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Bertram G. Wittke

FULHAM BOOKS: 4

ABSOLUTE AND ABITOFHELL;

*Or Noah's Ark put in Commission, and
set adrift (with no Walls or Roof to
catch the Force of these dangerous Seas)
on a new Voyage of discovery;*

Being a Satire in the Manner of Mr.
John Dryden on a newly-issued Work
entitl'd *Foundations*.

By R. A. K.

First publish'd in the OXFORD MAGAZINE in
the Month of October, MCMxiii, and now
printed anew for the SOCIETY OF SS. PETER
AND PAUL, and Sold by them at 32 George
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MCMXV

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MCMXV

Absolute and Abitofhell

Being a Satire in the Manner of Mr. John Dryden upon a newly-issu'd Work entitl'd *Foundations*.

IN former Times, when Israel's ancient Creed
Took Root so widely that it ran to Seed ;
When Saints were more accounted of than Soap,
And Men in happy Blindness serv'd the POPE ;
UXORIOUS JEROBOAM, waxen bold,
Tore the Ten Tribes from DAVID's falt'ring Hold,
And, spurning Threats from Salem's Vatican,
Set gaiter'd Calves in Bethel and in Dan.
So, Freedom reign'd ; so, Priests, dismay'd by
naught,
Thought what they pleas'd, and mention'd what
they thought.
Three hundred Years, and still the Land was free'd,
And Bishops still, and Judges disagree'd,
Till men began for some Account to call,
What we believ'd, or why believ'd at all ?
The thing was canvass'd, and it seem'd past doubt
Much we adher'd to we could do without ;
First, ADAM fell ; then NOAH's Ark was drown'd,
And SAMSON under close inspection bound ;
For DANIEL's Blood the Critick Lions roar'd,
And trembling Hands threw JONAH overboard.

Lux Mundi came, and here we found indeed
A Maximum and Minimum of Creed :
But still the Criticks, bent on MATTHEW'S Fall,
And setting PETER by the Ears with PAUL,
Brought unaccustom'd Doctrines oversea
Suggesting rather, *Caeli Tenebrae*.
So, while our Ark let in, through Seams ill-join'd
And gaping Timbers, *Bilge* of ev'ry Kind,
Ran to and fro, and like a Drunkard shook,
Seven of the Younger Men compos'd a *Book*.

Seven Men, in Views and Learning near ally'd,
Whom *Forms* alone and *Dogmas* did divide,
Their Differences funk, in Conclave met,
And each his Seal (with Reservations) set :
Each in his Turn subscrib'd the fateful Scroll,
And stamp'd his *Nihil Constat* on the whole. [ing,
Sing, Heavenly MUSE, from high Olympus bow-
Their Names, their Training, and their Welt-
anschauung,

Say, why did Magdala,¹ renown'd in Ships,
Withhold the Tribute of *his* dauntless Lips,
Who, setting out the Gospel Truths t' explain,
Thought all that was not German, not germane :
Whose queasy Stomach, while it tried in vain
Recorded Miracles to entertain,
Eschewing LUKE, JOHN, MATTHEW, and the rest,
Read MARK, but could not inwardly digest ?

¹ The Reverend Mr. J. M. Thompson, Dean of Divinity at the College of St. Mary Magdalene in Oxford.

Why did Neapolis,² aloof like ASHER,
Withhold—the Name is in the Book of Jasher—
Where, 'mid the Thunders of a boisterous Quad,
He ponders on the Raïson d'Être of God?
Not such the Arms, not such the vain Defence,
That rallied to thy Standard, Common Sense.

First, from the Public Schools—*Lernæan Bog*—
No paltry Bulwark, stood the Form of OG.³
A man so broad, to some he seem'd to be
Not one, but all Mankind in Effigy:
Who, brisk in Term, a Whirlwind in the Long,
Did everything by turns, and nothing wrong,
Bill'd at each Lecture-hall from Thames to Tyne
As Thinker, Usher, Statesman, or Divine.
Born in the Purple, swift he chose the Light,
And Lambeth mark'd him for a Nazirite:
Discerning *Balliol* snatched him in his teens,
And mourn'd him, early forfeited to *Queen's*.
His name suffic'd to leave th' insidious tome
A household word in every English Home:
No academick Treatise, high and dry,
Canvass'd in Walks round Mesopotamy,
Or where in Common Room, when days are short,
Soulless Professors gulp disgusted Port.

² The Reverend Dr. Hastings Rashdall, S.T.D., Fellow of the College of St. Mary of Winton, in Oxford.

³ The Reverend Mr. William Temple, sometime Head Master of Repton School; since Incumbent of the Church of St. James, Piccadilly, in Westminster.

“Not from the few, the learned, and the pale”
—So ran his message—“we expect our Sale;
Man in the Street, our Publication con—
What matter, if the Street be Ashkelon?”

