SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MEN OF LATITUDE

JOHN HALES

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MEN OF LATITUDE

FORERUNNERS OF THE NEW THEOLOGY

BY

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WITH PORTRAITS

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PREFACE

At intervals during more than ten years it has been the writer's privilege to refresh his spirit by communion with these worthies of an earlier time. In their sweet sanity the violent animosities of their own day are composed, and peace is made also between past and present. In every age, perhaps, there are spirits deep and broad enough both to unify the discordant elements of their own time and to bind all ages together. It is good for the soul to cultivate such company. It makes one believe afresh in "the communion of saints." While partisanship was rushing over the violent cataracts of a narrow torrent, in these spirits there is the placid expanse of broad and quiet streams. In their company we are led through green pastures and beside "the still waters." While others were thinking of the Christ who came to bring not peace but a sword, they were sitting at the feet of Him who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

It was a chapter in Professor Fisher's "History of Christian Doctrine," which first called the writer's attention to these men. That book referred him to Tulloch's classic work, "Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century,"

and by this, in turn, he was referred to the writers themselves. From the time when he opened that literary treasure, "The Golden Remains of the Ever-Memorable John Hales," he was won to the study of original sources. The aim is to present not what some one says about these men, but what they say themselves. Writings of the past need to be reinterpreted in each successive age. It is only in the present that the past can be appreciated. To-day we may value these catholic, irenic spirits, as their contemporaries could not. They were so far in advance of their times that they require the present for their appreciation, they without us not being made perfect.

The quaint phrase of the citations only accentuates the modern thought, or better, proves that the thought is less modern than is commonly supposed. The study of such minds makes for unity, peace, and toleration. Some of the phraseology and thought is doubtless obsolete but continually in the midst of the obsolete is discovered the pungent and vital, like fresh, sweet arbutus found under dead leaves. These studies aim to be a spring-time excursion into an earlier age, in quest of life under winter's death.

The descriptions of the men, their appearance, characteristics, and fortunes, have been gathered for the most part from contemporaries, who saw them and knew them, like Aubrey, Anthony Wood, Clarendon, and Worthington, and often, better still, from friends who loved them, as Simon Patrick loved John Smith, and Whitefoot loved Doctor Browne. Many a glimpse

is given into the universities, homes, and intimate personal relations of a troubled period. The atmosphere is the "better air" of an earlier time, but without a trace of mustiness, because these spirits stood out in the open, refreshed by the ventilation of the pure air and great winds. They would not be pent in: they were men of latitude.

The writer is under great obligations for courtesies received from the libraries of Yale and Cornell universities, and in particular for the encouragement and aid of Professor George L. Burr, of the historical department in Cornell, and of Professor Lewis O. Brastow, for many years of the Yale Faculty. In correcting the proof, Mr. Henry W. Goodrich has given valued assistance.

The Puritan and Anglican of the seventeenth century are in no danger of oblivion. They should not, however, monopolize the attention in these days of increasing unity and toleration. A revival of interest in these broad-minded men of a narrow age is due to them, and would be congenial to the modern spirit.

E. A. G.

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MEN OF LATITUDE

"They loved the constitution of the church and the liturgy, and could well live under them: but they did not think it unlawful to live under another form. They wished that things might have been carried with more moderation. And they continued to keep a good correspondence with those who had differed from them in opinion, and allowed a great freedom both in philosophy and in divinity: from whence they were called men of latitude. And upon this, men of narrower thoughts and fiercer tempers fastened upon them the name of Latitudinarians."

—*Bishop Burnet in his "History of His Own Time."*

"I can come into no company of late, but I find the chief discourse to be about a certain new sect of men called Latitude-men. . . . The name of Latitude-men is daily exagitated amongst us both in taverns and pulpits, and very tragical representations made of them."—*From a pamphlet of* 1662 *by S. P. [Simon Patrick?] of Cambridge.*

MEN OF LATITUDE IN A CENTURY OF NARROWNESS

THE men who make names for themselves are often men of extremes. Souls on fire brand history with their mark. The man of one idea attracts attention, and impresses himself upon his age. For this reason there is danger of misinterpreting a period, if we judge it by its most eminent characters. Too often in watching meteors we ignore the fixed stars.

Christian history suffers especially in this regard. Heretics and ultra-conservatives are familiar figures, while frequently the Christian of well-balanced views and sweet reasonableness has sunk into oblivion. His very moderation has buried him. The bigoted and intolerant make a stir in the world. The liberal and tolerant, whose strength is in quietness and confidence, attract little attention.

The seventeenth century is commonly regarded as bigoted and narrow. Contemplating it, our attention is monopolized by its glittering lights. The century is associated with the extreme Anglican and the extreme Puritan, with Archbishop Laud on the one side, and Cromwell and the Pilgrims on the other. To see only these extremes is to wrong the seventeenth century,

and to overestimate the twentieth in comparison with it. There is nothing new under the sun. Liberal, comprehensive, sweet-tempered Christianity did not begin in our day. The seventeenth century had its liberals as well as its dogmatists; gentle spirits, whose quiet influence in subtle ways has flowed into the present, greeting us from afar, without us not made perfect. Liberalism as well as bigotry has a pedigree.

In the time of Charles I and Laud and Cromwell and the Westminster divines, when ceremonialism was active on the one side, and dogmatism on the other, when Romanist and Protestant, Anglican and Puritan, Calvinist and Arminian were having their bitter controversies and the air was charged with maledictions, even then there were well-poised Christians who held a middle course, repelled from all extremes alike.

A word may be said in extenuation of seventeenth-century intolerance. If it may not be excused, it should not be unduly condemned. It was not so much a lack of toleration of the opposite party as a fear of its oppression, a mutual distrust. The Puritan feared, and with good cause, that the ceremonialism of the Anglican party would crush him out of existence. The Ceremonialist feared that Puritanism unfettered would run riot, and destroy all the decency and order of worship, together with the foundations of civil law and order. Neither side could trust the other to be free. Each must oppose the other to the death for its own self-preservation. The Puritan was not so much unwilling that the Ceremonialist should exist as unwilling that

the Ceremonialist should annihilate him, and conversely. Each side gave the other ample ground for such fear.

Seventeenth-century intolerance, again, was not merely religious, but political also. Church and State were indissolubly united, to prosper or suffer together. The Puritan conventicles, to the Anglican mind, were not only spreading heresy, but also inculcating sedition. They were dangerous to State as well as to Church. Neither party had any idea of an established order, which should make room for both. The hated innovations of ceremonialism and the excited meetings of the Puritans were each in turn regarded as dangerous to the public welfare. Each party claimed to be defending society from the other.

The violent struggle over religious questions, moreover, was not as vicious a thing as we are disposed to think. There were good elements in it. It stood at least for a vital devotion to the things of the spirit. It is to the honor of England, that, when on constitutional questions there was little division, men were not satisfied to ignore the danger threatening spiritual principles to them most precious, on the one side the love for an ordered and beautiful form of worship, on the other the rights of the individual conscience. The seventeenth-century Englishman was not satisfied, when the question of ship-money and political privilege had been settled. The rights of property and person assured, he must be assured also of the rights of the soul. He considered spiritual questions worth fighting over. Intol-

erance is often the expression of an ardor of devotion, which toleration often lacks.

If seventeenth-century intolerance may be thus extenuated, all the more precious becomes any spirit of toleration, which in such a century manifests itself. The times were all for partisanship. The alternative offered at the point of the sword was an ecclesiastical tyranny, allowing a certain liberty of belief, or a doctrinal tyranny, allowing a certain liberty of worship; a sad choice. It is, then, to the everlasting honor of the century, that, in the midst of its clashing extremes, men appeared with heads unbowed, who denounced both tyrannies and championed both liberties. Under Laudian supremacy, they rejoiced in the latitude allowed to belief, but condemned the uniformity imposed upon worship. Under Puritan supremacy, they rejoiced in the latitude allowed to worship, but condemned the uniformity imposed upon belief. These "men of latitude," as Burnet called some of them, in a cramped age felt pent in alike by narrowness of ritual and by narrowness of creed, and they cried out for room and air. Ecclesiastically and doctrinally they stood in the open. To these expansive souls the atmosphere both of triumphant Puritanism and of triumphant Anglicanism was stifling.

A rapid review of the age of partisanship and passion in which they were involved untainted, reveals a background, against which their moderation and latitude loom up large and blessed. They were all born in the first two decades of the century, with the exception

of Hales, who was sixteen years old at the century's opening. It was the period when James I was alienating his people by new and oppressive imposts, and offending religious sentiment by proposing a marriage for Prince Charles with Catholic Spain. Chillingworth was born the year before James came to the throne, Browne the second year of his reign, Whichcote the year after the first pilgrimage of the Pilgrims to Holland in disgust and despair, Taylor two years after the proposal of the exasperating Spanish marriage, More the next year, and Baxter the next, John Smith, the last to be born and the first to die, in 1618. All were thus born in ample time to imbibe with their first impressions the animosities of the age in their full strength, and to have partisanship and prejudice bred in their bones, if they had not been strangely immune from such infusions through natures sane and gracious. Browne and Whichcote were born in homes of wealth and privilege, and as far as their environment was concerned might easily have developed into pompous cavaliers. Baxter and More were sons of Puritans, and might as easily have become rampant roundheads. Chillingworth had Laud for his godfather, and might have been expected to develop into uncompromising churchmanship. Taylor, son of a Cambridge barber, did not begin life with much promise of the favor of Laud and the aristocracy. The influence of heredity and environment, however, was powerless before the native graciousness and catholicity of these unbiassed souls. It was bad soil, but good wheat.

As students these men received their education in the midst of Anglican oppression and Puritan resistance, pursuing their studies in a period unfavorable to the culture of catholicity. Everything made for partisanship, narrowness, animosity, extremes. Taylor began school the year that Calvinism gave a quietus to Arminianism at the one-sided Synod of Dort. He was seven years old, More six, and Baxter five, when in 1620 the Pilgrims made their exodus to New England, in despair of liberty of conscience at home. Whichcote and Taylor entered Cambridge, and Browne was graduated from Oxford, at the time when the notorious Buckingham, the hated favorite of James and Charles, and a principal instrument in their destruction, was being impeached by an indignant parliament. They were still pursuing their studies, when two years later, Buckingham was assassinated, and the great "Petition of Right," a better protest against tyranny, was stirring the hearts of Englishmen with its appeal for elemental liberties. More entered Cambridge, when the country was in uproar over the infamous "Star Chamber" sentences of a tyrannical government, and the enforcement of rigid conformity to Prayer Book by an equally tyrannical church. Baxter decided upon the ministry and began his theological studies in the same year that Laud, made Archbishop of Canterbury, was outraging Puritan sentiment by insisting that the "Declaration of Sports," encouraging recreation on the Sabbath, be read in the churches, and that the communion tables be set in the east end of the churches as altars. It was a

period prolific of partisans and bigots, a period perchance when men of one idea could alone be effective: but these men were not of them, and would not purchase influence at so dear a price. In the conservative and royalist sentiment of the universities, they learned neither to hate Puritanism nor to condone oppressive Anglicanism, and as little in reaction did they espouse iconoclasm and Calvinism.

