.

These have circulated very widely, and it is only necessary to recall the names of such translators as Weymouth, Goodspeed and Moffatt—to say nothing of others of more recent date—to realize the considerable part that they have played in preparing the way for a fresh approach by the Church as a whole to the task of translating the Bible anew. The plain fact is that the gap between the language of the Authorised Version of 1611 and contemporary English has become for most people virtually unbridgeable. Yet the pioneering work of individual scholars has served to show that the modern man is not as indifferent to the Bible as is sometimes supposed, but will listen to its message when it is brought to him in a form which he can understand and assimilate.

On this assumption, in May, 1946, the members of the Presbytery of Stirling and Dunblane submitted to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland a recommendation that a new translation of the Bible should be made in the language of the present day. The suggestion was approved, and in the following October a Conference was convened of delegates from the chief non-Roman Churches of Great Britain to consider the matter further. Representatives from the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches attended the meeting, which was held at the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. They supported the Scottish proposal, it being agreed that the aim in view should be an entirely new translation, and not a revision of any previous version of the Bible, such as had at one time been contemplated. At a further meeting held in January, 1947, when representatives of the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge were also present, it was resolved to request the Churches interested to appoint representatives to form "The Joint Committee on New Translation of the Bible," which should then be responsible for organizing the project. This body held its first meeting on 10th July, 1947, and in due course it was fully constituted as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Church of England—Six members.

Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, Baptist Union,  
Congregational Union—Two each.

Presbyterian Church of England, Society of Friends, The  
Churches in Wales, The Churches in Ireland, The  
British and Foreign Bible Society, and The National  
Bible Society of Scotland—One each.

Representatives of the Presses—Four.

The first Chairman of the Joint Committee was the Bishop of Truro (Dr. J. W. Hunkin). The Rev. Professor C. H. Dodd, of Cambridge,

<sup>2</sup> Besides the nominated representatives, provision was made in each case for an "alternate" to act when necessary.

was appointed Vice-Chairman, and the Rev. G. S. Hendry, of the Church of Scotland, Secretary.

The purpose of the new translation was conceived under a two-fold aspect. In the first place, the aim was, by a fresh study of the basic texts, to recover the meaning of the Biblical authors with more accuracy than had hitherto been possible. It was recognized at the outset that this would necessarily involve considerable research since no single existing text could be taken *simpliciter* as the sole basis for the New Translation. The criterion would have to be the best ascertainable text in the judgment of competent authorities, with appropriate recognition of alternative readings. Secondly, it was felt that the new translation must strive to make the meaning of the original authors plain to modern readers by giving to it an English rendering that should be at once clear, forceful and dignified without being stilted. "Timeless English" was the phrase used. The object was not to produce a literary masterpiece, nor to try and compete with the Authorised Version by offering a substitute for it. Indeed, the New Translation would not be designed primarily to be read in Church, although its authors would rejoice if it were adjudged worthy to be so used on suitable occasions. Its ultimate purpose would be to liberate the message of the Bible from out-moded forms, so that the inherent beauty and truth of the Divine Word should once again be able to make a direct appeal to the minds and hearts of men.

All this plainly implied a task of uncommon difficulty, and the Joint Committee resolved to entrust it in the first instance to specially chosen panels of scholars from various British universities, who were eminent in their own fields, and representative of competent biblical scholarship today. Names were considered and approved by the Committee on 2nd October, 1947, and the Old Testament and New Testament Panels were formally constituted. It was also decided to set up two other Panels, one to deal with the Apocrypha, and the other to advise generally on the literary style of the whole work. At a somewhat later stage, the Committee decided that a higher degree of integration was desirable, and they appointed Professor Dodd to be General Director of the New Translation.

The Joint Committee have met regularly twice a year since January, 1948, usually in the historic Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey, and from time to time they have invited the members of the Panels to confer with them. Progress reports have been received, and the Committee have given such advice and decisions as have been necessary. In the course of the years a number of changes have naturally taken place in both the Joint Committee and the Panels. On the death of the Bishop of Truro, the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Alwyn Williams (later translated to



Winchester) became Chairman of the Joint Committee; and the Rev. (now Professor) J. K. S. Reid succeeded the Rev. G. S. Hendry as Secretary, when the latter moved to Princeton. The Baptist Union representatives on the Joint Committee when it was first formed were the General Secretary (The Rev. Dr. M. E. Aubrey) and the Rev. Principal P. W. Evans (of Spurgeon's College), with the Rev. Dr. T. H. Robinson (Professor of Semitic Languages, University College, Cardiff) as the "alternate" member. A year or so later, Dr. Aubrey and Professor Robinson changed places. More recently, Principal R. L. Child (of Regent's Park College) was appointed to the position on the Joint Committee vacated by the deaths in succession of Principals P. W. Evans and L. H. Marshall (of Rawdon College). On the death of Dr. Aubrey, his successor in the Secretaryship of the Baptist Union (Dr. E. A. Payne) became the "alternate."

Full details of the membership of the Translation Panels will not be made known until the New English Bible has been completed. But with the publication of the New Testament, the names have been released of the scholars who have served on the New Testament Panel. They are as follows: *Chairman*: The Rev. Professor C. H. Dodd, D.D. (Congregational Church). The Very Rev. Dr. G. S. Duncan (Church of Scotland), University of St. Andrew's. The Rev. Professor R. V. G. Tasker (Church of England), University of London. The Rev. Professor C. F. D. Moule (Church of England), University of Cambridge. The Rev. Professor G. D. Kilpatrick (Church of England), University of Oxford. The Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Woolwich (J. A. T. Robinson), University of Cambridge until 1959. The Rev. G. M. Styler (Church of England), University of Cambridge. Three members died (and were replaced by others) before the work was completed: The Rev. Professor T. W. Manson (Presbyterian Church of England), University of Manchester. The Rev. Professor W. F. Howard (Methodist Church), University of Birmingham. The Very Rev. E. G. Selwyn, Dean of Winchester.

A number of Baptist scholars have been closely concerned with other aspects of the project since its inception. Work on the Old Testament and the Apocrypha still continues, and, in view of the great amount of material involved, and the burden that it lays upon scholars who are for the most part fully engaged in their professional duties, it is probable that several more years will elapse before the goal is finally reached. Meanwhile, a tribute should be paid now to the help given to the Joint Committee by the representatives of the University Presses, which are bearing the whole cost of the new translation.

The aims and methods of the Joint Committee and the Panels are described in some detail in the Preface and Introduction to the

New Testament now in print, and it would be superfluous to elaborate upon them here. Broadly speaking, the usual proceeding has been for the work to be "farmed out" to individual scholars, who have been made responsible, in the first instance, for translating a particular book or books. Their translations have been circulated in draft to the members of the appropriate Panels, who have submitted them in joint session to a detailed and rigorous examination with a view to elucidating the validity of the original text and its true meaning. This group-work is a major feature of the whole undertaking. No part of the translation—not even a single verse—can properly be attributed to any one scholar. When a common mind has been reached, the book in question becomes the collective responsibility of the Panel, and is then passed forward to the Panel of Literary Advisers for further examination on grounds of style. Finally, the completed book is circulated in typescript to the members of the Joint Committee, so that they may offer any comments they wish upon it before it is ultimately approved.

So much for what may be called the mechanics of the New Translation. But what of the process itself? This is a much more subtle and difficult affair. It involves first of all deciding which among a number of variants has the best claim to be regarded as the authentic form of the original text. Next, the author's meaning has to be studied with reference not only to the precise words which he uses, and their grammatical significance, but having in mind also what is known of his social and cultural background, and the current speech of his day. Finally, there is the question how best to embody the author's meaning in contemporary English, so that the form shall be worthy of the subject-matter, and reproduce as clearly and accurately as possible the character of the original—whether that be prose or poetry, narrative, discourse, or what not. To sketch thus baldly the nature of the translator's task is to skate lightly over problems which in practice call for repeated and anxious consideration and discussion. What exactly is "contemporary English" or "timeless English"? And where does one draw the line between justifiable and unjustifiable colloquialism? If we abandon the second person singular, and say "you" instead of "thou," are we to apply this also to the prayers of the Bible and say (for example): "Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done"? What is to be done with a word like "Church" which, in its Greek form (*Ekklesia*) is often used in the Old Testament to translate a Hebrew word that means simply "assembly" or "congregation," and so may perhaps, even in the New Testament, sometimes mean no more than this? (Cp. *Acts* 5: 11, 7: 38). Should a Greek word like *doulos* be softened, as in the Authorised Version, to "servant" (Cf. *Rom.* 1: 1, *Philemon* 16), or ought its full meaning of "slave" to be always given to it? These are the sort of questions that are continually arising,

to which simple answers can rarely if ever be given. They must be painstakingly examined and resolved in the light of the best evidence available, and there is no royal road to unanimity. Inspiration, as Dr. Oman used to say, is not an hebdomadal function. And the translators of the New English Bible would be the last to claim that all their renderings answer to that description. Yet at least they have tried to make the Bible a more readable and a more relevant book in the lives of English people than it has been for a long while past.

Notwithstanding all the pains taken in its production, it is not to be expected that the New Translation will at once achieve its purpose. Time alone can reveal how far it succeeds in winning acceptance from the Church as a whole. After all, even the Authorised Version, on its first appearance, had its critics, and was by no means universally approved. In every such enterprise there are losses as well as gains. Many readers of the New Translation will doubtless lament the disappearance of well-loved phrases, or resent what they regard as an unwarrantable interference with the traditional text. But in the end the work will stand to be judged as a whole, and the labour spent upon it will not be in vain if by the blessing of God it does something in our time to fulfil the words of Erasmus: "These sacred books reflect for thee the living image of His Mind, even Christ Himself speaking, healing, dying, rising again—in fine, they restore Him as so completely present that thou wouldest see less if thou didst behold Him with thine own eyes."

R. L. CHILD

# The Portsmouth Disputation of 1699

THE continuing baptismal controversy reminds us that Baptists have been so engaged, now vigorously, now fitfully, for over three centuries. Not always has it been conducted as it is today, however, and although there is, doubtless, room for further improvement, we can be thankful that the acrimony is gone that characterised the public debates of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Of all these disputations, perhaps the best documented, at least on the Baptist side, is that held at Portsmouth in 1699. It has also the distinction of being the last held under Royal Licence,<sup>1</sup> although other unlicensed debates were subsequently held.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after the Revolution, a Particular Baptist church was formed at Alverstoke, Gosport. Nothing is known of it before the mention of John Webber as its pastor, and the church appears to have dissolved at his death. Before that event, however, its numbers were considerably reduced when several members moved to the other side of Portsmouth Harbour and founded the first Particular church there. During the earlier part of Webber's ministry in Gosport it is recorded that the church was "so blessed . . . that in a short time they had gathered Twenty Members, very worthy Persons, who were added to them by Baptism. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Because, apparently, they had lost some of their own members to this Baptist church, the Presbyterians began to preach and to teach against believers' baptism. Most notable among them was one of their ministers, Samuel Chandler of Fareham, five miles north west of Gosport. Extracts from two of his sermons illustrate the arguments he used. At Portsmouth on 10th November, 1698 he said :

It is not likely that God that will have mercy and not sacrifice, would institute an Ordinance so prejudicial to the Bodies of Men : and that it's very unlikely that Dipping, which whenever it is mentioned, is used as a Token of God's Vengeance, should in this Sacrament be used as a Token of his Mercy. Where your read of Dipping, you find it mentioned in a way of Wrath and Vengeance. Thus the old World was Dip'd and Drowned for their Sins : God's Vengeance followed them, and they sunk as Lead in the mighty Waters. Thus the Egyptians were Dip'd and Drowned in the Red Sea. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ shall come down from Heaven, to render Vengeance on his Adversaries; cloathed with Garments Dip'd in blood, *Rev. xix. 13. . . .*<sup>4</sup>

And on 24th November, preaching on 1 *Cor. xii. 13*, he said :

First therefore in the sight of God, Repenting Believers

are to be baptized, they have an undoubted right to this Ordinance. . . . These were the Subjects of Baptism when the Ordinance was first instituted and appointed. . . . So that if we were sent into an Heathen Nation, we ought to engage them to repent and believe before we administer this Ordinance.<sup>5</sup>

Although elsewhere Chandler is very ready to defend infant baptism, here he is altogether concerned to refute 'Dipping' as the proper mode, even for adults. Facts that came to light after the Portsmouth disputation were, in view of this, to prove damaging to the Presbyterian arguments.