In Weight not less, but more advanc'd in Height,
Gigantic *ELIPHAZ*⁴ next hove in Sight:
Who 'mid the Prophets' Sons his Trade did ply
In teaching Wells to bless and magnify.
The Pomegranate upon his Helm display'd
His prebendarial Dignity betray'd:
Magdalen to *Univ.* gave him, and from there
He rapidly achiev'd a wider sphere;
Gray Hairs alone he wanted, but for that
Ripe for the Apron and the shovel Hat.
Those other Six, in punier arms array'd
Crouch'd in his Shadow, and were not afraid.

Yet something marr'd that order'd Symmetry:
Say, what did *STRATO*⁵ in their company?
Who, like a Leaven, gave his Tone to all,
'Mid prophet Bands an unsuspected Saul.
For he, discerning with nice arguings
'Twixt non-essential and essential Things,
Himself believing, could no reason see
Why any other should believe, but he.

⁴The Rev. R. G. Parsons, S.T.B., sometime Fellow of University College in Oxford; since Rector of Wells Seminary, in the County of Somerset.

⁵The Reverend Mr. B. H. Streeter, Fellow of Queen's College in Oxford, and Canon of Hereford.

(Himself believing, as believing went
In that wild Heyday of th'Etablissement,
When, on his Throne at Lambeth, Solomon
Uneasy murmur'd, "Something must be done,"
When suave Politeness, temp'ring bigot Zeal,
Corrected, "I believe," to "One does feel.")
He wish'd the *Bilge* away, yet did not seek
To man the *Pumps*, or plug the treach'rous Leak:
Would let into our Ark the veriest Crow,
That had the meastiest Olive-branch to show.
Who has not known how pleasant 'tis to sigh,
"Others, thank God, are less correct than I"?

From such Conclusion (so men said) averse,
A Balaam, blessing what he dared not curse,
A Scaeva, raising Powers he could not quell,
Dragging their Coat-tails, followed ABDIEL.⁶
In Height magnificent, in Depth profound,
Bless'd with more Sense than some, than all more
sound,

Gifted as if with Tongues, were there but wit
Among his Audience to interpret it:
Still, like a clumsy Falconer, he'd untie
Tradition's Hood from Reason's piercing Eye,
And then complain, because she soar'd too high.
So labour'd he, in Devorguilla's Pile,
Jowett's and Manning's views to reconcile:
Beneath his Rule (I quote from Dryden's Rhyme)

⁶ The Reverend Mr. N. E. Talbot, Fellow of Balliol College
in Oxford.

“The Sons of Belial had a glorious Time,”
And, when he shook his Fist and talk’d of Eve,
Like Devils trembled, but did not believe.

With sunnier Faith, with more unclouded Brow,
Brilliant ARCTURUS⁷ did the Fates endow :
Who cried, as joyfully he bound his Sheaves,
“What I believe is what the Church believes” :
Yet some might find it matter for Research,
Whether the Church taught him, or he the Church.
Corpus had trained him Reason’s Truth to doubt,
And Keble added Faith, to do without.
What matter, whether two and two be four,
So long as none account them to be more ?
What difference, whether black be black or white,
If no officious Hand turn on the Light ?
Whether our Fact be Fact, no Man can know,
But, Heav’n preserve us, we will treat it so.

Yet, lest some envious Critick might complain
The BIBLE had been jettisoned as vain,
Pellucid JABBOK⁸ show’d us, how much more
The Bible meant to us than e’er before.
Twelve *Prophets* our unlearn’d forefathers knew,
We are scarce satiffy’d with twenty-two :
A single *Pfalmist* was enough for them,
Our List of Authors rivals A. & M. :

⁷ The Reverend Mr. A. E. J. Rawlinson, Student of Christ Church in Oxford.

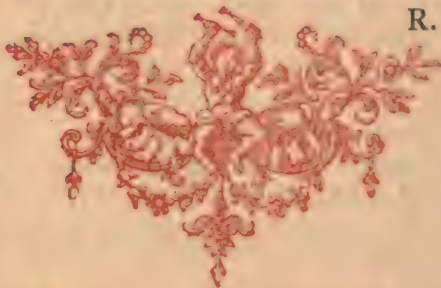
⁸ The Reverend Mr. Richard Brook, Fellow of Merton College in Oxford.

They were content MARK, MATTHEW, LUKE & JOHN
Should blefs th' old-fashion'd Beds they lay upon :
But we, for ev'ry one of theirs, have two,
And trust the Watchfulness of blessed Q.

The last, EPIGONUS,⁹ but not the least,
Levite by Birth, yet not by Calling Priest,
Woo'd coy Philosophy, reluctant Maid,
To bring her troubl'd Sister timely aid.
His Views on Punishment what need to tell ?
Poor, proctor'd Victims lately knew them well.
His pregnant Logick fill'd their only Want,
Temp'ring EZEKIEL with a Dash of KANT.

Hail, dauntless Mariners, that far outstrip
Previous Attempts to undergird the Ship !
To you this Rhyme, now falt'ring to its End,
Is dedicated by an humble Friend,
Praying that Providence this Wind may use
To puff your Sales, and to confound your Views.

R. A. K.



⁹ W. Moberley, Esquire, Fellow of Lincoln College in Oxford.

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