Being graduated from the universities, they took up their work between 1634 and 1640, during those six dreadful years, when collision of extreme with extreme was inflaming the passions of Englishmen beyond all bounds of charity and even sanity, and cleaving a great nation into the two factions of a civil war. It was, perhaps, the worst time in all history to enter the ministry in England, especially for men who would not take sides. In 1634, Whichcote was appointed tutor at Cambridge, and Taylor preached those sermons at Saint Paul's, which raised him to immediate eminence: it was the year when the first ship-money writ was served, and when the despotism of Charles I was beginning to work its own destruction. The following year, Browne quietly began his practice of medicine at Shipden Hall, and began also to jot down those amiable reflections, which were to develop into the "Religio Medici." In 1636, a notable year for these novitiates, Hales' "Schism and Schismatics" was published, and the author was appointed Canon of Windsor by Laud: in the same year the archbishop appointed Taylor rector of Uppingham, and Whichcote being ordained be-

gan his famous university sermons. All three were loyal to King and Church, but not so blindly as to be unconscious of grave errors in both Church and State. In this year also, Smith, the youngest of the group, came to Cambridge. The following year Browne peacefully settled at Norwich, when Scotland was in riot over the introduction of the new Prayer Book. In 1638 Chillingworth published "The Religion of Protestants," one of the sanest works in the literature of theology, and, appointed Chancellor of Salisbury, subscribed to the thirty-nine articles with the understanding that they were "articles of peace." In the same year Baxter was ordained and began preaching at Dudley: and this was the year when the Covenant was taken and episcopacy was abolished in Scotland, and when in England judgment was rendered against the valiant Hampden for resisting payment of the hated and unconstitutional ship-money. The following year More took orders and became fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, as serene as if he had been living in Persia. In 1640, Baxter entered upon his wonderful ministry at Kidderminster, the year when the Long Parliament convened, not to adjourn till monarchy had been overthrown and, after the Protectorate, restored again. If ever native charity triumphed over the biassing influence of an environment of passion and hate, it did so in these men.

In 1642, the great Civil War began, the King set up his standard at Nottingham, and the battle of Edgehill was fought, while Baxter was quietly preaching at Alcester, within sound of the cannon. In this year Hales

was ejected from the Canonry of Windsor, Baxter retired from Kidderminster to Coventry, and at this time (of all others!) appeared the gentle "Religio Medici." In 1643, Chillingworth preached before the King at Oxford, as unsparing toward the vices of royalty and court as toward the rebellion of the Puritans, the "Solemn League and Covenant" was issued as the palladium of militant Puritanism, the Westminster Assembly convened, and in the royal camp before Gloucester Chillingworth and Falkland agonized over the evil of the times, the latter soon to rush into a fusillade terminating a life become unendurable. "The distant future was his, the future of compromise and moderation. The present was Pym's and Cromwell's." In 1644, the year of Laud's execution in the triumph of Puritan indignation, Chillingworth died a captive at Chichester, badgered by the bigoted Cheynell, Hales lost the Eton fellowship by sequestration, and Taylor the living at Uppingham, Baxter became a chaplain in Cromwell's army in spite of his disapproval of the army's disloyalty, and Whichcote and Smith, feeling less the severity of the times, were appointed the one provost of King's College, the other fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge. From those who suffered, however, there was no note of bitterness, as from those who were favored there was no note of elation. All were sad, but without animosity. None of them approved the times, even in their own advancement.

The Battle of Naseby was fought in 1645, and Taylor taken captive in the royal army, retired to Golden

Grove. The following year Baxter retired from Cromwell's army to Rous-Lench. Then it was, in 1646 and 1647, 'mid the life and death struggle between Puritan and Anglican, that were written those two immortal messages of peace, "The Saints' Everlasting Rest" and "Liberty of Prophesying," the one by a Puritan fresh from his chaplaincy in Cromwell's army, the other by a royalist taken captive in the army of the King. Taylor's "Holy Living" was published in 1650, the year after the trial and execution of the King to whom he was devoted. In the same year Whichcote, enjoying the confidence of the Puritans though far from Puritan, was made Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University.

During the Protectorate, 1653–1658, Hales died in penury at Eton, Taylor was in distress and want, Doctor Browne was calmly pursuing his practice at Norwich, Whichcote was preaching his wonderful sermons, and More writing his voluminous books, at Cambridge, and Richard Baxter was doing his immortal work in the Kidderminster parish. Rare John Smith had died prematurely in 1652. Hales' "Golden Remains" were published in 1659, and Smith's "Select Discourses" the following year, both posthumous.

The first year of the Restoration, 1660, gave happy promise of toleration and irenic counsels. Baxter, the Puritan royalist, was in favor, and full of hope was laboring mightily with tongue and pen for a policy of comprehension, under which all parties might thrive. The author of "Liberty of Prophesying" was made Bishop of Down and Connor, and Whichcote in 1662

came to London as curate of Saint Anne's. The sufferings, however, of royalists and Anglicans during the wars could not be forgotten, and a spirit of retaliation and vengeance upon Puritanism soon ensued. The Act of Uniformity in 1662 required such allegiance to Anglicanism as Puritans with difficulty could give, and under its enforcement more than two thousand non-conformist ministers were ejected from their livings. In 1664, the "Conventicle" Act made all informal religious meetings seditious, and the following year the shameful Five Mile Act sent the dispossessed into practical exile. During these shiftings of administration from extreme to extreme, Whichcote was well poised enough to maintain a continuous position of influence, sailing storm-swept seas, strewn with wrecks, for fifty years without disaster.

Browne, Whichcote and More died between 1682 and 1687, all over seventy years of age, having finished their course, and having kept the faith. Baxter alone lived to behold in his last years, after the Revolution of 1688, the dawn of that day of toleration, for which their life long all these catholic souls had prayed.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The militant spirit always appeals to the popular heart. Men love a fight, and lionize fighters. But

fighting is primitive and barbarous. It was natural for the Puritans in power to dispossess and persecute the Anglicans who had persecuted them. It was natural for the Anglicans, recovering supremacy, to retaliate upon the Puritans in like spirit and measure. It was natural: it was not spiritual. It was eye for eye and tooth for tooth. It was Mosaic, not Christian. Christ may at times bring not peace but a sword, possibly there may be religious wars, but Chillingworth seems to interpret the prevailing spirit of the Master, when he says, "War is not the way of Jesus Christ," for it is undeniable that the general teaching of Jesus is that policy of meekness and non-resistance, which shall inherit the earth. In very truth, it is that blessed spirit alone that does inherit the earth securely. It was that spirit alone that inherited England in the end. Militant Anglicanism and rampant Puritanism, mutually exclusive, in turn won great victories, but neither prevailed through the years. Only a policy of comprehension and gentleness, capable of affirming the truth and denying the error of each, could persist. Only sanity endures. These men of blessed meekness failed to sway their own times, but the coming age was securely and enduringly theirs, for it is the scaffold of non-resisting truth, not the throne of militant wrong, that sways the future,

"—and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

JOHN HALES

JOHN HALES

1584–1656

I

At the Synod of Dort in the winter of 1618–1619, there sat in the gallery as a sagacious spectator a small, quiet man of cheerful face and gentle bearing, John Hales, chaplain to Sir Dudley Carleton, British Ambassador to The Hague. He was commissioned to report to the ambassador the proceedings of the synod, and performed the office with impartiality. The Calvinism which was there formally victorious won victory at too dear a cost, and over the mind of the reporter, at least, lost influence by abuse of its control of the synod. His friend Anthony Farindon was accustomed to say that Hales went to the synod a Calvinist, but that he often said in later life, acknowledging the influence of an exposition of the verse, "For God so loved the world," by Episcopius, the broad-minded leader of the Remonstrants, "There I bade John Calvin good-night!" The immediate effect of the synod upon him was not great, as his somewhat perfunctory reports show, but it was doubtless to the retired student a period of education in the evils of controversy and bigotry, and left a lasting impression, which developed with reflection. An

account of John Hales may properly introduce him on his appearance at Dort, as that was almost the only occasion during forty years on which he emerged from the "still air of delightful studies" into public view. He was not in the public eye. The nineteen years before his mission to Holland had been spent at Oxford, as student at Corpus Christi College, and after graduation as Fellow of Merton and later of Eton. He had shown rare proficiency in Greek. He had taken orders. His preaching was brilliant, sparkling with metaphors, but a weak voice detracted from its effectiveness. Anthony Wood, a contemporary, in a record of notable Oxford graduates entitled "Athenæ Oxonienses," thus suggests his university reputation: "Through the whole course of his bachelorship there was never any one in the memory of man (so I have been informed by certain seniors of that college, Merton, at my first coming thereunto) that ever went beyond him for subtle disputations in philosophy, for his eloquent declamations and orations, as also for his exact knowledge in the Greek tongue. . . . His profound learning and natural endowments (not that I shall take notice of his affability, sweetness of nature and complaisance, which seldom accompany hard students and critics) made him beloved of all good men."

His rare intellectual abilities and social charm were coupled with a modesty and love of studious retirement which prevented his light from shining conspicuously, although it was by no means hid under a bushel. "His chamber was a church, and his chair a pulpit." "He

was as communicative of his knowledge, as the celestial bodies of their light and influences." He was obstinate, however, against publishing his views in the press, and never raised his voice in the streets. The manuscripts of some of the sermons which have been preserved were snatched from his hand by interested friends as he descended from the pulpit. Throughout his life he was a retiring student. His two years as chaplain to the Dutch Embassy did not wean him from his studious habits, nor launch him upon a public career, influential as were the friends whose patronage he might have enjoyed. On his return from Holland he buried himself in his books at Eton again, content for twenty years with no higher office than his Fellowship. Clarendon, the contemporary historian, thus describes the even tenor of this period. "Being a person of the greatest eminency for learning and other abilities, from which he might have promised himself any preferment in the church, he withdrew himself from all pursuits of that kind into a private fellowship in the College of Eton, where he lived amongst his books and the most separated from the world of any man then living: though he was not in the least degree inclined to melancholy, but on the contrary of a very open and pleasant conversation." Clarendon adds that he delighted to have his friends resort to him, and about once a year would visit London, "to enjoy their chearful conversation."

His wants were simple, so that with a meagre income he was able to indulge his two luxuries, generosity to others, and books for himself. As bursar of his college

he insisted on replacing from his own funds bad money received, and would sometimes throw into the river from twenty to thirty pounds at a time. Aubrey, the antiquary, in his garrulous and lively reminiscences, in part happily preserved, draws a charming sketch belonging to this period. "'Twas pretty to see, as he walked to Windsor, how his godchildren asked him blessing. When he was bursar, he still gave away all his groates for the acquittances to his godchildren: and by that time he came to Windsor bridge, he would have never a groate left."

Of his books Clarendon says that Hales' was the best private library he had seen; that he "had read more and carried more about him in his excellent memory than any man I ever knew, my Lord Falkland only excepted." Wood calls him "a walking library." He digested his reading with much reflection, and had it ever at command.

Among his books, he was also among his friends. His rare social charm and brilliant conversation commended him to that choice circle of literary lights which centred in Ben Jonson, including Chillingworth, Falkland, Dryden, Suckling and kindred spirits. Suckling gives him a place in the "Session of the Poets," a poem in which Apollo is represented as seeking one to crown among the brilliant coterie.

> Hales, set by himself, most gravely did smile
> To see them about nothing keep such a coile.
> Apollo had spied him, but knowing his mind,
> Passed by, and called Falkland that sat just behind.

Similar modesty appears in the characterization by Wood, "Though a person of wonderful knowledge, yet he was so modest, as to be patiently contented to hear the disputes of persons at table, and those of small abilities, without interposing or speaking a word, till desired." When Hales did speak, however, something was always said. Retiring as the man was, when once his sword was unsheathed, it was keen, flashing and dextrous. In a rencontre with Jonson, who had charged Shakespere with ignorance of the ancient poets, he undertakes to match their best with better from Shakespere, and shrewdly adds as a parting thrust to Jonson, that if Shakespere was ignorant of the ancient poets, he at least stole nothing from them. A vast store of learning thus as always at command, with a flavor of humor and an atmosphere of constant good feeling, made him delightful company. In court society at Windsor he was also in demand on account of his "polite discourses, stories and poetry." The genial fellowship of the London coterie, in which Hales was always welcome, is delightfully reflected in the lines, in which Suckling bids him come to town:

> Whether these lines do find you out,
> Putting or clearing of a doubt;
> Whether predestination,
> Or reconciling three in one;
> Or the unriddling how men die,
> And live at once eternally. . . .
> 'Tis fit you show
> Yourself abroad, that men may know

(Whate'er some learned men have guessed)
That oracles are not yet ceased:
There you shall find the wit and wine
Flowing alike, and both divine: . . .
News in one day, as much we've here
As serves all Windsor for a year,
And which the carrier brings to you,
After 't has here been found not true.
Then think what company's designed
To meet you here: . . .
Where no disputes, nor forc'd defence
Of a man's person for his sense,
Take up the time; all strive to be
Masters of truth, as victory:
And where you come, I'd boldly swear
A synod might as easily err.