The nearest Baptist church to the Particular one at Gosport was, at this time, a General one at St. Thomas's Street, Portsmouth. This had been founded through the itinerant ministry of an unconventional Anglican clergyman, James Sicklemore—incumbent of Singleton, seven miles north of Chichester. Persuaded of believers' baptism about 1640, he had established a General Baptist church in Chichester as well as at Portsmouth. By the time of the disputation, a building had been erected and the pastor was Thomas Bowes, a farmer at Milton on Portsea Island. Bowes and a number of the members of this church attended lectures at the Portsmouth Presbyterian Meeting House given by the minister there, Francis Williams, assisted by Chandler of Fareham. At the close of one such lecture given by Chandler on Thursday, 22nd December 1698, Bowes stood up and opposed the arguments advanced in favour of the Presbyterian practice of baptism. Both parties soon agreed that only a public debate would suffice for the demands made on either side. Bowes and Webber now conferred on the choice of a disputant to represent the Baptists of both Portsmouth and Gosport. Bowes proposed that Matthew Caffin of Horsham should be invited but Webber rejected him because of his Christology. They then agreed to ask Dr. William Russel to oppose the Presbyterians on their behalf.

In many ways Russel was a natural choice. A graduate in medicine and art, and a member of the senate of Cambridge University, he was the first pastor of High Hall Baptist church and was ". . . well versed in the logical methods of disputation. . . ." <sup>6</sup> Yet the choice was curious. Bowes attended, as a Messenger, the annual assemblies of the General Baptist churches, and his signature occurs frequently in the minutes. When this assembly met in 1698 it sent a letter to representatives of the Particular Baptist churches, bearing the signatures of John Amory of Wrington in Somerset, and Thomas Bowes :

A copy of the Letter sent to Whites Alley touching Bror Wm. Russel

The Genall Assembly of the Messengers Elders & Brethren mett in Goswell Street Meeting House the 15; 16 and 17 of the 4th Month 1698

Unto our Dissenting Brethren Mett at Whites Alley Meeting House on the Day or Days above Mentioned.

Beloved Brethren

for as much as Bror Wm. Rusell a Member of your Society by the Testimony of sevall credibly Witnesses is proved in our Assembly to be guilty of severall & great Imoralities We have thought meet thereby to acquaint you therewith & do Earnestly do desire you speedily to admonish him thereof And to Suspend him from Exercising any Ministeriall gift in the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ And also further to deal with him as god's word Directs in such Cases And further also we do desire & in God's fear Beseech you to consider & Examine well your present Station And remember from whence you are fallen & repent & do your first workes. Brethren the Honour of God and the Glorious Gospell of our Lord Jesus Christ being so much Concerned we hope you will answer these our request.

Subscribed in the name and by  
the order of the Assembly

Jo : Amory  
Thos Bowes<sup>7</sup>

Although Russel's name is otherwise spelt in this letter, a nearby footnote in the minutes makes it clear beyond doubt that this does refer to the disputant.<sup>8</sup> It can only be assumed that whatever differences were the cause of this letter, they had been composed, at least as far as Bowes was concerned, before he and Webber began to seek a champion.

The church at Gosport now wrote to Russel :

To our esteemed Brother Russel, we of the church of Christ at Gosport, send Greeting.

We being under a Pressure of Conscience, having of late had the great Ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ (viz. that of Believers' baptism in water) inveighed against, and ridiculed by one of the Presbyterian ministers (Mr. Chandler by name) and being much grieved that the Ordinance of Christ should be thus triumphed over, and trodden under foot, and hoping you have so far engaged yourself in Christ's Cause, and that God hath given you Abilities to defend it, we don't only Beg, but Require your Personal Presence, and desire your Assistance to defend that sacred Ordinance.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time were sent " . . . several other Letters, signed by the Ministers, and other Private Brethren, to press him to it."<sup>10</sup> It seems that Russel was not at first anxious to comply. He suggested that he and Chandler should exchange letters "to try the strength and length of their Weapons; and thereby prevent a Publick Disputation, if possible. . . ."<sup>11</sup> When he was assured, however, that only a public debate was acceptable to either side, he agreed to attend.

Originally it had been "Agreed, The Disputation be held . . . on Friday the 10th of February next ensuing (if God permit) . . . And if . . . either Party should fall sick, or any other unavoidable Circumstance happen; that then the Time shall be deferr'd to another Day, to be agreed on by the Parties concern'd, not exceeding a Fortnight after; provided a Weeks Notice be given thereof before the 10th of February. . . ."<sup>12</sup> For some unrecorded reason this provision must have been invoked for the dispute did not take place until Wednesday 22nd February. Meanwhile the Baptists asked the Presbyterians to apply for the Royal Licence to dispute. Thus a letter was sent to William III through the Mayor, Henry Seager, and Major-General Earl and Col. Gibson, Governor and Deputy Governor respectively of the Garrison at Portsmouth, requesting His Majesty :

That he would grant permission to the Presbyterians, publicly to vindicate the common cause of the reformed churches, and to settle the wavering among them in the belief and practice of those truths, which tended very much to the advancement of early piety and religion.<sup>13</sup>

In granting the Licence the King commanded that all civil and military officers should attend to maintain peace and order!<sup>14</sup>

The Presbyterian Meeting House in Penny Street, Portsmouth was used for the disputation which began between nine and ten on the morning of February 22nd. Debate continued throughout the day without adjournment of any kind until between six and seven in the evening. Disputants for the Baptists were Dr. Wm. Russel, John Williams, minister at East Knoyle, Wilts. (not to be confused with Francis Williams who was Presbyterian minister at Penny Street) and John Sharp, (Moderator), minister at Frome, Somerset. Opposing them were Samuel Chandler, a Mr. Leigh of Newport, I.W., and Benjamin Robinson, (Moderator), of Hungerford. There were at least three recorders present. These were a Mr. Bissel, the Town Clerk for Portsmouth, Samuel Ring for the Baptists and a Mr. Smith for the Presbyterians. One account reads: "William Smith, M.D., the founder of the Grammar School, was present at this disputation, and took a

verbatim account of the proceedings."<sup>15</sup> All reports speak of the large number who attended.

Russel began by proposing that prayer should be offered. This was agreed to, and Chandler prayed, afterwards addressing the audience :

#### MY FRIENDS,

It is not out of Vanity or Pride I appear in this place upon this Occasion at this Time. Most of you know, and I suppose many of you have heard, that in the Course of my Lecture in this Place, I have Discoursed of the great Principles of Religion; and having explained the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, I came to give an Account of the Two Sacraments of the New Testament; and therein was unavoidably concerned to speak to those Truths that are contradicted by these Gentlemen here present. Those that heard me know, that I was very Modest in expressing my self in this Controversie; But a bold and confident Challenge was given me, which I knew not how to refuse; unless I would betray the Truths I believe in my Conscience, or confess my self not able to vindicate them. And accordingly these Men have sent for some Assistance to oppose us in this Matter. I desire these things may be handled with a great deal of Calmness; that we may discourse of things as becomes Christians; And as we have the Favour of the Government both Civil and Military so we may give them no occasion to repent of allowing us this liberty. And also I desire that nothing may be done unbecoming this Place, where we usually meet together for the more immediate Worship of God. And I would have you join with me in this Petition; That God would grant his Truth may take place.<sup>16</sup>

There were two questions to be debated: 1) WHETHER, according to the commission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, adult believers are only the proper subjects of baptism, and not infants? and 2) WHETHER the ordinance of baptism, as appointed by Christ is to be administered by dipping, plunging or overwhelming only and no otherwise? Russel asked how the issues were to be examined and appeared to favour exegesis of the commission with recourse to other texts. The Presbyterians, however, required that the arguments should be framed syllogistically.

Crosby<sup>17</sup> gives an abridgement of the account of the proceedings as given by Russel in his book *A True Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation Between some Ministers of the Presbyterian and others of the Baptist, Persuasion, concerning the Subjects and Manner of Baptism*. For convenience, the extracts below are



taken from Crosby's account; whilst Russel's unabridged version is here and there a little less abrupt, Crosby gives enough space to his abridgement faithfully to record the impressions that a reading of Russel's book affords. The modern reader deserves to be excused if he sometimes wonders whether the protagonists were not more anxious to win the arguments than they were to convince their opponents of the truth.

The opening exchanges are typical of the tenor throughout :

Dr. Russel. IF Christ hath no where required any of his ministers to baptize infants, then the baptism of infants is not according to the commission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But Christ hath no where required any of his ministers to baptize infants. Therefore the baptism of infants is not according to the commission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Mr. Chandler. IF you will allow good consequences drawn from scripture, I will deny your minor.

Dr. Russel. THEN you must suppose that Christ hath required some of his ministers to baptize infants.

Mr. Leigh. WE distinguish between consequential truths and express words.

Dr. Russel. AND so do we; but I hope our Lord's commission, about holy baptism is delivered in express words, and not in consequentials; the term, in my argument, is very lax; I do not say there commanded, but required; and if you prove the baptism of infants any where required by Christ, 'tis sufficient.

Mr. Leigh. WILL you allow good scripture consequences in this case, or do you expect plain scripture words?

Dr. Russel. I SAY again, the term I use admits of any proof; he is not thereby obliged to produce any express command, if he can do without it. If he can prove that Christ hath any way required it, it will suffice. But you must remember that you are to prove it according to Christ's commission; (for those are the terms in the question) and I believe you will find a difficult task to do that by consequence.

Mr. Chandler. WHAT from the commission?

Mr. Robinson, the moderator, cries out to Mr. Chandler, hold. Dr. Russel must prove it by an universal negative.

Dr. Russel. THEN Mr. Chandler must deny some part of my argument, which I have not yet been able to prevail with him to do.

Mr. Chandler. I DENY the minor.

Dr. Russel. BY denying the minor, you say, that Christ

hath somewhere required some of his ministers to baptize infants.

Mr. Chandler. BY good consequence.

Dr. Russel. THEN I will make good my minor thus : If Christ hath any where required any of his ministers to baptize infants, it is somewhere so recorded in the holy scripture : but it is no where so recorded in the holy scripture ; therefore Christ hath not any where required any of his ministers to baptize infants.

Mr. Chandler. IF you mean by being recorded in scripture, being recorded in express words, I deny your major ; but if you mean by consequence, I deny your minor.<sup>18</sup>

And so on !

To the first of the two questions debated, that concerning the proper subjects of baptism, Russel produced four arguments in favour of adult believers only. The first was, as the above extract shows, that Christ has not commanded the baptism of infants. The answer of the Presbyterians is also indicated above, that infant baptism is a consequence of our Lord's teaching. Secondly, Russel affirmed that discipleship is the prerequisite of baptism, and that infants cannot be disciples, since they cannot be taught. Reply was made that infants could be regarded as 'incomplete disciples.' Next, Russel turned to the Pauline epistles, saying that the apostle ". . . did declare all the counsel of God, and kept back nothing that was profitable for the church of God . . ." but since he nowhere refers to infant baptism, that practice cannot be held to be part of the Gospel. To this Mr. Leigh retorted that the extant epistles are ". . . not the 100th part of what Paul preached . . ." and rejected Russel's argument from silence. Sarcastically, Russel said he had heard that there were unwritten traditions locked up in the Pope's breast, but he had not heard that the Presbyterians had been entrusted with such treasure. The last argument Russel used in this section was based on the express words of the commission which, he asserted, excluded the possibility of the baptism of infants. Mr. Leigh, however, claimed that infants were ". . . included in the word 'all nations' . . ." This argument occupied a considerable time. The account makes it clear that voices were raised and tempers frayed. The hope that Chandler had expressed at the outset that the dispute would be conducted with ". . . a great deal of Calmness . . ." now proved forlorn. At one point in this section, Leigh for the Presbyterians asked : "I challenge you to give one instance of any one, born of believing parents, baptized at age." It seems that whilst Russel continued the debate, John Williams was trying to recall one instance from the New Testament, and soon this curious dialogue follows :

Mr. Williams. WAS not the mother of our Lord a believer when Christ was born?

Mr. Leigh. WHAT do you ask that question for? every body knows that?

Mr. Williams. BUT do you believe it?

Mr. Leigh. YES, I do believe it; what then?

Mr. Williams. THEN here is an instance for you, from scripture, of the child of a believer, that was a believer before he was born; and yet he was not baptized till he came to years; and this we can prove.<sup>19</sup>

Shortly afterwards the debate on the first question was concluded but not before Russel had said :

. . . doth he (i.e. Robinson) not know that the church of Rome baptize things of an inferior nature? for they baptize churches and bells. And if I had compared your practice to theirs of baptizing bells, you had no reason to complain, for they are both passive in the act; only, if you will give credit to one of the fathers, viz. Augustine, the bells are upon that account the fittest subjects, for they are wholly passive; but, saith he, the little children are not so, for they shew their resistance by their crying.<sup>20</sup>

In debating the second question which was concerned with the manner of baptizing, some time was spent on etymology. Chandler declared that the Greek 'baptizo' could be translated as 'wash,' and need not carry the meaning of 'dip.' Russel then quoted from the *Lexicon Theologicum* of Alstedius in which, so he recalled, the primary sense of 'baptizo' was given as 'to dip,' and the rendering 'to wash' was "secondary and remote." A short extract here will show the temper of the dispute :

Dr. Russel. THE holy scripture shews us the right way of baptizing, as appointed by Christ : but it doth not shew us that it ought to be done by sprinkling; therefore sprinkling is not the right way of baptizing.

Mr. Leigh. SIR, you must bring in that dipping is absolutely necessary; what do you talk of sprinkling for?

Dr. Russel. I HOPE you are not ashamed of your practice; but if you will disown sprinkling to be the right way of baptizing, I am contented, I will not then insist upon it.

Mr. Robinson. WE are not discoursing upon that now; you are to prove dipping to be the only way; and you must and shall prove it.

Dr. Russel. MUST and shall! must and shall is for the king, and not for Mr. Robinson. . . .<sup>21</sup>

The account of the proceedings closes with these words :

AFTER much pro and con about words to no profit, but the subverting of the hearers, and a confused jangling and noise, Mr. Williams, the Presbyterian minister, said, he thought there had been little said to the purpose. Upon which Dr. Russel said, Mr. Williams, I think there hath been a great deal said, more than hath been answered. But if you are not satisfied we will wave all that hath been said, and I will dispute it over with you, de novo. Mr. Williams shrugged, and answered, No, I am not very well. Upon which it was thought meet by them to put an end to the disputation. And Mr. Leigh, after he had made a speech to thank the governor and the mayor for their civility to them, and the Baptists had returned their thanks also, he then concluded in prayer, and so dismissed the assembly. It was between the hours of six and seven of the clock, when the dispute ended.<sup>22</sup>

The Portsmouth Disputation was at an end, but the sequel was a very long one. We may perhaps be pardoned if we are surprised to find that there were some who, as a direct result of that day's long and wearisome debate in the logical form, were persuaded of the claims of the Baptists, were baptised and joined the churches at Portsmouth and Gosport. The first development, however, took place next day. It seems that Sharp, Moderator for the Baptists, Leigh, the Presbyterian from Newport, John Williams, minister of East Knoyle Baptist church, and two other Baptists met together at the house of Francis Williams, the Portsmouth Presbyterian minister, in whose church the disputation had taken place.

. . . there came in Mr. Erle, Mr. Bowler, and Mr. Farrel, three Presbyterian Ministers . . . Mr. Farrel, in the Presence of the forementioned Ministers, saluted Mr. John Williams, the Disputant, after this manner.

Mr. Williams, I must tell you, and that not as my own Sentiments only, but as the Sentiments of every one of our Brethren, that what credit was gained to your Cause, was gained by you. . . .<sup>23</sup>

This estimate reflects the esteem in which the elderly John Williams was held and demonstrates, by implication, that the Presbyterian evaluation of Dr. Russel was not high. This is abundantly borne out elsewhere. It may have been due, in part at least, to the contempt in which provincials have often held those who live in the capital. It is also possible of course that they were unwilling to admit the abilities of Russel, to which others were ready to testify.

Subsequent to this meeting, Williams wrote a letter to Leigh which for charitable expression compares very favourably with the many other books and pamphlets that were issued on either side. He wrote :

Brother Leigh, for so I can heartily call you, and own you if you please to accept of it : the occasion of writing these few Lines to you is this. I have in my reflex Thoughts weighed what was offered upon both sides in the Dispute; not being willing to abide by any thing that has not a foundation in the Word, nor to reject any thing that is offered against my present Opinion, could I see it were bottomed on the Word, because I know I must one day be judged by the Word. You told me you could have said four times more for our Cause than was spoken by us, and ten times more than you did for your own. Possibly you might have spoken four times as many words as we did : but I think it would have been a hard task to have offered Arguments that had four times more weight and substance than those that were offered by us . . . yet I would not undervalue your Abilities, nor set our own in competition with yours : had we not had Truth on our side, your Abilities would soon have overturn'd mine. . . .

Whatever you could have said, I know not; you know you did not give us an instance for Infant-Baptism . . . and must we still look on Infant-Baptism to be an Ordinance of God . . . ? But, Sir, if you can say ten times more for your Practice than you did, it is not too late to offer it yet; and if you please to send it me, and it be such as is convincing, I will spread it for you; if not, I will fairly answer it, and not publickly spread it. Sir, when I consider what was offered by us, and denied by you, and with what Props your own Arguments were supported, being Men of such Parts and Piety as you are, on whose credit the Ordinance of Christ is like to be administered to a wrong Subject for the future, as it hath been for Ages past upon a like traditional Bottom; I am really grieved, and that is the reason of my setting Pen to Paper.

The letter then recapitulates some of the arguments offered on either side in the dispute but adds little significant to the record we have. The concluding sentence reads :

I shall now take leave, and remain your truly loving Friend,  
John Williams.<sup>24</sup>

It is a pity that there is not preserved any reply to this letter, whereas we have much of a different temper.

Within about a year of the disputation Williams had died but we have still a sermon of his preached in the Baptist Meeting House at Wallup near Andover, Hampshire. The sermon on the commission of our Lord as given in *Matt.* xxviii. 19, occupies some forty-three pages of closely set type! The following extracts illustrate Williams' exegesis and argument at certain points:

It appears it (i.e. the manner of baptising) is by Dipping, in that the whole of the Subject is to be baptized, and not a part only; the Commission is to baptize the Person, the Face is no more mentioned than the Feet, nor is there any part mentioned but the whole; the word is, baptizing them. If it be objected that the Face doth signify the Person; I answer, if that be granted, yet the Person doth not signify the Face: It's the Person that is to be baptized; but the sprinkling a little Water on the Face doth never wash the whole of the Subject; and this being done on the Face of a little Infant, is neither the washing away the filth of the Flesh, nor yet the answer of a good Conscience, by the Resurrection of Christ: there is neither the Figure, nor the thing figured.<sup>25</sup>

On 1 *Cor.* vii. 14:

Tho one of the Parents to whom the Apostle wrote was a Believer when he wrote to them, yet they were not so to be considered in their being sanctified each to the other, but as Husband and Wife. . . . Be they who they will, Believers or Unbelievers, they did not live in Fornication; but in Wedlock they were Husband and Wife. . . . Their Cohabitation was lawful according to the Word of God, and in this sense the word sanctified is taken elsewhere (for that which is lawful) 1 *Tim.* iv. 5. Every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused; for it is sanctified by the Word of God, etc. that is, lawful to be used; they were married, and so were sanctified each to the other; this he illustrates by an Argument drawn from their Offspring, Else were your Children unclean, but now they are holy. If they had not been married, and so sanctified each to the other by the Ordinance of God, their Children had been unclean, they had been illegitimate, unlawfully begotten. . . .<sup>26</sup>

When giving "a Description of Baptism," Williams said:

The Administrator, that must be a Minister of Christ, and one that hath Commission from Christ to preach the Gospel: Go preach and baptize. Now here I do not tie it to a Minister in Office, that is, to an Elder, one that hath a Pastoral Relation to a particular People, but to a preaching Disciple:

Baptism being no more tied to Office or Power, than Preaching is; Preaching is not restrained to Office or Power by the Commission, as I have shewed already: every one that is gifted and qualified by the Spirit, and providentially call'd, ought to have Commission to preach, *Acts xi. 20*, therefore such have Commission to baptize, Go teach and baptize.<sup>27</sup>

No date is affixed to this sermon, but the pattern of argument makes it clear that it was delivered after the Portsmouth disputation, and this view gains strength from the prefixed letter to Leigh and the fact that the date of publication is 1700.