This retired life of the Oxford scholar, interrupted only by the mission to Holland, and enlivened by occasional visits to his literary friends in London, Hales pursued for forty years, from his entrance as a student of Corpus Christi College in 1597 at the age of thirteen to 1636. In that year he wrote a short paper on "Schism and Schismatics," probably at the instance of his friend Chillingworth, who at that time was writing his great work, "The Religion of Protestants," and had requested Hales' views on schism. The manuscript of this paper was circulated from hand to hand, so much did it impress each reader, and finally came under the eye of Archbishop Laud, who at once recognized its ability and invited Hales to an interview. Laud had been acquainted with Hales in undergraduate days, but

such was the latter's retiring modesty, that Laud, as he told him at their meeting, had thought him long since dead, and chided him for keeping in the background. An interview followed which ended with an offer to Hales to become one of Laud's chaplains; and a year later he was persuaded, but with difficulty, to accept a Canonry at Windsor. Wood thus describes the interview. Laud "sifted and ferreted him about from one hole to another, in certain matters of religion that he partly then, but more in his younger days, maintained. And finding him an absolute master of learning, made him, upon his compliance, one of his chaplains and procured a Canonry of Windsor for him, which with his Fellowship was all that this most incomparable person, whom I may justly style a walking library, enjoyed."

The manuscript, which thus contrary to his own desires brought Hales into prominence, is thoroughly characteristic, and on account of its influence upon his career may be here examined. It opens with that native humor, which enlivened all his writings and discourse:

> Heresy and schism, as they are commonly used, are two theological scare-crows, with which they who use to uphold a party in religion use to fright away such, as making inquiry into it, are ready to relinquish and oppose it if it appear either erroneous or suspicious; for, as Plutarch reports of a painter, who having unskilfully painted a cock, chased away all cocks and hens, that so the imperfection of his art might not appear by comparison with nature; so men willing for ends to admit of no fancy but their own endeavor to hinder an inquiry into it by way of comparison of somewhat with it, peradventure truer, that so the deformity

of their own might not appear: but howsoever, in the common manage, heresy and schism are but ridiculous terms, yet the things in themselves are of very considerable moment, the one offending against truth, the other against charity, and therefore both deadly, when they are not by imputation, but in deed.

Heresy is defined as "an act of the will, not of the reason, and indeed is a lie, and not a mistake," not a mistaken position but a wrong disposition. Variety of opinions should not prevent those who hold them from worshipping together. "Why might it not be lawful to go to church with the Donatist, or celebrate Easter with the Quartodeciman, if occasion so require?" The central and striking theme is, "Where cause of schism is necessary, there not he that separates, but he that is the cause of the separation, is the schismatic." A fruitful source of schism has been deplorable emphasis upon non-essentials.

It hath been the common disease of Christians from the beginning not to content themselves with that measure of faith, which God and Scriptures have expressly afforded us, but out of a vain desire to know more than is revealed, they have attempted to devise things, of which we have no light, neither from reason nor revelation; neither have they rested here, but upon pretence of church authority (which is none), or tradition (which for the most part is feigned), they have peremptorily concluded and confidently imposed upon others a necessity of entertaining conclusions of that nature; and to strengthen themselves have broken out into divisions and factions, opposing man to man, synod to synod, till the peace of the church vanished without all possibility of recall.

These are sane words for any time, but certainly remarkable for the year 1636. The authority of tradition Hales considers overestimated, and says that by the ancients "many are more affrighted than hurt." The illegitimate introduction into liturgy of controverted ideas has, to his mind, united with insistence upon uniformity of opinion in fomenting schism.

> Were liturgies so framed as that they admitted not of particular and private fancies, but contained only such things as in which all Christians agree, schisms on opinion were utterly vanished. Whereas to load our public forms with the private fancies upon which we differ is the most sovereign way to perpetuate schism unto the world's end; prayer, confession, thanksgiving, reading of Scriptures, administration of sacraments in the plainest and simplest manner were matter enough to furnish out a sufficient liturgy, though nothing either of private opinion, or of church pomp, of garments, or prescribed gestures, of imagery, of music, of matter concerning the dead, of many superfluities which creep into the church, under the name of order and decency did interpose itself.

This sharp thrust at the Laudian insistence upon uniformity of obnoxious ceremonial, and the fact that Laud made a man of such views one of his chaplains and recommended him for further preferment, show that Laud could receive blows as well as give them, and should be counted to the credit of one who has been unsparingly condemned. To give him his due, Laud with his ceremonial narrowness exercised much toleration in matters of doctrine, and was patient of Hales', as also of Chillingworth's, breadth. As at the begin-

ning, so toward the close of this paper, is one of those humorous and pithy metaphors, in which Hales' writings abound:

"For private and indifferent persons, they may be spectators of these contentions as securely in regard of any peril of conscience (for of danger in purse or person, I keep no account) as at a cock-fight where serpents fight, who cares who hath the better? The best wish is that both may perish in the fight."

This remarkable tract, it is to be noted, was written not for publication, but as a private letter to a friend. For its publicity the author was no more responsible than he was desirous of the notice into which it brought him. According to Clarendon, "He would often say, his opinions, he was sure, did him no harm, but he was far from being confident that they might not do others harm, who entertained them, and might entertain other results from them than he did: and therefore he was very reserved in communicating what he thought himself in those points, in which he differed from what was received. . . . Nothing troubled him more than the brawls which were grown from religion."

At the time of Hales' appointment to the Canonry of Windsor, the long years of his studious retirement and cheerful association with his brilliant friends were fast drawing to a close, to be succeeded by critical and awful times, demanding men of a different calibre, men of strenuous action rather than of scholarly meditation, fighters rather than thinkers. Laud had set Hales' light into a candlestick, but its gentle radiance was not

long to give illumination, for the candlestick was soon overturned, and the light itself almost snuffed out. In 1640, but a year after his appointment as Canon of Windsor, the Long Parliament met, with its life-and-death struggle between Commons and King. In 1642 the Civil War began. In the following year Falkland, Hales' friend and host of many years, met a sad death in the field. In 1644 his friend Chillingworth died a captive of the Parliamentary forces, and in the same year his patron Laud was executed in the triumph of Puritan rebellion.

Little as Hales sympathized with Laud's ceremonialism, Puritan dogmatism was even more distasteful to him. Choosing between two evils, he chose what seemed to him the less, and sided with the royal party. In 1642 his tract on schism was published without his consent, and the same year he was ejected from his canonry by a parliamentary committee, jealous of all royal sympathizers. Puritan dogmatism could not tolerate such latitude to varying opinion, in spite of the stout defence of untrammelled worship. Now uniformity of doctrine was to be pressed as violently as had been uniformity of ceremonial. In both systems, Anglican and Puritan, was a tyranny, which in both alike Hales denounced. He loved the good and hated the evil in each. In 1644, by a sequestration of college rents, he lost the Eton Fellowship, on which for years he had subsisted in his simple life. For nine weeks he was in hiding at Eton. In 1649 he refused to sign the Solemn League and Covenant, the palladium of triumphant Presbyterianism,

and was formally dispossessed of the Eton Fellowship. He became tutor to William Salter, nephew of the Bishop of Salisbury, at Riching's Lodge in Buckinghamshire, where in coöperation with Henry King, Bishop of Chichester, a kind of college was established, with Hales as chaplain. No peace, however, was to be granted to quiet students: it was a time of action and of the strenuous rather than the simple life. Hounded in his retirement by the order against harboring malignants, this man, of all men benignant, was obliged to leave Riching's Lodge, and sought refuge at Eton with the widow of an old servant, grateful to him for his generosities toward her in the past. Here he was to end his days in obscurity and penury.

Prohibited from teaching or preaching, this man of peace in times of war could still let his light shine in lovely deeds of charity. A star of the first magnitude, his sky was clouded, but although his brilliance was obscured in the smoke of battle, gentle influences from his benignity made themselves felt, like the ultra-violet rays of the spectrum, actinic though invisible. He sold a large part of his precious library, which had cost twenty-five hundred pounds, for seven hundred, and in the midst of his own straits gave liberal assistance to clergy and scholars "deprived" like himself. If he could no longer preach, he would still practise the heart of the Gospel. With qualms of conscience at dispossessing such a man, Penwarden, who had been installed in the Eton Fellowship in his place, magnanimously offered to resign it to him, but without

success. Aubrey thus sketches him the year before his death:

> At Eton he lodged (after his sequestration), at the next house to the Christopher Inne, where I sawe him, a prettie little man, sanguine, of a cheerful countenance, very gentile and courteous. I was received by him with much humanity: he was in a kind of violet-colourd cloath gowne, with buttons and loopes (he wore not a black gown), and was reading "Thomas à Kempis: " it was within a year before he deceased. He loved Canarie; but moderately, to refresh his spirits. . . . He had a bountifull mind.

A sweet picture, certainly, of one who knew "how to be abased." If he used "Canarie" moderately, he also was accustomed to fast from Thursday's dinner till Saturday. In the sale of his books, "Thomas à Kempis" had been spared. Of his personal appearance in addition to Aubrey's description is that of Wood:

> Those that remember and were well acquainted with Mr. Hales have said that he had the most ingenuous countenance that they ever saw, that it was sanguine, cheerful, and full of air: also that his stature was little and well proportioned, and his motion quick and nimble.

At Eton in the house of his old servant he died in 1656, weary of "the black and dismal times," "one of the least men in the kingdom; and one of the greatest scholars in Europe"; "one of the clearest heads and best prepared breasts in Christendom." He was buried in Eton College churchyard without public honors. A monument was erected over his grave by his admirer,

Peter Curwen, with a Latin inscription, which translated, runs thus:

"Beloved of the Muses and the Graces, John Hales (name not so much of a man as of a philosophy) lies not here, but the clay which he assumed is placed below, for surely he shone above other mortals in polish of manners, subtlety of genius, fulness of heart. He was wise with a wisdom higher than the wisdom of this world, and so is more fit for the Choir Invisible."

II

Hales' unwillingness to publish his writings has been noted, so that during his life but little from his pen reached the press. The tract on schism was published without his consent. Three years after his death, Bishop Pearson edited and published a collection of sermons, letters and miscellanies, "such as he could not but write, and such as when written were out of his power to destroy. . . . The sermons preached on several eminent occasions were snatched from him by his friends, and in their hands the copies were continued, or by transcription dispersed." The collection contains the Letters from Dort, a valuable contemporary report of that important synod. The title of the book, to modern taste somewhat florid, was congenial to the literary atmosphere of the period, and was, we may be sure, a sincere and affectionate tribute to distinguished worth: "The Golden Remains of the Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales of Eton College."

These writings of Hales are as crowded with interest as his life is barren in incident. He lived within. His meditation was the deeper for his inaction. All his force was free to expend itself within. It was a life of the soul. His history is a history of mind. He was not a practical leader, a man of affairs, like Laud or Cromwell. He had neither political nor ecclesiastical nor doctrinal plan to offer as a panacea for the ills of his day. He had no faith in accomplishing things by force. Christ's kingdom is maintained, he says, "not by the sword but the Spirit: not by violence but by love: not by striving but by yielding: not by fighting but by dying." There was nothing in him of the belligerent. The Spirit was his sole reliance; and his contribution to that sanity, reason, and toleration, which alone in the end could prevail, was great. It is the "still small voice," after wind, earthquake and fire.

As we turn from his life to his writings, it is the same man who appears, only revealed the more fully, with reserve broken. The same spirit of gentleness that gave charm to his manner pervades his writings. His sermon at St. Paul's Cross, for example, is a refuge from the theological storms of the day, with its atmosphere of serenity in the midst of conflict. He begins by saying that his object in coming is to exhort them "to a gracious interpreting of each other's imperfections," and the text is "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Among the much-discussed notes of the church there should be a place, he thinks, for benignity. Theological writers need self-

control: "If it be the cause of God which we handle in our writings, then let us handle it like the prophets of God, with quietness and moderation, and not in the violence of passion, as if we were possessed rather than inspired." It was characteristic of the man to begin his sermon on "Christian Omnipotency," a subject suggesting vigorous action, with a preface on that "omnipotent patience" which "beareth all things." Hales advocates in golden words gentleness of reproof: "The wisdom and gentleness of a Christian is never better seen than in reproving. The young and tender branches of a vine are not to be pruned with a knife, but gently pulled away by hand." It is in this connection that he introduces the striking figure of the knife and the sponge, long remembered:

> As a skilful physician of whom we read, finding the sick person to be afraid of lancing, privily wrapped up his knife in a sponge, with which, whilst he gently smoothed the place, he lanced it: so, beloved, when we encounter our offending brother, we must wrap our knife in our sponge, and lance him whilst we smooth him, and with all sweetness and gentleness of behavior cure him, as Isaiah cured Hezekiah by laying upon him a plaster of figs.