In contrast to the mildness of that part of the sequel to the dispute in which John Williams figured, that which concerned Russel was vigorous and often bitter. On the morning of the day following the debate, Russel, whose wife was ill, set out once more for London.<sup>28</sup> Two mornings later this advertisement appeared in a newspaper:

Portsmouth, February 23rd. Yesterday the dispute between the Presbyterians and Anabaptists, was held in the Presbyterian Meeting-house. It began at ten of the Clock in the morning, and continued till 6 in the afternoon, without any intermission. The Theam of the Dispute was the subject of Baptism, and the manner how Baptism is to be performed. Russel and Williams were the Opponents for the Anabaptists, and Mr. Chaunler and Mr. Leigh Defendants for the Presbyterians, Mr. Sharp, Moderator for the former, and Mr. Robinson for the latter. Mr. Russel opposed Infant Baptism with all the subtlety and sophistry of the Schools, and was answered with good Reason and Learning. Upon the whole, it was the Opinion of all the Judicious Auditory, the Presbyterians sufficiently defended their Doctrine, and also worsted their Adversaries when they came to assume the place of Opponents.<sup>29</sup>

This advertisement was unsigned, but it appears that it was inserted by the authority of the Deputy Governor of the Portsmouth Garrison, for Ivimey records:

It afterwards appeared that this was sent by Colonel John Gibson the Lieutenant Governor, who gave Mr. Chandler liberty to publish a certificate signed by his own hand June 9, 1699. In this he declares, "I say, the above advertisement was inserted, as above, by my direction. I do also own, I was then, and am still of the same opinion so mentioned in the above said advertisement."<sup>30</sup>

As was inevitable both sides were laying claim to victory, for although the Baptists did not hurry into print with their claims

they were nevertheless made, as later publications were to testify. Moreover, other rumours and accusations were being let loose, two of which were personal attacks on Russel. It was being said that he had required of the Baptists of the district a fee for the services he rendered, whilst doubts were also being cast on his right to the style of 'Dr.'. Then, on April 1st 1699, another Presbyterian notice appeared in a newspaper :

## SIR

UNderstanding that the Anabaptists do every where make high Boasts, as if they had obtained the Victory in the late Disputation at Portsmouth, I thought fit to give you the following Account of the Occasion and Issue of it. Mr. Samuel Chandler of Fareham, carrying on a Week-day Lecture at Portsmouth in conjunction with Mr. Francis Williams (the Nonconforming Minister there) entered upon the Doctrine of the Sacraments (after he had gone through the Creed and Lords Prayer, as Mr. Williams in his Course was going through the Decalogue) with a Design thereby to compleat a Body of Divinity; and being upon the Point of Baptism, the Anabaptists came, in a considerable Body, upon one of his Lecture-days, and after Sermon one Farmer Bowes, a preacher amongst them stood up; and charging Mr. Chandler with delivering several things that were false, challenged him in the face of the Congregation, to dispute publicly upon the Point, with such a Person as they should procure. Mr. Chandler (apprehending the Interest of Religion, as well as his own Reputation, was likely to suffer if he should decline it) accepted the Challenge; and the next day some on both sides met, and adjusted Preliminaries, viz. That Mr. Chandler aforesaid, and one Mr. William (by some call'd Dr.) Russel of London, should be the Disputants; the Time, Place, and Questions to be debated were all fixed; that each of them should be allowed a Second, and each Side have a Mediator, and that the Rules of Disputation should be strictly observed. Accordingly Mr. Leigh of Newport, in the Isle of Wight, was declared Mr. Chandler's Assistant, and Mr. Benj. Robinson of Hungerford in Berks, was chosen Mediator on their side. One Mr. John Williams of East Knahil near Shaftsbury was Mr. Russel's Second, and one Mr. Sharp of Froom in Somersetshire, was Mediator on the Anabaptist side. — It was visible to every One, That though Mr. Russel made use of all the little Arts of Sophistry, with which a bad Cause is wont to be supported; yet the Disputants on the other side by Distinguishing upon him and



their Moderator, by preventing his Excursions, and keeping him close to the Rules of Disputation, broke all his Measures, so that he gained no Ground upon them in either Question. But when they, in their Course, opposed, the Evidence and force of the Reasonings, was such as once and again put the Anabaptists to silence.<sup>31</sup>

This last advertisement prompted Russel to publish his own account of his debate, *A True Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation Between some Ministers of the Presbyterian and others of the Baptist, Persuasion, concerning the Subjects and Manner of Baptism*. This is the account which Crosby used and from whose abridgement extracts have been taken. Later, justifying the publication, Russel said :

And this, (i.e. the above quoted advertisement) together with the Noise and Clamour they made in the time of the Dispute, by which the People were hindred from hearing what was spoken, were the Reasons why it was thought meet to make it publick. . . .<sup>32</sup>

In the book itself Russel wrote :

We being silent and not using the same Methods as they did, to squirt out foolish Advertisement in common News-Papers, these men grew confident; and upon the 1st of April following, in the Flying Post, they publish a long Story full of Untruths and silly squint-ey'd Reflections, not becoming their Learning or Profession: and all to support a sinking Interest.<sup>33</sup>

Affirming that he had received from John Williams a record of the arguments that he had used at the dispute, and that he had had letters from "divers other Persons that were present . . .", Russel yet goes on to anticipate that the Presbyterians will object to his account, for he says :

And if there be any thing omitted therein, they must blame themselves, or their own Scribe, and not us. For Mr. William Leddel went to Mr. Smith their Writer, and carried our Copy with him and desired him to compare it with his: He answered that his was very imperfect, it being the first time he was in a Dispute, and he could not take it, but some things were left out; and said that it was not as yet wholly written over. Mr. Leddel waited upon him a second time, but could not obtain a sight of it to compare them together, although he was satisfied it was then finished. . . .<sup>34</sup>

About the charge that he had required a fee for his attendance, Russel said :

They have also reported, That I am a Hackney Disputant, and that I refused to come down to Portsmouth under thirty Guinea's; but that at last I was prevail'd upon to take Twenty . . . I think fit hereby to tell the World, That I did not so much as demand one farthing of them for my Journey, neither before nor after. For all that are thoroughly acquainted with me know, that I do neither Preach for Hire, nor Divine for Money, as some of them do. . . .

But that I may do Right to our Friends at Portsmouth and Gosport, I do acknowledge that of their own free good Will (without asking) they did pay my Coach—hire and bear my Charges. . . .<sup>35</sup>

At the conclusion of his record of the proceedings, Russel added a list of authorities to strengthen his arguments, making citations from British and continental scholars of varying doctrinal allegiances.

As Russel had foreseen the Presbyterians quickly rejected his account. Their first act was to send out a certificate over the names of Chandler and Leigh.

THese are to certify all whom it may concern, That Dr. Russel's Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation is full of palpable notorious Falshoods, and that there are many Alterations, Additions and Omissions, even from Mr. Samuel Ring's own Copy which he hath honestly given to us. We can procure the hands of vast numbers both of the Church of England and Dissenters, and some Anabaptists themselves, that will acknowledge we obtain'd an intire Victory. The Governor and Mayor have promised their Testimonials, but being both now at London, we cannot send them at present, but shall publish with all convenient speed a full Answer to Dr. Russel's Book, with the Attestations of the principal Gentlemen present: Therefore we humbly desire all Persons would suspend their Judgment of this matter till they have a view of our Answer.

Signed by  
Sam. Chandler,  
Will. Leigh<sup>36</sup>

Portsmouth, June 1, 1699.

This certificate was widely circulated in the churches of the West where those who still retained an interest in the issue of the battle eagerly awaited the promised account by Chandler and Leigh. When it was published, the name of Robinson, the Presbyterian Moderator, appeared with those of Chandler and Leigh as joint

author. The title was *An impartial account of the Portsmouth Disputation. With some just reflections on Dr. Russel's pretended narrative. . .*<sup>37</sup> This in turn gave rise to a publication by Sharp, the Baptist Moderator, entitled, *Truth Prevailing against the Fiercest Opposition. Being a Vindication of Dr. Russel's True Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation.* This volume includes the criticisms not only of Sharp but also of Russel who, having listed 39 errors in the Presbyterian account, states that he has "not yet fully advanced so far as three Leaves and a half in their printed account . . .",<sup>38</sup> and so he gives up any attempt to provide a complete catalogue of errors.

Another small work entitled *A Dialogue between a Paedobaptist and an Anti-Paedobaptist, containing the Strength of Arguments offered on both sides at the Portsmouth Disputation*<sup>39</sup> was published anonymously. A reply to this was entitled *Truth Vindicated*.<sup>40</sup> The title-page observes that the *Dialogue* which it sets out to answer was "Published by Samuel Chandler, and William Leigh, by the Advice of their Brethren from Divers Parts." More interestingly still, the anonymous author of *Truth Vindicated* is described as "one, who was referr'd to the Account of the Dispute at Portsmouth, etc. for his Conviction, but hath since separated from the Presbyterians, and now is a Member of a Baptist Congregation." For one so recently a Presbyterian, the tone of the pamphlet is surprisingly bitter.

A Dr. Bereault next issued an answer to the Portsmouth disputation and this led Russel to write a tract entitled *Infant Baptism is Will—Worship. . .*<sup>41</sup> Whitley lists one more publication, an 82 page tract by J. Morgan entitled *The Portsmouth Disputation examined. Being a Brief Answer to Arguments used by the Anti-Paedobaptists in Dr. Russel's narrative . . .*, published in 1713 in New York.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps the most damaging evidence used by the Baptists against the Presbyterians was that concerning Joseph Fox. In his lectures and sermons given towards the end of 1698, Chandler, as has been shown, did not deny that initially at any rate baptism was for "Repenting Believers." He challenged the Baptist claim that baptism by immersion was the correct mode. After the dispute, however, it was shown that Joseph Fox, a Presbyterian of about 40 years of age, had been baptised by immersion. The baptism took place at Havant, some eight miles north east of Portsmouth, and the baptising minister was Earl, the Gosport Presbyterian.<sup>43</sup> So Russel wrote :

And why (after all this) they should quarrel with us, we cannot understand when they practise it after the same manner as we do, and call it dipping.<sup>44</sup>

## SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup> Underwood: *History of English Baptists*, London, 1956, p. 126.
- <sup>2</sup> Crosby: *History of English Baptists*, London, 1740, Vol. 4, pp. 177-183, where he refers to a dispute between Baptists and Quakers at Burton in Northants, in 1717.
- <sup>3</sup> Russel: *True Narrative of Portsmouth Disputation*, London, 1700. Dedication.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Dedication.
- <sup>5</sup> Sharp: *Truth Prevailing against Fiercest Opposition*, London, 1700. p. vi.
- <sup>6</sup> Crosby: *History of English Baptists*, London, 1740, Vol. 4, p. 259.
- <sup>7</sup> Whitley: *Minutes of Gen. Assembly of General Baptist Churches in England*, London, 1909, Vol. I, pp. 55-6.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- <sup>9</sup> Ridoutt: *Early Baptist History of Portsmouth*, Portsmouth, 1888, p. 18.
- <sup>10</sup> Russel: *True Narrative*, London, 1700. Dedication.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Dedication.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- <sup>13</sup> Ridoutt: *Early Baptist History of Portsmouth*, Portsmouth, 1888, p. 19.
- <sup>14</sup> Ivimey: *History of English Baptists*, London, 1811, Vol. I, p. 555.
- <sup>15</sup> Gates: *History of Portsmouth*, Portsmouth, 1900, p. 296.
- <sup>16</sup> Russel: *True Narrative*, London, 1700. Dedication.
- <sup>17</sup> Crosby: *History of English Baptists*, London, 1740, Vol. III, pp. 314-353.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 315-317.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 350.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 352-3.
- <sup>23</sup> Russel: *True Narrative*, London, 1700. Dedication.
- <sup>24</sup> Bound with Sharp's *Truth Prevailing*, London, 1700, pp. 128-134.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-7.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.
- <sup>28</sup> Sharp: *Truth Prevailing*, London, 1700, p. iii.
- <sup>29</sup> *The Post-man and the Historical Account*, London, from Thursday, February 23 to Saturday, February 25, 1699.
- <sup>30</sup> Ivimey: *History of English Baptists*, London, 1811, Vol. I, p. 558, where he quotes from *Impartial Account* by Chandler, Leigh and Robinson.
- <sup>31</sup> *The Flying Post or The Post-Master*, London, from Thursday, March 30 to Saturday, April 1, 1699.
- <sup>32</sup> Sharp: *Truth Prevailing*, London, 1700, p. iv.
- <sup>33</sup> Russel: *True Narrative*, London, 1700. Dedication.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* Dedication.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* Dedication.
- <sup>36</sup> Sharp: *Truth Prevailing*, London, 1700, p. 35.
- <sup>37</sup> Whitley: *Baptist Bibliography*, London, 1916, Vol. I, p. 133. 7-699.
- <sup>38</sup> Sharp: *Truth Prevailing*, London, 1700, p. 88.
- <sup>39</sup> Whitley: *Baptist Bibliography*, London, 1916, Vol. I, p. 133. 8-699.
- <sup>40</sup> Sharp: *Truth Prevailing*, London, 1700, pp. 93-125.
- <sup>41</sup> Whitley: *Baptist Bibliography*, London, 1916, Vol. I, p. 136. 40-700.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 144. 13-713.
- <sup>43</sup> Russel: *True Narrative*, London, 1700. Dedication; and Sharp: *Truth Prevailing*, London, 1700, pp. 89-92.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

# Roman Catholicism and Religious Liberty

(A review article)

JUST over a year ago, a significant book appeared bearing the title of this article.<sup>1</sup> It presents a minority trend towards religious liberty in the Roman Catholic Church and in effect says to that Church, "Openly declare that this trend is right."

The author of the book, Dr. A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz, is a Spaniard who was formerly a Jesuit serving as general director of the Roman Catholic Movement of Students, with residence in Rome. He left the Roman Catholic Church at the time of the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Well trained in Catholic theology and now an earnest Protestant, he is employed by the World Council of Churches as research associate of its Commission on the Study of Religious Liberty. He is well aware of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has often been a formidable enemy of religious liberty, but he is convinced that this will not necessarily always be the case.

## I

Before dealing with the minority trend towards liberty in the Roman Catholic Church we need to consider briefly the main tradition of that Church.<sup>2</sup> This is against freedom except where expediency calls for it.

After church and state had been united in the Roman Empire, the church gradually accepted the use of governmental power for the enforcement of religious unity. Augustine developed the theory that "when error prevails it is right to invoke liberty of conscience, but when the contrary truth predominates, it is proper to use coercion."<sup>3</sup> For him heresy was worse than murder, since it destroys the soul, whereas murder only destroys the body.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Aquinas justified the death penalty for heretics by saying that it is more serious to corrupt the faith than to counterfeit money, and if counterfeiters are put to death, with much more justice should heretics be executed.<sup>5</sup> A firm foundation was laid by theologians for the inquisition and for crusades against heretics.

Few Roman Catholics in modern times have advocated inquisitions and crusades. The leadership of the Church, however, has favoured the use of state power to prevent the spread of heresy and to protect "the true religion."

In 1864 Pope Pius IX made clear in the *Syllabus of Errors* that he was opposed to freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, separation of church and state, civil marriage, and secular education. Among the errors he condemned is the belief that "in the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion shall be held as the only religion of the state, to the exclusion of all other modes of worship."<sup>6</sup> Pope Leo XIII in 1885 indicated that his church claims special privileges as the true religion but recognises that in some circumstances a degree of toleration is necessary: "In truth, though the Church judges it not lawful that the various kinds of divine worship should have the same right as the true religion, still it does not condemn those governors of States who, for the sake of acquiring some great good, or preventing some great ill, patiently bear with manners and customs so that each kind of religion has its place in the State."<sup>7</sup>

This seems to support the distinction first explicitly made by Jesuits in 1863<sup>8</sup> between "thesis" and "hypothesis," though so far as I know no pope has ever used that terminology. The "thesis" is the ideal stand which is to be taken when Catholic principles can be applied. It exists in a Catholic state, that is, a state whose citizens are overwhelmingly Catholic and whose government is friendly to the Roman Catholic Church. In such a situation "error" must not be free to compete with the "truth." The "hypothesis" is a lower, unideal stand which is taken by Catholics when circumstances made it imprudent for them to try to impose their principles. In such a situation "error" may be tolerated as "a lesser evil." The "hypothesis" exists in America, and some Catholics would say in all or most parts of the modern world.

Many Catholics believe that the "thesis" exists in Spain. That nation, more than any other, regards itself as a Catholic state. There, the power of the government is on the side of Catholic unity. The Charter of the Spanish People, proclaimed in 1945, indicates the extent of the religious toleration which may be expected in a Catholic state:

The profession and practice of the Catholic religion, which is that of the Spanish state, will enjoy official protection.

No one will be molested for his religious beliefs, nor for the private practice of his cult. No external ceremonies or manifestations other than those of the Catholic religion will be permitted.

In a Catholic state dissident religions cannot expect freedom of worship. It is not strange that the leaders of the Catholic Church in Spain have sought to limit dissident worship to the interior of

chapels and that they have even connived to close some that had already been opened.<sup>10</sup> An American Catholic textbook on political science says that circumstances in a Catholic state may demand the toleration of dissident worship "carried on within the family, or in such an inconspicuous manner as to be an occasion neither of scandal nor of perversion to the faithful."<sup>11</sup>

In a Catholic state dissident religions cannot expect freedom of propaganda and proselytism. The American textbook just quoted declares :

Quite distinct from the performance of false religious worship and preaching to the members of the erring sect, is the propaganda of the false doctrines among Catholics. This could become a source of injury, a positive menace, to the religious welfare of true believers. Against such an evil they have a right to protection by the Catholic State.<sup>12</sup>

A recent book on church and state by a Spanish Catholic argues that the Catholic state should come to the aid of the church against heretical propaganda when "in certain circumstances other methods, which are by nature the principal ones, higher and more in keeping with human dignity of susceptibility . . . cannot be used successfully or prove insufficient."<sup>13</sup> In some cases such as propaganda by Jews, Buddhists, or Moslems within its domain, the Catholic state can ignore what is going on, since it is of little danger, whereas in other cases, such as vigorous Protestant propaganda, the state must intervene. The government should be flexible, sometimes tolerant and sometimes intolerant, supporting the true faith and at the same time avoiding arousing the animosity of people within the nation and on the outside.

In a Catholic state the Roman Catholic Church expects to control education. The proper arrangement is a system of public education which guarantees Catholic instruction for all. The greatest concession which can be made is exemption from Catholic instruction for those whose parents demand it on the basis of belonging to another religion.

The Roman Catholic Church also claims the right to control marriage in a Catholic state. In Spain, since canon law is state law, the only form of legal marriage for Catholics, even in the case of mixed marriages, is that offered by the Church. The stricter Catholics insist that everyone baptized as a Catholic is bound by canon law. Others recognise the right of baptized persons to leave the Catholic Church, and therefore to have civil marriage, but make leaving the Church as difficult as possible.

The situation in Spain with regard to worship, the publicising of non-Catholic beliefs and practices, evangelism, education, and

marriage comes close to the traditional ideal for a Catholic state. In a joint pastoral letter in 1948 the Spanish Catholic hierarchy declared: "Let Catholics of all countries, if they wish truly to be Catholic, if they wish to be faithful to papal teachings . . . be on their guard against ridiculing, as intransigent and backward, the Catholics of Spain or of any other country which has the great fortune of preserving Catholic unity."<sup>14</sup>

## II

Now we turn to the other side. Some people who regard themselves as real Catholics are advocating full religious liberty. Dr. Carrillo de Albornoz stresses "the momentous importance, within the Roman Catholic Church, of the every day increasing stream in favour of religious liberty."<sup>15</sup>

Frenchmen are especially outspoken in favour of religious liberty, but important statements have also been made by Catholics of Germany, Belgium, England, America, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and other lands. They have been published with the "nihil obstat" of Roman Catholic authorities. This does not mean that they reproduce official Catholic doctrine, but it does mean that they have not yet been judged contrary to it. Among the advocates of religious liberty on the basis of Christian principle are members of the hierarchy. Cardinal Felin, Archbishop of Paris, has said:

Social pressure: spiritual emancipation. Which will win? As a man I cannot tell; as a bishop I am bound to choose. And my choice is freedom. At a higher level than the disputes of the schools and political ideologies, freedom assumes a pastoral dimension. The reason is not exterior and secondary, as if the Church were claiming freedom only to accommodate itself to the taste of the day. Freedom lies at the very heart of Christianity, which seen from without might look like a system, but thought and lived from within is a living bond between persons, a religion of the spirit. Faith is the encounter of a free gift and a free acceptance: a call on the part of God and a conscious and submissive response to God's voice. . . .

Freedom for the sake of freedom, freedom for the sake of approaching nearer to God, such is the Christian order which is ours to promote.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Carrillo de Albornoz concludes:

At any rate, the least one can say about this Roman Catholic position in favour of complete religious freedom is that it is



an "orthodox" doctrine within the Roman Catholic Church, which can be defended with the official "nihil obstat" of the ecclesiastical authority, and which has the favour of many and very important members of the Catholic Hierarchy. For one, Cardinal Ottaviani, who spoke against such freedom (and not without some indirect "rappel à l'ordre" by the Pope), we have several living cardinals who publicly raised their voices in favour of it.<sup>17</sup>

The theory of "thesis" and "hypothesis" is condemned by adherents of the present trend towards religious liberty. They insist that religious liberty is not something to be tolerated under certain circumstances as a lesser evil; it is to be practised under all circumstances as a positive good. Unfortunately they have not yet given much attention to precisely what is involved in religious liberty—and some would apparently be satisfied with toleration—but they have given impressive arguments in its favour. Some are philosophical, political, and pragmatic, but the most weighty ones are biblical and theological.