To Hales' mind gentleness is due even to souls in torment, and dwelling upon Abraham's manner of addressing Dives, "Son, remember," he exclaims; "Son! a word of mercy and gentleness, used to teach us that in all cases, how desperate soever, unto all persons, though never so forlorn, unto the greatest delinquent, how sinful soever, yet still we must open some window, at least some small

crevice, to let our goodness shine through." In similar vein he notices that "the master of the feast, when he came in to his guests and saw one there without a wedding garment, though he saw he was constrained to pronounce a sharp and severe doom, yet he useth Abraham's method, 'Friend,' saith he, 'how comest thou hither?' Son! Friend! here is the true art of chiding, this is the proper style wherein we ought to reprove."

It hath been observed of the ancient Cornish language, that it afforded no forms of oaths, no phrases to swear in. I should never think our language the poorer, if it were utterly destitute of all forms and phrases of reviling and opprobrious speech.

"Gracious language is so cheap a virtue good words are afforded at the same price that evil are." How far such a spirit as this rises above the partisan and controversial atmosphere of the times, in which Protestant and Romanist, Anglican and Puritan, Calvinist and Arminian were vilifying each other, it is needless to remark. Bishop Pearson in the introduction to "The Golden Remains," after alluding to Hales' intellectual attainments speaks of his gentleness thus quaintly and sweetly:

Had he never understood a letter, he had other ornaments sufficient to endear him. For he was of a nature so kind, so sweet, so courting all mankind, of an affability so prompt, so ready to receive all conditions of men, that I conceive it near as easy a task for any one to become so knowing as so obliging.

Hales was a true Protestant, not hesitating to assume

the personal responsibility incurred by abandoning the Church's infallibility. He saw clearly that Protestantism must be self-reliant, that every man must use his own reason, "working out his own salvation with fear and trembling." These are his brave words on personal infallibility:

> We see many times a kind of ridiculous forgetfulness of many men, seeking for that which they have in their hands; so fares it with men who seek for infallibility in others, which either is or ought to be in themselves. . . . For, beloved, infallibility is not a favor impropriated to any one man, it is a duty alike expected at the hands of all, all must have it. . . . There is no other means not to be deceived, but to know things yourselves. . . . Wherefore hath God given me the light of reason and conscience, if I must suffer myself to be led and governed by the reason and conscience of another man?

Hales did not quail before the unrest and dispute which might result from freedom of religious inquiry, feeling that peace purchased at the price of intellectual stagnation was too dear. He charges the clergy with cowardice in discouraging inquiry, as "the Sybarites to procure their ease banished the smiths, because their trade was full of noise." Religion by proxy he compares, with keen wit, to the methods of the Roman gentleman, who being ignorant himself, yet desirous of seeming learned, procured educated servants, with the fancy that all their learning thus became his own. Being weak in body, he procured wrestlers and runners, and exulted in their exploits as his own.

> Beloved, you are this man, when you neglect to try the spirits,

to study the means of salvation yourselves, but content yourselves to take them upon trust, and repose yourselves altogether on the wit and knowledge of us that are your teachers.

The Christian must cease to lean upon others, and must be content to rely upon God and his own reason. Antiquity is not reliable, for "what is it else but man's authority born some ages before us?" In regard to antiquity Hales speaks with delicious incisiveness:

Those things which we reverence for antiquity, what were they at their first birth? Were they false? Time cannot make them true. Were they true? Time cannot make them more true.

Universality is as unreliable as antiquity, for universality is only an appeal to the multitude, and the multitude is usually wrong. "It will never go so well with mankind that the most shall be the best." Truth is not established by synods, but is often endangered, for as the special garments of the Roman slaves called attention to their number, and thus became a menace to their masters, so councils endanger the truth by revealing the numerical strength of those in error, for "there are more which run against the truth than with it." His opinion of synods evidently had not improved since the days at Dort. Such is Hales' brave Protestantism, "Neither to adore all things for Gospel which our betters tell us, but to bring all things to the true test; to know the reasons, try the authorities, and never rest ourselves, till we can take up that conclusion of the Psalmist, 'As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God.'"

With this thorough-going Protestantism Hales mingled a wholesome respect for authority. He deplored the indiscriminate discussion of profound questions by the unskilled, and the great breed of writers, which if they sowed not tares, yet filled the Lord's floor with chaff. Maturity of judgment was all-important in his eyes, and "greenness of scholarship" is roundly censured. Protestant that he was, he was far from indulging in Puritan vituperation of the Roman Church, from which he acknowledges the ceremonies and ritual of the English Church to have been derived, and with which there is a common ground of faith when superstitions are pruned away.

The perfect balance of Hales' mind and taste prevented him from finding rest in any of the extremes of his day. A true Protestant, he was at home neither among the rampant Puritans nor the pompous Anglicans. He was in favor of the simplest form of worship, and opposed, as we have seen in the Tract on Schism, all that pomp which, under the plea of "decency and order", Laud and his followers were bent on introducing. He deplored the exaltation of the bishopric, as making Christianity "lackey to ambition." Worship must not be identified with ceremonies, the danger of which is illustrated in the following characteristic way, with another quotation from classic lore:

Our books tell us of a poor Spartan that travelling in another country and seeing the beams and posts of the houses squared and carved, asked if the trees grew so in those countries. Beloved, many men that have been long acquainted with a form of worship

squared and carved, tricked and set out with shew and ceremony, fall upon this Spartan's conceit, think the trees grow so, and think that there is no natural shape and face of God's service but that.

Most trenchantly does Hales decry the Anglican tendency to exaggerate the visible notes of the church. Vigorous, caustic and beautiful is his contention for the invisibility of Christ's kingdom.

It is but Popish madness to send men up and down the world to find the church. . . . The Lord only knoweth who are his. . . . When Saul went out to seek his father's asses, he found a kingdom: let us take heed lest the contrary befall us, lest while we seek our Father's kingdom thus, we find but asses. . . . The church hath no other note but to be. . . . The church is not a thing that can be pointed out. The Devil could shew our Saviour Christ all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them: I hope the church was none of these! It is the glory of it not to be seen, and the note of it to be invisible. . . . Will you know where to find the kingdom of Christ? Our Saviour directs you in the Gospel; The kingdom of heaven, saith he, cometh not by observation, neither shall ye say, Lo here, or Lo there, for the kingdom of heaven is within you. Let every man therefore retire into himself, and see if he can find this kingdom in his heart; for if he find it not there, in vain shall he find it in all the world besides.

Vigorous as is this protest against Anglican ritualism and ecclesiasticism, Hales found little comfort among the Puritans. At one with them in asserting the invisibility and spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and in advocating simplicity of worship, he is repelled by Puritan emphasis upon uniformity of doctrine no less than by Anglican

emphasis upon uniformity of ceremony. Hales' toleration stands out glorified against the intolerance of his times. He deplores that "exceeding affection and love unto our own conceits, through which we cannot with patience either admit of other men's opinions or endure that our own should be withstood." "Scarcely can there be found a thing more harmful to religion than to vent thus our own conceits, and obtrude them upon the world for necessary and absolute." Hales would seek Christian unity neither in uniformity of ceremonial with the Anglican, nor in uniformity of opinion with the Puritan, but in unity of spirit, with the Christians that were still to be, of whom he is the forerunner. It is an inspiration to find words like these in sermons nearly three hundred years old:

> It is not the variety of opinions, but our own perverse wills, who think it meet that all should be conceited as ourselves are, which hath so inconvenienced the church: were we not ready to anathematize each other, where we concur not in opinion, we might in hearts be united though in tongues we were divided, and that with singular profit to all sides. It is the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and not identity of conceit, which the Holy Ghost requires at the hands of Christians. Since it is impossible where Scripture is ambiguous that all conceits should run alike, it remains that we should seek out a way not so much to establish an unity of opinion in the minds of all, which I take to be a thing likewise impossible, as to provide that multiplicity of conceit trouble not the church's peace.

Here is the apostle of a new day, and in lines like these John Hales "being dead yet speaketh."

Between the Calvinism and Arminianism of the times Hales occupies a mediating position. In bidding John Calvin good-night at the Synod of Dort, he did not, as has been well said by Tulloch, bid Arminius good-morning. In these times of controversy it is reassuring to behold a man broad enough to appreciate the truth of both Calvinism and Arminianism. In the matter of "Predestination" Hales feels that both teach important truths.

> Were we not ambitiously minded every one to be lord of a sect, each of these tenets might be profitably taught and heard, and matter of singular exhortation drawn from either; for on the one part doubtless it is a pious intent to endeavor to free God from all imputation of unnecessary rigor; and on the other side, it is a noble resolution to humble ourselves under the hand of Almighty God.

Likewise in regard to "Perseverance" he sees truth in both the Calvinistic and Arminian positions. The purposes of God are regarded in the same broad way. God's purposes are not to be defeated, as the one side contends, and yet with the other they do not nullify ordinary means nor infringe upon personal liberty; indeed these are the very means by which God's decrees are brought about. And with what sanity does he close the section:

> I may not stand longer upon this, I will draw but one short admonition; Let no man presume to look into the third heaven, to open the books of life and death, to pronounce over peremptorily of God's purpose concerning himself or any other man.

The same balance appears in his treatment of "Original Sin." He will not allow that doctrine to cause despair, nor to cloud for a moment the sense of personal responsibility. "Man indeed is a creature of great strength, and if at any time he find himself weak, it is through his fault, not through his nature." Original sin is not responsible for the full extent of personal wickedness:

> As for original sin of what strength it is I will not discuss; only thus much will I say, there is none of us all but is much more wicked than the strength of any primitive corruption can constrain.

There is no resisting such incisiveness. At a time when it was sadly misinterpreted, Hales read truly the inspiring fifth chapter of Romans, that *locus classicus* of Calvinism, realizing that the sin of Adam, however disastrous, is more than counterbalanced in the righteousness of Christ.

> Let us sorrow no more for our loss in Adam; for is not Christ tenfold better unto us than all the good of Paradise? The loss of that portion of strength wherewith our nature was originally endued is made up with fulness of power in Christ. . . . It hurts not us that Adam fell; nay our strength and glory is much improved that by Christ we are redeemed. . . . Yea but the Devil inspires into us evil thoughts: well, and cannot good angels inspire good?

It was a lofty soul that could rise thus far enough above Calvinism and Arminianism to appreciate the good of each and so beautifully to blend the two systems. Such sympathetic appreciation of both sides of a great

controversy reflects glory upon John Hales, and makes one think better of the seventeenth century. Such a spirit is as incense rising in the midst of battle smoke.

Hales' attitude toward the Christian of unworthy life is as gentle as toward the Christian with doubts and intellectual difficulties. The austere Puritan was as far from him in the treatment of offending Christians as in the treatment of heretics. Hales believed in the friendly and sympathetic association of the good with the bad.

> No man so ill but hath some good in him. . . . We must take heed that we do not mistake in thinking that there is nothing else but evil, where we often see it. We must therefore entertain even near friendship with such a one to discover him. No man is perfectly understood but by his inward acquaintance. . . . For as they that work in gold and costly matter, diligently save every little piece that falls away, so goodness wheresoever it be is a thing so precious that every little spark of it deserves our care in cherishing. . . . Nothing profits evil men more than the company of the good. . . . No cause therefore why the true professors, though notorious sinners, should not be partakers of our Christian courtesies. . . . Only let me add St. Paul's words in another place, Ye that are strong receive such a one!