Important Roman Catholic theologians now argue that the dignity and freedom of man as a being created in the image of God with the power of choice call for religious liberty. They dwell much on the nature of redemption and on Christian inner freedom—failing at times to show the connection between these and external religious liberty. They emphasise that love of God must be free and spontaneous, that love of one's neighbour requires respect for his dignity as a person, and that faith must be voluntary in order to be real. In the words of Father Léonard, "A faith that is imposed is a contradiction in terms, not only in relation to God's free will but also in relation to the free acceptance it presupposes in the believer."<sup>18</sup>

The Catholic friends of religious liberty also emphasise the sovereignty of God and man's obligation to obey Him. Subjectively they interpret this as the duty to follow conscience, and they insist that every man must be free to obey his own conscience. The German Jesuit, Max Pribilla, declares: "The Church itself will . . . be wise to leave God to decide on the state of conscience of people with different beliefs."<sup>19</sup>

But is not all of this contrary to Roman Catholic tradition? The Catholic friends of religious liberty reply that it is contrary to one tradition of their Church but is in harmony with what the Church has essentially stood for through the centuries. They quote Church Fathers, especially those before Augustine, isolated statements by church leaders of later times, and the provision in canon law<sup>20</sup> that no one should be forced to become a Catholic

against his will. They point out that there is no "ex cathedra" statement absolutely binding Roman Catholic consciences. André Latreille has written :

The canons of the councils, approved by the Pope, or the pontifical definitions provided with the particular characteristics of universality and solemnity ought alone to bind rigorously the consciences of the faithful. The other documents, encyclicals, letters or declarations aim to orient the thought and the conduct of Catholics in the circumstances in which they find themselves at a given moment; they often contain contingent elements which bear the mark of a certain historical situation and are consequently subject to revision.<sup>21</sup>

Other writers argue that the popes of the nineteenth century did not condemn religious liberty in an absolute manner. They only condemned the false interpretation of it as the sovereign right of the individual reason and conscience to decide matters of faith without any consideration of objective truth and order. It is only natural concludes Yves Congar, that the Church would condemn a concept of liberty "which regarded freedom as a primary and absolute good and defined it without reference to anything else."<sup>22</sup> It is also entirely proper to recognise, declare the friends of religious liberty, that it would be much better if religious pluralism did not exist, but the fact is that it does exist.

The popes of the twentieth century, declare Catholic advocates or religious liberty, have faced a new situation and have sought to find a reconciliation between Catholic principles and the new society based on liberty. In 1931 Pope Pius XI wrote : "We are both proud and happy to fight for the freedom of consciences."<sup>23</sup> In 1953, just after Cardinal Ottaviani had defended the Spanish concept of Catholic unity, Pope Pius XII made a speech in which he denied that the principle, "Error has no rights," can be transferred from the metaphysical plane to the plane of state legislation. He said that God permits error and evil and He has not given men or human authorities any unconditional command to prevent religious error or moral evil. He concluded : "The duty of suppressing moral and religious error cannot, therefore, be the final form for action."<sup>24</sup>

Since Dr. Carrillo de Albornoz's book was published, Pope John XXIII has told the General Council of Catholic Missions that obsolete ideas and prejudices must be overcome so that those separated from the Roman Catholic Church will return to it. He said, "We must go to work with all the goodwill at our com-

mand, overcoming all our old viewpoints and prejudices and laying aside our less-courteous expressions."<sup>25</sup>

Certainly the popes of the twentieth century are less harsh in their denunciations of heretics than were those of the nineteenth century. Still, they have made no unequivocal statement in favour of full religious liberty for all people under all circumstances. Dr. Carrillo de Albornoz thinks the reason may be that the theologians have not yet finished their work and the situation is not ripe for a decisive statement.

Whether such a statement will ever be made is a moot question. Obviously there are people of courage, intellectual vigour, and sincerity who think that it may be, and they are seeking to prepare the way for it. They may be silenced tomorrow, but in the meantime they speak, and we may be grateful for it. They are our allies in the struggle for religious liberty.

J. D. HUGHEY

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz, *Roman Catholicism and Religious Liberty* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> See J. D. Hughey, Jr., *Religious Freedom in Spain: Its Ebb and Flow* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1955).

<sup>3</sup> M. Searle Bates, *Religious Liberty: an Inquiry* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1945), p. 358

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper, 1919), Vol. II, p. 232.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 587.

<sup>8</sup> Carrillo de Albornoz, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> Hughey, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>10</sup> At the present time three Baptist churches in Spain are closed with government seals and several others are verbally closed. The Third Baptist Church of Madrid has recently been permitted to re-open.

<sup>11</sup> John A. Ryan and Francis J. Boland, *Catholic Principles of Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 317.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Francisco Segarra, *Inglesia y estado* (Madrid: Ifiba, 1958), p. 218.

<sup>14</sup> Carrillo de Albornoz, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 14f.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>20</sup> Canon 1351.

<sup>21</sup> Carrillo de Albornoz, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 75f.

<sup>25</sup> *Baptist Times*, June 9, 1960, p. 1.

## In The Study

A FULL-SCALE modern English commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel has long been awaited. The announcement of the Black New Testament Commentaries encouraged the hope that at last it would be provided. Mark and John have from many quarters received worthy contemporary treatment. Even Luke has attracted much discerning and provocative re-examination. If it sometimes seemed that the First Gospel always came in last in the Scholarship Stakes, we trusted that Dr. Filson<sup>1</sup> would drastically rearrange the field.

Indeed he has given us riches. Here are more than forty pages of introductory material and two hundred and fifty of translation and commentary. The Gospel is not artificially isolated, but always seen in the widest biblical context and with special attention to Synoptic relationships. Aim and attitude are undeviatingly expository. Critical knowledge is never obtruded for its own sake, but made subservient to the task of interpretation. Of course Dr. Filson would have liked more space. But he exploits the limitations set upon him. His style is masterly. There are no long prosy sentences. Every word is made to count. The only obscurity is mathematical! In the parable of the unmerciful steward the problem of translating talents into pounds and dollars finally defeats the commentator. But the slip is remarkable because so exceptional.

This is a book for the plain man who wants to take Scripture seriously. Herein is its strength—and something of its disappointment. The publishers inform us that this series of commentaries are "full enough for serious academic work." But it is just here that questions arise in the mind. I miss the kind of treatment and material provided so effectively by T. W. Manson in *The Sayings of Jesus*—a book which significantly is missing from the bibliography. And I note the absence of any sense of a controlling motif that imparts special structural form and unity to the Gospel.

Now without doubt Dr. Filson would have his defence. He will draw attention to the varied readership he is commissioned to serve. He will point out his own suspicion of those who read into Scripture all sorts of modern patterns and discover all sorts of keys that were never there at all. He will remind us of his own conviction that Matthew has provided a manual of Christian teaching. He may even add that teaching tends inevitably to be or to seem pedestrian to the scholar precisely because it is concerned with the edification of the ordinary church member.

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, by F. V. Filson (A. & C. Black, 28/-). 1960.

All this is sound sense. If the First Gospel was primarily intended as a vehicle of Christian teaching for the instruction of the converted, then a commentary upon it which echoes its aim and is directed to its audience must merit praise. But that praise will be no less sincere for being accompanied by the conviction that another commentary for the academic student still needs to be written.

It is a revived concern for Scripture and its exposition that seems to the Protestant to be one of the encouraging marks of Rome in our day. But what does the Ecumenical Movement look like to the Roman Catholic Church? How does that Church react to the World Council of Churches which occupies so prominent a position in the ecumenical scene? These are important questions which Protestant leaders are finding it increasingly necessary to ask; and for searching and sympathetic answer they could not do better than look to a volume<sup>2</sup> from the pen of the Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Heythrop College. Father Leeming is now a familiar figure at World Council gatherings. He speaks with knowledge of his theme distilled from deep and prolonged encounter with men and books alike. He offers an impressive study in ecumenism.

The presentation he provides falls essentially into two parts. The one traces the rise and development of the Ecumenical Movement and its organ, the World Council, and delineates governing factors, shifts in thinking and emphasis, strains and stresses. This is a notably fair and accurate summary of a complex movement and situation. The other sets ecumenism and the Roman Church in fruitful encounter, probes the mutual reactions, and makes plain the principles that have governed and do govern the "Catholic" approach to the new situation. This contains the sections that will command most interest and attention. They are of high value not least because of the clear statement of key facets of Roman faith and Roman ecclesiology that they offer. Concluding appendices register important pronouncements from both sides of the Great Divide.

Those of us who do not accept the Roman position are not thereby absolved from seeking to understand it; and this is no easy task even when we have begun to recognize the distortions of so much of the writing of Church history in the past. Protestants speak much of Roman intransigence, and complain sometimes that the World Council pays too much attention to Rome. Perhaps it is time that we bluntly confessed that in one sense at least Rome has served us well. She has stood as a silent indictment of all facile and superficial solutions to our divided situation, has borne innate testimony to the profound depths from which unity springs and at which alone it may be reclaimed. Now that the search of the World

<sup>2</sup> *The Churches and the Church*, by Bernard Leeming (Darton, Longman & Todd, 35/-). 1960.

Council has reached these deeper levels, Rome can and will begin to take her seriously. So long as the Faith and Order Division is kept central in the World Council, we may expect that Rome will continue so to do.

Father Leeming writes from faith and prayer and love; and constantly he tries to understand. He does not always quite succeed. This is the tragedy of disunity. But he has come a long way, and Protestants are in his debt. It is only to be regretted that those who most need to read this valuable book will probably not open it.

Clearly the road to reunion cannot bypass profound theological thinking; and we welcome it from wherever it comes. The enduring value of lectures on Christian Doctrine given twenty years ago to students at the University of Cambridge ensures for their author eager attention to the publication of fresh lectures on the Christian Doctrine of Redemption.<sup>3</sup> We look for discerning exposition of those things which lie at the very centre of our faith, and we are not disappointed. The vexed problems of time and history are not ignored or quickly brushed aside. The full scope of the redemptive activity is recognized by the inclusion of discussion of church, sacraments, and the resurrection of the body. But the heart of this book treats inevitably of the saving work of the Lord in terms of an atonement at once redemptive, expiatory, and penal.

The qualities of mind and spirit that made Dr. Whale's earlier work famous are here amply displayed. We must not look for the exhaustive examination, whether expository or theological, nor for the presentation of new realms of truth. What we may expect and shall find is a wide learning, a balanced appraisal of the best of contemporary thinking, a limpid prose style, and above all a massive sanity of judgment. This book is a joy to read. It is more than can be said of most.

The most valuable sections are those which deal with the redemptive and expiatory work of Christ, which speak of him in terms of victor and victim, which set the atonement against the background of battlefield and altar. The discussion of Satan, with its reminiscences of Lutheran insight and daring, is specially noteworthy. So is the exposition of biblical sacrifice. Dr. Whale has surely got this exactly right. We need the reminder that in the Old Testament, outside the great Servant Song, sacrifice and sin-bearing are mutually exclusive ideas and activities. It is the Lamb of God alone who transmutes penalty into sacrifice.

It is, however, just when we approach the examination of Christ as criminal, of the penal aspect of atonement, that the limitations of *multum in parvo* begin to emerge. We have forcibly emphasized for us the slenderness of the biblical basis for the "juridical concept of vicarious penalty"; and a radical question

<sup>3</sup> *Victor and Victim*, by J. S. Whale (Cambridge University Press, 18/6d.). 1960.

mark is placed against any simple substitutionary interpretation of the Cross. But this profound question demands a more extended discussion than Dr. Whale has found himself able to provide, and there is a tantalisingly elusive quality about the pointers and signposts he offers. It is the same issue that arises over his fragmentary treatment of universalism. His weighty enunciation of the reasons for this conviction is beyond criticism. But a fuller treatment could scarcely have avoided a reckoning with the paradox that arises when we seek a harmony of the ontological and the existential verdict on this vexed question.