Such a spirit could not affiliate with Puritanism and its rigorous discipline. Hales had learned to blend with the injunction, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," the prayer of Christ "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world."

If Hales was out of sympathy with the Puritan in his attitude toward the heretic and the offending Christian,

still wider was the gap between his attitude and theirs toward humanity as a whole. His splendid catholicity is perhaps the most remarkable and admirable of his mental qualities. Words like these in the seventeenth century are rare enough to be cherished in all honor:

> The goodness of a Christian man may be like the widow's oil, that never ceased running so long as there was a vessel to receive it. There is no kind of man, of what life, of what profession, of what estate and calling soever, though he be an heathen and idolater, unto whom the skirts of Christian compassion do not reach. . . . As therefore our religion is, so must our compassion be, catholic. . . . In some things we agree as we are men, and thus far the heathen themselves are to be received.

Augustine's words, Hales reminds us, are to be remembered, "It is easy to hate the wicked, because they are wicked; but to love them, because they are men, this is the rare and pious thing!"

> We read of a nice Athenian being entertained in a place by one given to hospitality, finding anon that another was received with the like courtesy, and then a third, growing very angry; I thought, said he, that I had found here a friend's house, but I am fallen into an inn to entertain all comers, rather than a lodging for some private and especial friends. Let it not offend any that I have made Christianity rather an inn to receive all than a private house to receive some few. . . . Beloved, a Christian must be like Julian's fig tree, so universally compassionate, that so all sorts of grafts by a kind of Christian inoculation may be brought to draw life and nourishment from his root.

He would give the crown of martyrdom to Regulus

and Fabricius, in a time when the virtues of the heathen were declared to be glittering vices:

For the crown of martyrdom fits not only the heads of those who have lost their lives rather than they would cease to profess the name of Christ, but on the head of every one that suffers for the testimony of a good conscience and for righteousness' sake.

Hales' views of the Bible and its interpretation are especially interesting and noteworthy. He regards revelation through books as not the highest, but only a secondary form of revelation. God spoke directly to the Patriarchs. It would be better if we had "no need of writing, no other teacher but the Spirit, no other books but our hearts." His sermon on "Wresting the Scriptures" might well be preached to-day. He speaks vigorously against forcing our own private ideas into Scripture: we should receive from it its natural sense, not press into it our own. We should not debase the Prince's coin by stamping the name of God upon base brazen stuff of our own. We should not approach the Bible with prepossessions, bent on finding preconceived ideas.

As Antipheron in Aristotle thought that everywhere he saw his own shape and picture going afore him: so in divers parts of Scripture where these men walk, they will easily persuade themselves that they see the image of their own conceits.

Two excellent rules of interpretation are given. The first is the rule of the literal sense:

The literal, plain and uncontroversable meaning of Scripture without any addition or supply by way of interpretation, is that

alone which for ground of faith we are necessarily bound to accept, except it be where the Holy Ghost himself treads us out another way.

By setting up our own glosses in place of Rome's, we do but run around and meet the Church of Rome again in the same point in which at first we left her. "This doctrine of the literal sense," says Hales with incisiveness, "was never grievous or prejudicial to any but only to those who were inwardly conscious that their positions were not sufficiently grounded." "A wrested proof is like unto a suborned witness."

The second rule is equally sound:

In places of ambiguous and doubtful, or dark and intricate meaning, it is sufficient if we religiously admire and acknowledge and confess, neither affirming nor denying either side.

Here is that moderation and caution which is a cheering contrast to the precise dogmatism of the times. In some directions he advocates a reverent Christian agnosticism, content not to know. "I have, I confess, the same disease that my first parents in paradise had, a desire to know more than I need." "It shall well befit our Christian modesty to participate somewhat of the sceptic." There must be in regard to some things suspension of belief. The church has made a mistake in expressing through councils and creeds decided opinions as the solution of all problems that have arisen: it would have been better to have left many problems unsettled, than to have inundated theology with opinions, some of which cannot be maintained, especially as

these unnecessary definitions have been a fruitful cause of schism. The Christian must be content to wait patiently with confession of ignorance before obscure texts.

> The Jewish rabbis so oft as they met with hard texts were wont to shut up their discourse with this, Elias shall answer this doubt when he comes. Not the Jews only, but the learned Christians of all ages have found many things in Scripture, which yet expect Elias.

Toward a Biblical interpretation that was to be realized in our day Hales' face was set in hope.

This prophetic soul anticipated not only the Biblical interpretation but also the social Christianity of our times. He felt the pressing of social problems. He discusses the Christian use of wealth, deploring the tendency to mass riches, and emphasizing the responsibility of large means. One needs a thorough training for the use of wealth, to his mind, as much as for a profession. He has a notable sermon on "The Profit of Godliness," quite in the modern spirit:

> Godliness it is therefore that makes even profit itself profitable. . . . It is a greater part of wisdom wisely to dispense profits when we have them, than to get them at the first. . . . So many there are in the world who know how to gather, but few that know how to use. . . . Many there are that can be content to hear that godliness is profitable unto them, but that godliness should make them profitable to others, that it should cost them anything, that they cannot endure to hear.

Laying out is more important than laying up.

Powerful and searching is the sermon on "The Rich Man's *Recepisti;* or The Danger of Receiving our Good Things in This Life."

Thou sittest at thy full table, whilst Lazarus starves at thy gate, Recepisti! (Thou hast received thy good things!); thou cladst thyself with superfluous and gaudy apparel, whilst thy naked brother freezes in the street, Recepisti! Thou refreshest thyself with dainty restoring physic, whilst the sick perisheth for want of care, Recepisti! Take heed, every vanity, every superfluity, every penny that thou hast misspent to the prejudice of him that wants, when the time comes, shall cry out unto thee, Recepisti!

Here is the clear note of the modern social reformer! Only abuse takes things from God, to whom all belongs. "So much as thou needest is thine, the rest thou art entrusted withal for others' good." "In debt thou art for all thou hast: and wilt thou know who are thy creditors? Even every man that needs thee!"

The man who preached these high truths, practised them also. As we read these rare applications of Christianity to social problems, the vision rises before us of the benignant bursar scattering his groats among his godchildren, as he gave them his benediction; and then of the booklover who sold his precious library, and distributed to the necessity of saints, his fellow sufferers, in evil times.

The prayer with which Hales closes his sermon on "Peace I leave unto you" breathes the inmost spirit of the man, and may well conclude a study of him:

Look down, O Lord, upon thy poor dismembered church, rent and torn with discord, and even ready to sink. . . . We will

hope, O Lord, that notwithstanding all supposed impossibilities, thou wilt one day in mercy look down upon thy Sion, and grant a gracious interview of friends so long divided. Thou that wroughtest that great reconciliation between God and man, is thine arm waxen shorter? Was it possible to reconcile God to man? To reconcile man to man, is it impossible? Be with those, we beseech thee, to whom the prosecution of church controversies is committed, and like a good Lazarus drop one cooling drop into their tongues and pens, too much exasperated against each other. . . . Direct thy church, O Lord, in all her petitions for peace, teach her wherein her peace consists, and warn her from the world, and bring her home to thee: that all those that love thy peace, may at last have the reward of the sons of peace, and reign with thee in thy kingdom of peace for ever!

In such a prayer we seem to hear in the midst of theological storms Christ's own "Pax vobiscum."

WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH

WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH

1602–1644

I

While John Hales was sitting in the gallery at the Synod of Dort, there was walking in the lanes of Oxford a student of sixteen, "a little man, blackish hair, of a saturnine complexion," like Hales, of small stature and large mind. "Mr. Chillingworth," says the historian Clarendon, "was of a stature little superior to Mr. Hales; and it was an age in which there were many great and wonderful men of that size." While Hales was a spectator of the controversy between Calvinist and Arminian, Chillingworth at Oxford was in the midst of the controversy between Romanist and Anglican. In college debates he was whetting his wits for valiant service in clear-cut discrimination. In characteristic style Aubrey thus pictures him:

He did walke much in the college grove, and there contemplate, and meet with some cod's head or other, and dispute with him and baffle him. He thus prepared himself beforehand. He would alwayes be disputing; so would my tutor. I thinke it was an epidemick evill of that time, which I thinke now is growne out of fashion, as unmannerly and boyish. He was the readiest and

nimblest disputant of his time in the university, perhaps none haz equalled him since.

The Lord Falkland and he had such extraordinary clear reasons, that they were wont to say at Oxon that if the great Turk were to be converted by natural reason, these two were the persons to convert him.

In these college debates the Roman controversy was uppermost. Chillingworth felt the force of Rome's ecclesiastical argument, unsatisfied by Laud's theories of order and authority, although Laud was his godfather. Under the influence of the Jesuit John Fisher he sought infallibility, continuity and authority in the Church of Rome, to which he became a convert in 1630. During his residence at the College of Douai, he was followed by letters from Laud, then Bishop of London, who with admirable tact abandoned insistence on the argument of order and authority, dear to his heart, and diverted his godson's mind to fresh lines of inquiry. Chillingworth now began to study religion from the intellectual rather than the ecclesiastical point of view, to seek truth rather than authority, and in the shifting of his ground he found himself returning to Anglicanism. He had been introduced to the field where his acumen was to be of the greatest service. It was rare tolerance through which Laud saved Chillingworth to the English Church, for through the arguments important to Laud he had gone over to Rome. In a conversation upon this period, Morley reports Gladstone as saying, "Do you know whom I find the most tolerant churchman of that time? Laud! Laud got Davenant

made Bishop of Salisbury, and he zealously befriended Chillingworth and Hales." This conversion and reconversion naturally brought upon Chillingworth charges of inconstancy, but he maintained that he was constant to the leading of truth. "He is constant in nothing," says his biographer, Des Maizeaux, "but in following that way to heaven which for the present seems to him the most probable." Whichever way he faced, he was ever seeking the north.

While Chillingworth was developing under these experiences, his work was preparing for him, the task commensurate to the power. In 1630, the year of Chillingworth's conversion to Rome, the Jesuit Edward Knott published a controversial tract with the self-explanatory title, "Charity Mistaken, with the Want Whereof Catholics are Unjustly Charged for Affirming, as They do with Grief, that Protestancy Unrepented Destroys Salvation." Three years later Dr. Potter, provost of Queen's College, Oxford, replied with a tract, "Want of Charity Justly Charged on all Such Romanists as Dare (Without Truth or Modesty) Affirm that Protestancy Destroyeth Salvation." This was answered in turn by Knott's "Mercy and Truth, or Charity Maintained by Catholics." It was at this point that Chillingworth entered a controversy which from its nature was bound to excite the interest of one who had had his experience. He undertook a reply to Knott's "Charity Maintained," finding herein a worthy field for the exercise of his long discipline. At the house of his friend Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, at Great Tew, he

found a congenial environment for the preparation of his great work. It is a delightful picture of Falkland's hospitality that Clarendon and Aubrey sketch, and in the turmoil of the times it is good to find retreat in the atmosphere of the manor house at Great Tew.

His lordship was acquainted with the best wits of that university (Oxford), and his house was like a college, full of learned men. . . . Mr. Chillingworth of Trinity College in Oxford (afterwards D.D.) was his most intimate and beloved favourite, and was most commonly with my Lord.

And truly his whole conversation was one continued convivium philosophicum or convivium theologicum, enlivened and refreshed with all the facetiousness of wit and good humor and pleasantness of discourse, which made the gravity of the argument itself (whatever it was) very delectable. His house where he usually resided, Tew or Burford in Oxfordshire, being within ten or twelve miles of the university, looked like the university itself by the company that was always found there. There was Dr. Sheldon, Dr. Morley, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Earles, Mr. Chillingworth, and indeed all men of eminent parts and faculties in Oxford, besides those who resorted thither from London, who all found their lodgings there as ready as in the colleges: nor did the lord of the house know of their coming or going, nor who was in his house, till he came to dinner or supper, where all still met: otherwise there was no troublesome ceremony or constraint to forbid men to come to the house, or to make them weary of staying there, so that many came thither to study in a better air, finding all the books they could desire in his library, and all the persons together whose company they could wish, and not find in any other society. . . .