Particular attention will be accorded to the defence of infant baptism. Without doubt it will be compared with the earlier apologetics in *Christian Doctrine*. The fuller discussion now provided reveals significant changes of emphasis across the years. So far as argument is concerned, the faith of the Church is out, the solidarity of the family in. Infant baptism is in the end a logically irresistible implication. I must confess that for my own part I prefer *Christian Doctrine*. The short statement there had a sort of impressive and classic simplicity. The more detailed the paedobaptist argument, the less convincing it seems to be.

One of the most valuable recent contributions to the paedobaptist controversy was the careful examination of early Church practice undertaken by the Professor of Theology at Gottingen. This is now available to us in English translation.<sup>4</sup> It enshrines a painstaking search for infant baptism from the New Testament itself to the end of the fourth century. The general literary evidence is supplemented by reference to the testimony of inscription and archaeology. It is a fascinating path along which Dr. Jeremias so surely conducts us.

His conclusion is that the baptism of infants born to Christian parents is a practice that goes back to New Testament times, and that it can be traced onwards in almost unbroken line through the centuries. To this generalisation there are but two qualifications. There is no early trace of paedobaptism in Eastern Syria; and there is a curious break for a generation after about 330 A.D. In the one case, it is argued, this is due to Gnostic/Marcionite influences; in the other, to Hellenistic superstition that accompanied the influx of pagans to a state religion.

How far has the case been proved? Substantially—though not quite all the way. It seems difficult to doubt that infant baptism was an established practice by the second century. The dictum of Loofs, popularised by Wheeler Robinson: "Infant baptism, first demonstrable in Irenaeus, still contested by Tertullian, was for Origen an apostolic custom," remains verbally true but conveys a

<sup>4</sup> *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*, by J. Jeremias. (S.C.M. Press Ltd., 12/6d.). 1960.

quite erroneous impression of the evidence. Similarly, it is clear that all the weight of Jewish background and Jewish antecedents bears on the paedobaptist scale. Nevertheless, the paucity of the evidence at certain crucial points continues to baffle and to annoy. This book indeed offers a wealth of material. But the careful reader will note how often it deals with necessary assumptions and logical implications, just because the *facts* are missing.

It is within the New Testament itself that the uncertainties are greatest and perhaps, in the end, most significant. Were the children born to Christian parents baptized in this age? Jeremias finds but three relevant passages: 1 Cor. 7:14; Acts 21:21; Mark 10:13-16, and parallels. He now agrees that the first of these has nothing to do with baptism. The second gives him "probabilities," but only on the basis of a debatable use of Col. 2:11. It is upon the Gospel passage(s) that main emphasis is rested. Certainly, a more weighty and broadly based argument than that of Cullmann is advanced. But inevitably the doubts remain.

It is surely high time that it was explicitly recognized that, owing to the nature of the sources and the material, paedobaptists can hardly be expected to produce any stronger evidence for this case than they have now done. That it fails to be conclusive belongs to the nature of the situation. Further advance, as Jeremias himself recognizes, can be expected only in the context of consideration of the whole variety of baptismal practice and baptismal theology in this formative period.

It was in preparation for the Lambeth Conference of 1958 that the Bishop of Southwell wrote a short study, *Vocation and Ministry*, which attempted to promote thought and discussion upon one of the burning issues for the Church of our day. That concern has been taken a stage further in another work<sup>5</sup> that explores some of the problems of Church and Ministry. It is a slender study. It is written in leisurely style. It throws together a wide diversity of material that does not obviously cry out a close-knit common theme. It is wholly concerned with the Anglican situation. It bears the imprint of the liberal wing of the Church of England. All these factors must be borne in mind in making an assessment of it. Because of them I find it just a little disappointing. Of course a book must be judged for what it is, not for what we might like it to be. The author is asking questions not claiming to provide the answers. He writes as a liberal Anglican for Anglicans he would like to see more liberal. But his theme is of such importance to us all and his questions are almost always so exactly right that a more systematic and co-ordinated presentation would have commanded from us even more gratitude.

<sup>5</sup> *Asking the Right Questions*, by F. R. Barry (Hodder & Stoughton, 12/6d.). 1960.



Dr. Barry is in no doubt but that Christian advance is and will be heavily dependent upon the Christian Ministry. We need more ministers. We should be urgently considering the use of our laity for supplementary work in this field. But if the full-time professional Ministry remains pivotal, then searching questions must be asked about recruitment and training. The final disaster would be to substitute quantity for quality. We need more clergy, but they must be clergy highly trained. We must provide intensive theological education, but it must express an understanding of theology that ranges beyond the ecclesiastical and the narrowly religious.

With these cardinal theses surely no wise man will quarrel. Would that they commanded as prominent an exponent in each of the Free Churches! If I am left with doubts, they mainly concern Dr. Barry's estimate of the contemporary situation. He thinks liberalism has become disreputable; but I wonder. Certainly it was fifteen years ago. And for all I know may still be among the ranks of Anglican clergy. But I would have thought that the fashion now was rather to scorn those who belittle the liberal spirit or the liberal achievement. Indeed, his plea for a Christian agnosticism is one that would surely be echoed in most circles of lively Christian thinking.

There may, however, be a concealed problem just at this point. The concluding chapter not only demands a true agnosticism but also defends that view of Christian ethics that deals in terms of spirit and motive, and the application of the dynamic of love to the practical ever-changing situation. Here also we applaud. Yet we must not ignore the perils. The shrewdest comment on the work of John Oman was made by the reviewer who pointed out that this was magnificent because and in so far as it assumed the foundation of the Westminster Confession. Just so! The dangerous liberalism was that which lost the sure foundation that kept it true and made it fruitful. The liberalism we decry today is that which is immersed in outdated science and outmoded philosophy. Needless to say, Dr. Barry is not of that era.

Many would agree that whatever else the minister of the future may be he must at least remain pastor. It was but a few years ago that an Anglo-Catholic of the school of Mascall startled his brethren with a book on Pastoral Theology that undeniably broke new ground. Other allied studies followed. Now the pastoral theme is given fresh examination in a series of essays<sup>6</sup> which range from the particular to the general but never lose touch with the concrete situation of the Church of England in twentieth-century Britain. This volume may be read in isolation without any encounter with

<sup>6</sup> *Essays in Pastoral Reconstruction*, by M. Thornton. (S.P.C.K., 17/6d.). 1960.

insuperable difficulties. But it will perhaps yield up the fulness of its treasure only to those who have read the author's earlier book.

I have more than once made reference to our modern need for an adequate and contemporary pastoral theology. These tantalising studies contribute some more of the material that must necessarily be taken into account. Certainly their concern is the promotion of a characteristically Anglican spirituality. Nevertheless, Free Churchmen would do well to sit up and take notice; for there are things being said here which may well be more urgently relevant to their particular problems than at first appears. They should ponder long Mr. Thornton's concept of the Remnant—but not be too eager to equate it without remainder with the saints of the gathered church. They should weigh with care the place he would give to the use of the Daily Office—and not too quickly assume that there can be no possibility of a Free Church counterpart. They should come to terms with his interpretation and defence of ascetical theology—and then go on to do some hard thinking about casuistry and church meetings.

This is a book to be taken seriously, but not too soberly. It is not the systematic presentation of the theologian but the manifesto of the prophet. And the prophet notoriously has to be rubbed off at the edges. Mr. Thornton is not at his most convincing on organs and clinical baptism; and his background fetters him when he comes to grapple with sermons. But he deals with the laity in the only way in which they should be dealt with—and so seldom are—namely, realistically. He punctures the swollen pietistic illusions that surround prayer meetings, conventional Scripture reading, internal organizations, church magazines, mass efforts, indiscriminate visitation. And he recalls us to that spiritual direction that should always be written deep into ministerial endeavour and provide the holy counterpoint to the sacred melody of the Liturgy of the People of God.

N. CLARK

# Reviews

## THE BIBLE IN OUR TIME

E. H. Robertson must have had a most interesting time travelling all over the world as Study Secretary of the United Bible Societies, and there is already evidence to show that he is going to put the wealth of his experience at the disposal of the church. *The Recovery of Confidence*<sup>1</sup> is the first of a series of pamphlets to be published under the general heading, "The Bible in Our Time," and Mr. Robertson sums up the general results of his work by saying that the picture that emerges is of the Bible as a highly respected book whose prestige in recent years has greatly risen, but whose use by the majority of its admirers is very limited. He nevertheless points out that there are flashes of rediscovery across this sombre picture, and some of them come out in this work, as for instance when he incidentally raises the issue as to whether our churches try to do too much: he doesn't raise it like that of course. He simply points out that when Hitler closed the youth groups and stopped the church's social work he left the young people with only their Bibles. Do people only ever see the important when they are forcibly prevented from the unimportant? Many will regret that the problems of the student world are not tackled more fully, but this booklet augurs well for the series as a whole and we must be patient before pointing out what appear to be omissions.

Another sign of the revived interest in the Bible is the republication of old material and the dressing up of scholarly material for the layman. We have two examples before us. *The Synoptic Gospels*<sup>2</sup> by J. H. Ropes is a new impression of a book first published in 1934. In 1949 R. H. Lightfoot expressed his indebtedness to it and deplored the comparative neglect from which it had suffered. The Oxford University Press has now re-issued it in a paper-back edition, with a preface by D. E. Nineham.

On the whole Ropes accepted the principles of source criticism but went on to ask what the writer was seeking to do with his sources. *Mark*, he concluded, was a theological gospel comparable with *John*, the writer addressing himself to the problem, Why did the Messiah die? Matthew's purpose was historical, the writer seeking to provide for Christians a systematic compendium or handbook of what was known about the deeds and words of the founder of the Christian Church, and he has a very clear division of the Gospel into sections. *Luke* can only be read as a biography. There is some useful new thinking here that many a man will find refreshing

<sup>1</sup> S.C.M. Press, 4s.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.

whether he is studying the Gospels for the first time or brushing up his knowledge.

In 1957 the Four Gospels was the subject of an International Congress of New Testament scholars at Oxford. The publicity which the Congress received showed that its findings were of interest to clergy, ministers, teachers of divinity and laymen as well as to the scholars concerned, and this has now prompted Blackwell to issue a selection of the papers (previously all published in *Studia Evangelica*) at a price within the reach of many who were not able to buy the larger volume.<sup>3</sup> No summary of the contributions is possible or necessary, for they have already made their appeal. Altogether 16 papers (two of them in French) are found here, and the contributors include H. Cunliffe-Jones, A. M. Ramsey, B. Reicke, H. Riesefeld and J. A. T. Robinson. Many ministers will want to have this valuable collection of material on their shelves and many more will want to see that it is in their local library.

A. GILMORE

*The Life and Works of Edmund Bishop*, by Nigel Abercrombie, 539 pp. (Longman's, Green & Co., London, 70s.).

The subject of this meticulous volume was a self-taught, liturgical scholar of native genius and immense learning who was born in 1846 and died in 1917. A convert to Roman Catholicism, he gave up a comfortable Civil Service post to become a postulant among the monks of the Downside community. Eventually deciding against becoming a monk himself, however, he devoted the rest of his life, on a pension of £150 a year, to historical research. In the process he acquired a rare erudition and a lasting name in the field of liturgical studies. On a number of occasions, some of them connected with developments at Downside, he exerted a quiet but considerable influence in Roman Catholic affairs in England. As Professor David Knowles declares in his foreword, Bishop was "a scholar-pioneer, an intuitive genius who was able also to say on many things the last word." Recognition of his mastery over his chosen field of learning has grown with the passing of the years.