Here Mr. Chillingworth wrote and formed and modelled his

excellent book against the learned Jesuit Mr. Knott, after frequent debates upon the most important particulars: in many of which he suffered himself to be overruled by the judgment of his friends, though in others he still adhered to his own fancy, which was sceptical enough, even in the highest points.

In such an atmosphere, Chillingworth wrote his great work, "The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way of Salvation," which breathes indeed "a better air" than the prevailing atmosphere of the seventeenth century. Published at Oxford in 1638, the first edition is said to have been exhausted in five weeks. In less than five months two editions had been sold. Fifty years after its first appearance it was still regarded as a bulwark of Protestantism, a condensed edition being published by John Patrick in fear of a Romanist revival. Up to 1719 seven editions had appeared. In 1742, more than a hundred years after its publication, it appeared in still another edition. So much was it prized, and so enduring was its sane argument.

In 1638 in recognition of his eminent service to Protestantism Chillingworth was presented to the Chancellorship of Salisbury by Charles I, with the Prebend of Brixworth and the Mastership of Wigston's Hospital annexed. In the subscription book of Salisbury his subscription to the Articles appears. The sense in which he subscribed he made plain, as to articles of "peace and union." His subscription was only after much hesitation, largely due to the damnatory clauses, which were repulsive to him. Such was his charity that, however clearly he was convinced of his own beliefs, he

could not put all dissent from them under the ban. He defines the sense in which he accepts the Articles in characteristic words:

> I belong to the Church of England. I have not only no wish to renounce her communion, but I am willing to be her minister, supposing that it is enough that I approve generally of her doctrine. This approval is what I design by subscribing the Articles. In these Articles good men of former times have done what they could to express their highest Christian thought against the perversions of heretical curiosity. They would have succeeded better if they in their turn had been less curious, if they had refrained from defining where Scripture itself has refrained; but, upon the whole, I acknowledge their doctrine, or at least I have no wish to dispute it. I accept the Articles as articles of peace.

As in the case of Hales, hardly was Chillingworth settled in a position of authority with his powers recognized, when the outbreak of the great struggle destroyed the conditions in which his brilliant but non-militant genius could have been most effective. Forced to choose between two evils, he espoused the cause of the King, although acknowledging the piety of the Parliamentary army, and condemning the godlessness of the court. Reforms he felt necessary, but he could not approve the Parliament's method. In a conversation on his death-bed he said to Cheynell, "Sir, I must acknowledge that I do verily believe that the intentions of the Parliament are better than the intentions of the Court or of that army which I have followed: but I conceive that the Parliament takes a wrong course to prosecute and accomplish their good intentions, for war is not

WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH

the way of Jesus Christ." In a sermon before the King at Oxford in 1643 on the occasion of the Public Fast, he recognized the King as the Lord's anointed whose authority must be maintained, but in the spirit of the Hebrew Prophets condemned the sins of the King's supporters. Conversely, the piety of the Parliamentary cause could not excuse its violence and anarchy.

> Publicans and sinners on one side, scribes and Pharisees on the other. On the one side hypocrisy, on the other profaneness. No honesty nor justice on the one side, and very little piety on the other. On the one side horrible oaths, curses and blasphemies; on the other pestilent lies, calumnies and perjuries. When I see among them the pretence of reformation, if not the desire, pursued by anti-Christian, Mahometan, devilish means; and amongst us little or no zeal for reformation of what is indeed amiss; little or no care to remove the cause of God's anger towards us by just, lawful and Christian means, I profess plainly that I cannot without trembling consider what is likely to be the event of these distractions.

In 1643 Chillingworth and Falkland were together in the royal camp before Gloucester, two high souls aghast at the horror of their times. After a deep silence and frequent sighs, Falkland, says Clarendon, "would with a shrill and sad accent ingeminate the word, Peace! Peace! and would passionately profess that the very agony of the war and the view of the calamities and desolation which the kingdom did and must endure, took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart." The blessed days of calm, far-seeing discussion in the library at Great Tew were

over, but when the battle smoke at length cleared, the sanity of those discussions made itself felt resurgent. By the Civil War the influence of Chillingworth was only interrupted: it was not ended.

At the surrender of Arundel Castle to Waller, Chillingworth became a captive of the Parliamentary army, and, unable on account of sickness from the severe cold to go to London with the garrison, was taken to the Bishop's palace at Chichester. It was here that the dying man was subjected to the inquisition of Francis Cheynell, who doubtless in his bigotry was performing a conscientious office. Cheynell is a typical figure of the party then ascendant, "a rigid, zealous Presbyterian, exactly orthodox, very unwilling that any should be suffered to go to heaven but in the right way." He was a member of the Westminster Assembly, and author of a book entitled, "The Rise, Growth and Danger of Socinianism, together with a plain discovery of a desperate design of corrupting the Protestant Religion, whereby it appears that the Religion which hath been so violently contended for by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his adherents is not the true, pure Protestant Religion, but an Hotchpotch of Arminianism, Socinianism and Popery." Cheynell set himself to correct what he considered the heresies of the dying man. The absolute cruelty of his interviews might be considered highly colored, were he not himself the reporter. "When I found him pretty hearty one day, I desired him to tell me whether he conceived that a man living and dying a Turk, Papist, or Socinian could be saved. All the

answer I could gain from him was that he did not absolve them and would not condemn." The dying man besought an interest in the charity of his disputant, for, said he, "I was ever a charitable man."

My answer was somewhat tart, and therefore more charitable, considering his condition and the counsel of the apostle, Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. And I desire not to conceal my tartness. It was to this effect. Sir, it is confessed that you have been very excessive in your charity. You have lavished so much charity upon Turks, Socinians, Papists, that I am afraid you have very little to spare for a truly reformed Protestant.

Nothing, perhaps, shows the true charity of Chillingworth in more beautiful light than an incident told by Cheynell himself among these reminiscences. "I told him that I did use to pray for him in private, and asked him whether it was his desire that I should pray for him in public. He answered, 'Yes, with all my heart'; and he said withal that he hoped he should fare the better for my prayers." Here one sees Chillingworth at the depths of his tender charity and graciousness: and Cheynell, too, at his best.

Chillingworth died at Chichester in January of 1644. Standing by his open grave, Cheynell sought to bury his book with his body in the following words:

If they please to undertake the burial of his corpse, I shall undertake to bury his errors, which are published in this so much admired yet unworthy book: and happy would it be for the kingdom, if this book and all its fellows could be so buried. Get thee gone, thou cursed book, which has seduced so many precious

souls! Get thee gone, thou corrupt, rotten book! Earth to earth, and dust to dust! Get thee gone into the place of rottenness, that thou mayest rot with thy author, and see corruption.

But Cheynell could not bury Chillingworth. His work was to survive and assert its power in better days, and the name of Cheynell would hardly have been preserved except for his connection with the man whom he sentenced to forgetfulness.

II

"The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way of Salvation" contains a genuine and refreshing Protestantism. Chillingworth has the courage to stand on Protestantism's logical ground. In answer to the Roman argument that truth must have an infallible interpreter, because otherwise every individual is given over to his own "wit and discourse," Chillingworth asserts the trustworthiness of one's own wit and discourse, of "right reason grounded on divine revelation and common notions written by God in the hearts of all men." Reason is in some sort God's word. To the objection that reliance upon one's own reason is liable to lead to error, he frankly replies that infallibility in every direction is not required.

> But this I am sure of, as sure as that God is good, that he will require no impossibilities of us: not an infallible, nor a certainly unerring belief, unless he hath given us certain means to avoid error; and if we use those which we have, he will never require of us that we use that which we have not.

Intellectual errors of conscientious truth-seekers are possible, but are not dangerous. Personal responsibility is so precious that it is to be maintained at the expense of possible error: this is Chillingworth's brave and truly Protestant position.

Personal responsibility involves also variations of creed, and these are not to be feared. "That may be fundamental and necessary to one, which to another is not so." There are worse things than divisions of opinion. "If all men would submit themselves to the chief mufti of the Turks, it is apparent there would be no divisions; yet unity is not to be purchased at so dear a rate." "Christians have and shall have means sufficient (though not always effectual) to determine, not all controversies, but all necessary to be determined. There are some controversies which will end when the world ends, and that is time enough."

The necessary result of such views is toleration. Conscientious men may differ, and are therefore to respect each other.

> And therefore, though we wish heartily that all controversies were ended, as we do that all sin were abolished, yet have we little hopes of the one or the other until the world be ended; and in the meantime think it best to content ourselves with, and to persuade others unto, an unity of charity and mutual toleration; seeing God hath authorized no man to force all men to unity of opinion.

Toleration is required by the very essence of Protestantism, and while too often it has not appeared, it is refreshing to behold it in such large measure in one of the earliest Protestant controversialists.

The heart of Chillingworth's book is the definition of the place of the Bible in Christianity. Protestantism was fortunate in having at the outset its attitude toward the Bible so clearly and satisfactorily stated. The Roman position is familiar—that the Bible needs an interpreter in order that its saving truth may be certainly known, and in order that disputes as to its meaning may be avoided. The Romanist, with apparent ground, pointed to the widely varying interpretations of disputing Protestants as evidence of the necessity of an infallible interpreter. How luminous is Chillingworth's reply!

> All things necessary to salvation are *evidently* contained in Scripture, there being no more certain sign that a point is not evident than that honest men differ about it. Those truths are fundamental which are evidently delivered in Scripture, those not fundamental which are obscure. Nothing that is obscure can be necessary to be understood.

Truths which are necessary to salvation are evident; truths which are obscure are by their very obscurity proved to be unnecessary. Here are the flashes of truth, which, like lightning, struck the Roman doctrine at its core, and cleared the atmosphere. The whole controversy is compressed into a single sentence: "The difference between a Papist and a Protestant is this, that the one judges his guide to be infallible, the other his way to be manifest." Faith in the divineness of the Bible is established not by external authority, but by internal evidence. The Scriptures shine with their own inherent light, one believes in them as he believes in the

sunshine. Chillingworth was far from being a Bibliolater. Belief, not in a theory about the Bible, but in its subject-matter, is the all-important thing.

If a man should believe Christian religion wholly and entirely, and live according to it, such a man, though he should not know or not believe the Scripture to be a rule of faith, no, nor to be the word of God, my opinion is, he may be saved; and my reason is, because he performs the entire condition of the new covenant, which is, that we believe the matter of the Gospel, and not that it is contained in these or these books. So that the books of Scripture are not so much the objects of our faith as the instruments of conveying it to our understanding.

These are certainly notable words. It is difficult to repress enthusiasm as we read Chillingworth's climax, it is so lucid, luminous, and liberal.

By the religion of Protestants, I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melanchthon; nor the confession of Augusta or Geneva, nor the catechism of Heidelberg, nor the Articles of the Church of England; no, nor the harmony of Protestant confessions; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony as a perfect rule of their faith and actions—that is, the Bible. The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants! . . . I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore that men ought not to require any more of any man than this, to believe the Scriptures to be God's word, to endeavor to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it.

Chillingworth's advocacy of Christian unity is so remarkable that it is difficult to realize that it comes from the seventeenth century: a difficulty which plainly

shows that in our current views we have ascribed to that century too great a narrowness. Let the century have the credit of Chillingworth and his catholicity! We hear him insisting quite in the modern spirit that the way to heaven is no narrower now than Christ left it, that His yoke is no heavier than He made it. He thinks that strife among Christians would soon end, "if, instead of being zealous Papists, earnest Calvinists, rigid Lutherans, they would become themselves, and be content that others should be, plain and honest Christians." "The greatest schismatics are those who make the way to heaven narrower, the yoke of Christ heavier, the differences of faith greater, the conditions of ecclesiastical communion harder and stricter than they were made at the beginning by Christ and his Apostles." "Christians must be taught to set a higher value upon these high points of faith and obedience wherein they agree than upon these matters of less moment wherein they differ; and understand that agreement in those ought to be more effectual to join them in one communion, than their difference in other things of less moment to divide them."

The finest passage in the whole book is perhaps this, in which Chillingworth rises above the plane of calm lucidity into that of holy zeal:

> This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit that we can speak the things of God better than in the words of God;

this deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and the Apostles left them, is and hath been the only fountain of all the schisms of the church, the common incendiary of Christendom. Take away these walls of separation, and all will be quickly one. Take away this persecuting, burning, damning of men for not subscribing to the words of men as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but Him only; let these leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it, and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions. In a word, take away tyranny, which is the devil's instrument to support errors and superstitions and impieties in the several parts of the world, which could not otherwise long withstand the power of truth; I say, take away tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only; and as rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may well be hoped, by God's blessing, that universal liberty, thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity. These thoughts of peace (I am persuaded) may come from the God of peace, and to His blessing I commend them.

The words sound indeed like an inspiration.

So did this man, who lived in the heat of conflict, who sought refuge in the royal camp, who died the captive of the Puritan army, rise to a plane in which all differences between Anglican, Puritan and Romanist disappeared, the prophet of a larger spirit to come.

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE

1609–1683

I

As in Hales, Chillingworth and Falkland we have glimpses into the Oxford of their time, so in another group of like spirit we are introduced to the Cambridge of the seventeenth century. A distinguished company it was that congregated in the Cambridge of 1630, for in that year one might have met there within a single day John Milton, Thomas Fuller, Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, Jeremy Taylor and Benjamin Whichcote, and all with their talents still in the green blade, a spring-time indeed. Before the harvest the field was to be devastated by the flames of war, but a harvest still there was, for the plants were sturdy and able to adapt themselves to severe conditions. The partisanship which crowds out all foreign growths, or is itself choked by them, was no part of their spirit. They were sound wheat, but could grow together with the tares.

Benjamin Whichcote was entered at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1626 at the age of seventeen. He

had as tutor Anthony Tuckney, whose teaching stimulated him by reaction rather than assent. In 1634 Whichcote was himself appointed college tutor, and soon became famous for the number, rank and character of his pupils, John Smith among them, destined even to surpass his master. In the "Life of Joseph Mede," a contemporary, is a sketch of the tutorial system at its best in the Cambridge of the time.

After he had by daily lectures well grounded his pupils in Humanity, Logic and Philosophy, and by frequent conversation understood to what particular studies their parts might be most profitably applied, he gave them his advice accordingly; and when they were able to go alone, he chose rather to set every one his daily task than constantly to confine himself and them to precise hours for lectures. In the evening they all came to his chamber, to satisfy him that they had performed the task he had set them. The first question which he used then to propound to every one in his order was "*Quid dubitas?*" (for he supposed that to doubt nothing and to understand nothing were verifiable alike). Their doubts being propounded, he resolved their queries, and so set them on clear ground to proceed more distinctly; and then, having by prayer commended them and their studies to God's protection and blessing, he dismissed them to their lodgings.

The Cambridge tutors were thus guide, philosopher and friend to their pupils, and had special influence over their religious opinions. It is said that the younger Pitt, a century and a half later, was rarely out of his tutor's company. Anxious parents unburdened their hearts to their sons' tutors. When Nicholas Ferrar's tutor commended his self-denial, Ferrar reminded him

of the lives of holy men which he had read at the tutor's suggestion. Such an office Whichcote magnified. "Being disgusted," says Burnet in his "History of His Own Time," "with the dry, systematical way of those times, he studied to raise those who conversed with him to a noble set of thoughts and to consider religion as a seed of a deiform nature (to use one of his own phrases): in order to this he set young students much on reading the ancient philosophers, chiefly Plato, Tully and Plotin, and on considering the Christian religion as a doctrine sent from God, both to elevate and sweeten human nature, in which he was a great example, as well as a wise and kind instructor." Here at its source is the movement which was to be known as Cambridge Platonism.

As a tutor, however, Whichcote had less influence than as a preacher. In 1636 he was ordained and appointed Sunday afternoon lecturer at Trinity College, a position which he filled with distinction for nearly twenty years. His discourses during this period in this pulpit constituted a large part of his life work. It was his aim, says Tulloch, "to turn men's minds away from polemical argumentation to the great moral and spiritual realities lying at the base of all religion—from the 'forms of words', as he himself says, to the 'inwards of things' and the reason of them." Tillotson thus estimates the influence of his university sermons, "Every Lord's Day in the afternoon for almost twenty years together he preached in Trinity Church, where he had a great number not only of the young scholars,

but of those of greater standing and best repute for learning in the university, his constant and attentive auditors: and in those wild and unsettled times contributed more to the forming of the students of that university to a sober sense of religion than any man in that age." While, then, Chillingworth was writing the "Religion of Protestants" in the Oxford atmosphere of Great Tew, and Hales at the university was aiding him with his paper on "Schism and Schismatics," Whichcote as preacher and tutor was inspiring Cambridge students with the same ample spirit.

In the maelstrom of the Civil War, Whichcote was still able to swim. The university by no means escaped the general confusion, for Cambridge became a garrison for Cromwell's troops, libraries were rifled, chapels were abused, and a stately university was converted into soldiers' barracks. The "*Querela Cantabrigiensis*" complains in hysterical note:

> The Knipperdollings of the age reduced a glorious and renowned University almost to a mere Münster; and did more in less than three years than the apostate Julian could effect in all his reign, viz.: broke the heart-strings of learning and all learned men, and thereby luxated all the joints of Christianity in the kingdom, insomuch that they feared not to appeal to any impartial judge, whether, if the Goths and Vandals, or even the Turks themselves, had overrun this nation, they would have more inhumanly abused a flourishing University than these pretended advancers of religion had done; having, as the complaint is continued, thrust out one of the eyes of this kingdom; made eloquence dumb; philosophy sottish; widowed the arts; drove the muses from their

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE

habitation; plucked the reverend and orthodox professors out of the chairs, and silenced them in prison or their graves: turned religion into rebellion; changed the apostolical chair into a desk for blasphemy; tore the garland from off the head of learning, to place it on the dull brows of disloyal ignorance; made those ancient and beautiful chapels, the sweet remembrancers and monuments of our forefathers' charity, and kind fomentors of their children's devotion, to become ruinous heaps of dust and stones; and unhived those swarms of labouring bees which used to drop honey dews over all this kingdom, to place in their room swarms of senseless drones.

But Whichcote still survived, and even prospered In 1644 he was appointed Provost of King's College in place of the learned Dr. Samuel Collins, ejected as obnoxious to the reigning Puritanism. Whichcote reluctantly supplanted him, but insisted that Dr. Collins should still receive half the income of the office, and in his will bequeathed a hundred pounds to John Collins, his son. Whichcote maintained his position under Puritan domination, but without sacrifice of principle, for he refused himself to take the Covenant, and "prevailed to have the greatest part of the fellows of King's College exempted from that imposition and preserved in their places." As Provost he had the salaries of ejected professors paid in full to the end of the year of their ejection. The spectacle of such independence surviving such a storm of partisanship is remarkable. Whichcote had a stouter heart than Hales or Chillingworth, who were disabled by the violence of the times. Under Puritan domination he maintained

both his independence and his position, and was sympathetic toward the persecuted. "So that I hope," says Tillotson, "none will be hard upon him, that he was contented upon such terms to be in a capacity to do good in bad times." He belonged to that group of rare men, who, according to Bishop Burnet, "declared against superstition on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other. They loved the constitution of the church and the liturgy, and could well live under them: but they did not think it unlawful to live under another form. They wished that things might have been carried with more moderation. And they continued to keep a good correspondence with those who had differed from them in opinion, and allowed a great freedom both in philosophy and in divinity: from whence they were called men of latitude. And upon this, men of narrower thoughts and fiercer tempers fastened upon them the name of Latitudinarians."

In 1649 Whichcote was presented to the Rectory of Milton in Cambridgeshire, which he held till his death. In the following year he became Vice-Chancellor of the university. In 1655 Cromwell invited his advice in the matter of toleration toward the Jews. So steadily did he proceed in evil times.

At the Restoration, Whichcote was ejected from the Provostship, but on compliance with the Act of Uniformity in 1662 was restored to court favor. With the reversal of conditions, in the restoration of royalty and Anglicanism, Whichcote's influence still persisted. He was above partisanship, and untouched by its changing

fortunes. In 1662 he was appointed curate of Saint Anne's, Blackfriars, London, but on the burning of the church in the great fire of 1665, retired to his living at Milton, where he "preached constantly, relieved the poor, had their children taught to read at his own charge, and made up differences among the neighbors," gracious occupation indeed for one who knew how to be abased as well as to abound. Whichcote had a plentiful estate, and like Hales and Chillingworth was frugal in personal expenditures, but lavish in benevolence. He particularly directed his charities toward the aid of poor housekeepers disabled by age or sickness. On the appointment of his friend John Wilkins to the Bishopric of Chester in 1668, he became in his place vicar of Saint Lawrence Jewry. During seven years, while the church was being rebuilt, he preached regularly at Guildhall Chapel before the mayor and corporation of the city.

For nearly fifty years, and under three civil régimes, this remarkable man preached without molestation. He was silenced neither by the Puritans and army in the day of their power, nor by the Anglicans and King in the day of theirs. His light shone steady, while others were flickering and snuffed. While on a visit in the house of his old friend Dr. Cudworth at Cambridge, he died in 1683. "And God knows," feelingly exclaims a friend, "we could very ill at this time have spared such a man, and have lost from among us as it were so much balm for the healing of the nation, which is now so miserably

rent and torn by these wounds which we madly give ourselves."

Bishop Tillotson in his funeral sermon gives sketches of Whichcote's character and manners, which in part explain his power to survive the revolutions through which he passed.

His conversation was exceeding kind and affable, grave and winning, prudent and profitable. He was slow in declaring his opinions, never passionate, he heard others patiently, was ready to be convinced, willing to learn to the last, and never had his opinions set. He was wont to say "If I provoke a man, he is the worse for my company: and if I suffer myself to be provoked by him, I shall be the worse for his." He very seldom reproved any person in company otherwise than by silence or some sign of uneasiness, or some very soft and gentle word, which yet from the respect men generally bore him. did often prove effectual. For he understood human nature very well, and how to apply himself to it in the most easy and effectual ways. Particularly he excelled in the virtues of conversation, humanity and gentleness and humility, a prudent and peaceable and reconciling temper.

In similar vein is Burnet's characterization:

Dr. Whichcote was a man of a rare temper, very mild and obliging. He had great credit with some that had been eminent in the late times, but made all the use he could of it, to protect good men of all persuasions. He was much for liberty of conscience.

Here was one who gave his goods to feed the poor, who had knowledge and faith, who spoke with the tongues of men and of angels, *and had charity.*

II

Four volumes of Whichcote's sermons give us an insight into the charm and power of his preaching. It is difficult to realize that the sermons are nearly three hundred years old.

It would be hard to find in our own time a more vigorous advocate of reason in religion, of a rational Christianity. Instead of making revelation and reason foes, after the fashion of his times, he insisted that they were friends. Truth is not foreign, but natural to the mind. "Truth is the soul's health and strength," is "akin to man's mind." "The mind makes no more resistance to truth than the air does to light; both are thereby beautified and adorned." "No sooner doth the truth of God come into the soul's sight, but the soul knows her to be her first and old acquaintance; which though they have been by some accident unhappily parted a great while, yet having now through the divine providence happily met, they greet one another and renew acquaintance as those that were first and ancient friends." With truth and man's mind in such correspondence, it is only an abnormal, unnatural state of mind that can separate them.

There is light enough of God in the world, if the eye of our minds were but fitted to receive it and let it in. It is the incapacity of the subject, where God is not: for nothing in the world is more knowable than God. God only is absent to them that are indisposed and disaffected. For a man cannot open his

eye, nor lend his ear, but everything will declare more or less of God. It is our fault that we are estranged from Him: for God doth not withdraw Himself from us, unless we first leave Him: the distance is occasioned through our unnatural use of ourselves.