A life spent among books, papers and ancient manuscripts, however, does not easily lend itself to biography and it may be questionable whether it was really necessary to trace in such detail, as does this volume, the unexciting and almost day to day movements of a scholar whose chief activities consisted in pursuing research in libraries and museums and writing down his conclusions for publication in learned journals. One would think that to have supplied a brief outline of the man's life, a bibliography of his

<sup>3</sup> *The Gospels Reconsidered*. 27s. 6d.

works and an appraisal of his achievement would have been sufficient.

By the nature of things the life of a Roman Catholic liturgical authority contains little of immediate interest to Baptists. Here and there, however, some of Bishop's opinions—with the weight of his almost unequalled knowledge behind them—catch one's notice. In view of certain trends within Anglicanism today and of recent discussions between the Free Churches and the Church of England it is interesting to note how one who was both a Roman Catholic and an authority viewed certain features of the Anglican Church. Of the Book of Common Prayer Bishop declared that the men who drew it up professed a teaching which was "precisely Calvin's" and that it was compiled to substitute for the Mass "a Calvinist sort of communion service." What the Tractarians did, he observes, was to introduce "a kind of Lutheran system," which was later dropped by the Anglo-Catholics "in favour of a bastard kind of Transubstantiationism." Writing at a time when the then Lord Halifax and his party were making overtures to Roman Catholicism, Bishop declares that Anglican Orders are invalid. No one, he states, has ever found "any proof or record of the consecration of the bishop from whom the clergy of the Church of England derives 'succession' (if any)." Anglicans, on the other hand, recognised throughout the 17th and 18th centuries the Orders of ministers of the continental Reformed churches as valid, on the same footing as their own. Interesting, too, is his statement that, generally speaking, an Independent or Wesleyan chapel of the present day must be ritualistic in comparison with the Anglican services in the reign of Elizabeth. Bishop was an Englishman and he understood the Englishman's religion far better than many of his fellow Catholics. This, he said, was essentially Puritan, depending in large measure on its simplicity and "above all to the direct relation between the creature and his Creator." Here, then, is a painstakingly detailed, authoritative and scholarly account of the life and achievement of a man of great learning and influence which, at the same time, throws light on the history of the Downside community in particular and of English Catholicism in general.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES

*An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, by T. E. Jessop. (Thomas Nelson, 133 pp., 12s. 6d.).

Those acquainted with the pamphlets on Christian Belief written by Professor Jessop for the Mission to the Royal Air Force will not be surprised to find this attractively produced Introduction written with a competence, clarity and conciseness to meet the needs of

those for whom it is intended. The author says that it stands between the popular expositions of Christian belief and examination text books intended for students. Its style and method match its purpose. The main doctrines are presented clearly, controversies around them are indicated and a balanced assessment of the issues made. No quotations from other works are included, the whole being written in Professor Jessop's readable and trenchant style. Minimum use is made of technical terms, and where they are employed a brief explanation is usually appended.

A brief consideration of the nature of religion ("there is no such thing as religion-in-general; there are only particular religions"), and a sketch of the Jewish background, are followed by a few pages of Natural Theology which include the reminder that the practical proof of the reality of God is not that He is inferred, but met. The succeeding chapters cover the normal range of doctrinal subjects. The equal importance of a doctrine of the Incarnation with that of the Cross is emphasized. The significance of the natural man is stressed, underlining that it is not necessary to condemn what God as Creator gave us in order to emphasize what He gives us by Grace. Concerning the Saving Work of Christ, a salutary warning is included against shaping the whole Christian doctrine on the parable of the Prodigal Son, "for Jesus Himself is not in it." The chapter on the Church, though the author says he found it the hardest to write, is an admirable contribution, doing justice to the differing emphases of the various Christian Communion. The paragraphs on Judgement, Heaven and Hell are particularly candid, and a timely warning of the peril of being so preoccupied with Christ's Second Coming as to underrate His first is given.

In one instance the interests of compression leave a false impression. On page 54 the author might seem to suggest that perfection is reached if motives are sound though actions may be mistaken through ignorance of fact or error of judgment. The clarity of the chapter on the Holy Spirit is not enhanced by the statement "From this point of view we might speak of the Spirit as the divine Vicar of Christ, in the sense of acting *for* Him. It is unfortunate that the term has become attached as a title to a human being, the Pope."

The book concludes with an admirable chapter in which the Historic Creeds are printed with comments on the reason for and circumstances of their origin. Further material for those stimulated by this excellent Introduction is indicated in an extensive Bibliography. The book is eminently suitable for study groups of young church members and for intelligent enquirers of any age.

A. ELLIS MOLD

*The Living World of the New Testament*, by Howard Clark Kee and Franklin W. Young. (Darton, Longman and Todd, 492 pp., 25s.).

This book was first published in the U.S.A. in 1957 under the title "Understanding the New Testament." Each title is significant, for the book deals with both the Scriptures and the Culture of the New Testament period, in 470 pages of fairly close print interspersed with 56 clear illustrations and 11 useful maps. Obviously this is very good measure for 25s., and the quality of the work is just as good. It is abreast of contemporary scholarship, as evidenced in the text and the book-list on each of the fifteen chapters. (It should be added that the Index is fuller than in most books of this kind).

The first two chapters set the Christian fellowship in the midst of the "age of anxiety" in which it was born and indicate its distinctive ethos. The examination of the convictions of the primitive church takes us back in the next three chapters to the Ministry and teaching of Jesus, and then in the following chapter we are back again in "The Life of the Earliest Community." Thereafter, in Parts II and III we follow the expansion and maturing of the Community. The book is useful as a commentary on much of the New Testament literature. The Synoptic Gospels form the background of the three chapters on the Ministry, whilst the Gospel of John is succinctly interpreted in the 31 pages of chapter 13, entitled "The Community in Rapprochement with the World: I." The following chapter devotes 17 pages to the Epistle to the Hebrews and 13 to 1 Peter. The Book of the Revelation is allotted 11 pages. There are three and a half chapters covering the career of Paul, based on his letters and the story in the Acts. "The living world of the New Testament" includes Greek philosophy (in decline), the Mystery Religions, Jewish parties and sects (the Qumran community is described in word and picture), Jewish Christian sects and Gnosticism (the book was finished too early for any reference to the papyri of Nag Hammadi).

In these days of a somewhat conservative attitude to earlier critical positions regarding the origins of the books of the New Testament, this work tends to maintain the older viewpoints. Thus the Gospel of John is used to illuminate the period about the end of the first century rather than the days of Jesus' ministry. The first Epistle of Peter was written about A.D. 95 to Christians in Asia Minor and represents the "moderate" attitude towards the State as compared with that of Revelation. Ephesians is not Pauline (but Philippians, Colossians and Philemon date from the Roman imprisonment). The radical approach sometimes goes for

the Synoptics as well as the fourth Gospel. The reference to the relationship between the Baptist and Jesus in Luke 1 and 2 is "full of legendary material." The miracles of Jesus are treated with rather negative caution, and as for His teaching we are nearest to it in the parables. Passages in the Synoptic Gospels which stress Pilate's reluctance to condemn Jesus "have no foundation in fact" but are due to the later attempt of the church to lay the blame for the crucifixion on the Jews and to exonerate Rome. The "words of institution" in 1 Cor. 11 are attributed to Paul rather than to Jesus. On the other side, the reviewer was surprised, even in these days when the Dead Sea Scrolls are quoted to illustrate any aspect of New Testament teaching, to find a quotation on p. 273 from the "Manual of Discipline" in support of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith! (The translation of this passage depends partly on the punctuation which the original does not supply. A simple shift of a full stop in the translation quoted could make the passage teach a doctrine of justification by works).

This is a stimulating book, equally useful whether one agrees or disagrees with its findings. Often the serious reader will feel compelled to "examine the Scripture to see if these things are so." No doubt the authors will be content with that result, even if sometimes their readers suspect that some of these things are *not* just so.

GEORGE FARR

*The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church*, by M. F. Wiles. (Cambridge University Press, 1960, 25s., pp. 182).

This book is a careful and scholarly study of the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel by some of the early Fathers, especially Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria; to a lesser extent account is also taken of Gnostic writings, and of the work of Chrysostom and Augustine.

The author keeps rigidly to the scope indicated by the sub-title. Thus, for instance, an introductory section (Commentaries and Commentators), and Chapters I and II (The Authorship and Purpose of the Gospel, and The Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels) are entirely confined to the discussion of these themes in the Early Church, and there is a similar concentration of interest throughout the book.

Chapters III, IV, and V deal with certain outstanding aspects of the content of the Gospel (Historicity and Symbolism: The Signs: Leading Ideas) as these are viewed in patristic commentaries.

There follow three chapters showing how the Gospel fared in



the doctrinal controversies of the early centuries (The Fourth Gospel and the Gnostics: Christological Interpretation in the Third and Fourth Centuries: The Christological Interpretation Exegesis of Theodore and Cyril). Chapter IX (The Gospel of Salvation) deals in the main with the contrasts between Theodore and Cyril on this theme. In an Epilogue (158-161) the author offers an assessment of the work of the chief commentators with whom he has been concerned. Here are some of his comments: On Theodore of Mopsuestia: "For all the honesty of his approach, the directness and practical good sense of many of his comments, his commentary as a whole is a disappointing book. He has attempted to expound the meaning of the Gospel too narrowly within the confines of his own way of thought. To borrow a phrase from Origen, it is as if he has never lain upon the Evangelist's breast; his mind has never found spiritual communion with the mind of St. John, and therefore he cannot reveal the Gospel's most precious secrets to us" (159). On Cyril: "Something of the freshness, the vigour, the theological penetration of Origen has gone; but a sense of balance and good sense has come to check the excesses of the earlier scholar. Cyril's commentary is a profound work of theological interpretation, sustained throughout with a high level of consistency" (160).

A good bibliography and full indices of Scriptural and patristic texts are provided. Of the few recent discussions which the author seems to have missed, one may perhaps mention the essays by Quispel and Laurentin in *L'Évangile de Jean, Études et Problèmes*, (Recherches Bibliques, Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, III, 1958).

This is clearly a book for specialists rather than for general readers, and it has as much to interest students of the doctrinal controversies of the Early Church as students of the New Testament. It is a powerful reminder of the fact that from the early days of the Church the Fourth Gospel was regarded as a carefully written work which called for some subtlety and penetration in its interpretation; it is not simply the ingenuity of modern scholars which represents it as such! At the same time, there are abundant illustration here of the ever-present tendency to read into the New Testament the theological interests and emphases of a later period. "Both writers" (Mr. Wiles comments, on Theodore and Cyril) "are attempting to interpret the Gospel from within a strait-jacket of presuppositions to which the message of the Gospel will not succumb" (136). This kind of error has by no means ceased with the ancient schools of Antioch and Alexandria.

D. R. GRIFFITHS