Religion in this view is natural and vital to man. "The seat of religion is the inward man; it is the first sense of his soul, the temper of his mind, the pulse of his heart." "We are as capable of religion as we are of reason." Revelation and reason do not contradict each other, for "there is nothing of after-light of God in Christ reconciling subject to reproof of the former light of God creating." "Man is not at all settled or confirmed in his religion until his religion is the self-same with the reason of his mind; so that when he thinks he speaks reason, he speaks religion; or when he speaks religiously, he speaks reasonably; and his religion and reason are mingled together; they pass into one principle; they are no more two, but one; just as the light in the air makes one illuminated sphere, so reason and religion in the subject are one principle." "I receive the truth of Christian religion in a way of illumination, affection and choice: I retain it as a welcome guest; it is not forced into me, but I let it in." "The soul of man to God is as the flower to the sun; it opens at its approach, and shuts when it withdraws. . . . The good man is an instrument in tune: excite a good man, give him an occasion, you shall have from him savory speeches out of his mouth, and good actions in his life." In answer to the criticism that his preaching is too philosophical, he replies. "I have always found

in myself that such preaching of others hath most commanded my heart which hath most illuminated my head."

With this high appreciation of reason in religion is associated a profound respect for human nature as a whole, for "the grandeur of our being," in striking contrast with the prevailing views of human depravity. One characteristic aphorism deals with original sin, "Men are more what they are used to than what they are born to." In times when men were being disparaged as "worthless worms," it is refreshing to find estimates of another sort. "Nothing of the natural state is base or vile. . . . For our Saviour himself took flesh and blood, and that is the meaner part of human nature. . . . That which is vile, base, and filthy is unnatural, and depends upon unnatural use and degenerate practice." "There is nothing in the world hath more of God in it than man hath." "Have a reverence to thyself, for God is in thee!"

The trustworthiness of reason and the nobility of human nature point toward man's redemption through the use of "resident forces," stimulated by the divine grace. Two beautiful phrases express his theology of redemption; "A divine nature in us, a divine assistance over us." With those who saw only the vile in human nature, salvation of necessity became a heavenly transaction of a legal type, through which Christ's righteousness was imputed to the Christian in something of an artificial way. Whichcote's interest is in the human side of redemption; to him reconciliation with God is

not legal but vital, righteousness is not imputed but real, salvation is not a heavenly award but an earthly fact. It is not enough for Christ to do something for us with God, unless He does something for us with ourselves. "Christ doth not save us by only doing for us without us: yea, we come at that which Christ hath done for us with God by what He hath done for us within us." Christ is to be acknowledged as a principle of grace in us as well as an advocate for us. "They therefore deceive and flatter themselves extremely who think of reconciliation with God by means of a Saviour acting upon God in their behalf, and not also working in or upon them, to make them Godlike." "Some look at salvation as at a thing a distance from them: the benefit of some convenient place to be in; exemption from punishment; freedom from enemies abroad: but it is the mending of our natures, and the safety of our persons, our health and strength within ourselves." Christ is a principle of divine life within us, as well as a Saviour without us. It is not enough that Christ is sacrificed for us, unless Christ be formed in us. The beauty and inspiration of such a thoroughly vital Christianity over against the current legal type require no commendation. Such a Christianity is being preached far and wide to-day we welcome its appearance under the eaves of the Westminster Assembly. With all the set judicial phrases of the Westminster divines there were mingled in the preaching of the day the living sentences of Benjamin Whichcote, as fresh and full of meaning now as when first uttered—such sentences as these: "Re-

ligion is the introduction of the divine life into the soul of man," "Regeneration is nativity from above," "Had we a man that was really gospelized, were the Gospel a life, a soul, a spirit to him, he would be the most lovely, useful person under heaven." Over against the phrases of a formal theology are those fine expressions which Whichcote loved, "heartsease," "spirituality," "heavenly mindedness," "participation in the divine nature": and has conscience ever been given a name more beautiful than his name for it—the "Home-God"?

With Hales and Chillingworth, Whichcote was always advocating Christian unity in his words and in his life. This unity was a unity, not of opinion, but of spirit. Unity of opinion was not to be expected. Different tempers, constitutions of mind, environments, education and habitual modes of thought produce differences of opinion. "Some men's apprehensions cannot possibly hit in anything: they are, as it were, cast in different moulds; and they can no more help this than they can make their faces alike." "We may maintain the unity of verity in point of faith, and the unity of charity in point of communion, notwithstanding all difference in point of apprehension." The introduction to his sermon on Philippians iii : 15, 16 deals with this subject in a masterly way, and is a good example of Whichcote's lucid exegesis:

1. There is that in religion which is necessary and determined, fixt and immutable, clear and perspicuous; about which good men, they who are of growth and proficiency in religion, do not differ. "As many as are perfect are thus minded."

2. There is also in religion that which is not so necessary and immutable, clear and plain, in which good men may happen to be otherwise minded one than another; or otherwise than ought to be. "If any be otherwise minded."

3. There is reason to think that God will bring out of particular mistake him that is right in the main. "God shall reveal even this unto you."

4. They who agree in the main, but differ in other particulars, ought nevertheless to hold together as if they were in all things agreed. "To walk by the same rule, to mind the same things."

There may be even a positive advantage in minor differences.

Why should not they who meet in the regenerate nature, who agree in the great articles of faith and principles of good life, overlook subordinate differences? If there be love and good-will, we come to be more rational, better grounded in our resolutions, from our different apprehensions. Discourse is as soon ended as begun where all say the same; whereas he that speaks after, and says a new thing, searcheth the former.

The closing words of the sermon must be added; it is difficult to believe that they belong to the seventeenth century:

Give a fair allowance of patience to those who mean well; be ready to shew them, since there is ground of expectation that in a little time they will come out of their error. . . . Nothing is desperate in the condition of good men; they will not live and die in any dangerous error. They have a right principle within them, and God's superintendency, conduct and guidance. The devil is thrown out of his stronghold where there is holiness of heart; and being dispossessed of his main fort he will lose all his

holds, one after another; all errors and mistakes will be discovered successively. The sun, having broken through the thickest cloud, will after that scatter the less; and the day will clear up.

With differences of opinion thus frankly acknowledged and not altogether deplored, Christians are to unite in spirit, for religion demands unity. "Religion is a bond of union between God and man, and between man and man; and therefore cannot be an occasion of distance or separation." "If it be a difference concerning religion, it must be so upon account of religion; and religion requires concord. We cannot pretend to do that for religion itself, which is unnatural to religion, which is contrary to religion, and which religion forbids."

In his correspondence with Tuckney, Whichcote gave a splendid example of his principles in practice. Tuckney, who had been one of his tutors in Cambridge, wrote him a letter remonstrating with him for his views from the Puritan stand-point. To Tuckney's mind his preaching was too philosophical, being addressed to the mind and understanding rather than to the heart and will. The emphasis on inherent righteousness, he feared, was clouding the divine side of redemption. The difference of opinion between the two men was great, but throughout their controversial letters there breathes a spirit of personal regard and affection too deep for any debate to disturb. Tuckney beseeches God that "both you and I may be kept in the faith, and may follow the truth in love," and the prayer was answered. The eight letters which passed between

these Christian gentlemen of the seventeenth century deserve wider recognition. They sweeten the history of theology. "I aver that it is everybody's right to be fairly used and handsomely treated," was one of Whichcote's maxims, and in this correspondence he practised what he preached. Irreconcilable as their intellectual positions were, the men remained friends, and it is pleasant to know that a few years after their controversy Whichcote joined with the six other electors in raising Tuckney to the Divinity Professorship. Whichcote's quotation from a great schoolman ought to be added to his own words on Christian unity, as showing the atmosphere in which he differed from others: "For men to differ about matters of particular persuasion and opinion, it is not inconsistent with that imperfect state which we are in, while in the way to heaven; when we come thither, we shall be consummated, and more fully harmonize: but to differ in opinion is not repugnant to peace in the way, though the difference shall be taken away when we come home."

We are fortunate in having preserved to us the prayer with which this noble preacher usually opened the service of worship. A few selections from it give a beautiful summary of his theology, with all its faith in the grandeur of human nature and the reality of the indwelling divine life:

O naturalize us to heaven! May we bear the image of Christ's resurrection by spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. O Lord, communicate thy light to our minds, thy life to our souls: as thou art original to us by thy creation of us, so be thou also final by

our intention of thee. Go over the workmanship of thy creation in us again: to mend all the defects we have contracted, and to destroy out of us, by the working of thy grace and spirit, whatsoever we have acquired unnatural to thy creation of us. Transform us into the image of thy Son, conform us to His likeness, make us body and soul an habitation for thyself by thy Holy Spirit.

JOHN SMITH

JOHN SMITH

1618–1652

I

JOHN SMITH was born in Achurch near Oundle in Northamptonshire in 1618 of parents who were aged and had been long childless. "I shall speak nothing of his earthly parentage save only this," says Simon Patrick, the preacher at his funeral, "that he was like to John the Baptist, the last Elias, in that he was born after his parents had been long childless and were grown aged. Some have observed that such have proved very famous; for they seem to be sent on purpose by God into the world to do good, and to be scarce begotten by their parents. Such are something like Isaac, who had a great blessing in him, and seem to be intended by God for some great service and work in the world."

To Cambridge, the Cambridge of Whichcote, Smith came in 1636, being entered at Emmanuel College, taking his Bachelor's degree in 1640 and his Master's in 1644. Whichcote early discovered the abilities and promise of the young student, whom he

bounteously aided from his own resources, perhaps his most fruitful benefaction. Worthington writes of this period:

> I considered him as a friend, one whom I knew for many years, not only when he was Fellow of Queen's College, but when a student in Emmanuel College, where his early piety, and the remembering of his Creator in those days of his youth, as also his excellent improvements in the choicest parts of learning, endeared him to many, particularly to his careful tutor, then Fellow of Emmanuel College, afterwards Provost of King's College, Dr. Whichcote; to whom, for his directions and encouragements of him in his studies, his seasonable provision for his support and maintenance when he was a young scholar, as also upon other obliging considerations, our author did ever express a great and singular regard.

In 1644, with seven other members of Emmanuel, Smith was transferred to Queen's College, "they having bine examined and approved by the Assembly of Divines sitting in Westminster as fitt to be fellowes." Although thus acceptable to the Westminster Assembly, Smith was far from being Puritan or Calvinistic. It is to the credit of the Assembly that it tolerated Whichcote and Smith, as it is to their credit that they could preach with independence and at such variance from the Westminster theology, without becoming obnoxious. As fellow and tutor Smith did eminent service at Queen's College. "He was read in law and physic, well versed in history, philosophy and mathematics, and critically skilled in the learned languages." His lectures on mathematics were especially commended by contemporaries. His ac-

complishments were varied, but it was as a preacher that his greatest influence was felt. Simon Patrick, whose funeral sermon with Worthington's preface to the "Discourses" constitutes almost our entire source of information, refers to "his great industry and indefatigable pains, his Herculean labors day and night from his first coming to the university till the time of his long sickness." Hard study combined with much meditation and abstraction of the mind from sensible things served to unite in Smith's wisdom the subjective and objective. He was not a book worm, but "a living library," a "walking study," and communicated his knowledge with the charm of a rare conversationalist. Patrick gratefully alludes to the benefits received from intercourse with him:

I never got so much good among all my books by a whole day's plodding in a study, as by an hour's discourse I have got with him. For he was not a library locked up, nor a book clasped, but stood open for any to converse withal that had a mind to learn. Yea, he was a fountain running over, labouring to do good to those who perhaps had no mind to receive it. None more free and communicative than he was to such as desired to discourse with him; nor would he grudge to be taken off from his studies upon such an occasion. It may be truly said of him, that a man might always come better from him; and his mouth could drop sentences as easily as an ordinary man's could speak sense. And he was no less happy in expressing his mind than in conceiving. . . . He had such a *copia verborum*, a plenty of words, and those so full, pregnant and significant, joined with such an active fancy, as is very rarely to be found in the company of such a deep understanding and judgment as dwelt in him.

With his rare abilities, Smith was not ambitious of preferment.

From his first admission into the University, he sought not great things for himself, but was contented in the condition wherein he was. He made not haste to rise and climb, as youths are apt to do, which we in these late times too much experience, wherein youths scarce fledged have soared to the highest preferments, but proceeded leisurely by orderly steps, not to what he could get, but to what he was fit to undertake. He staid God's time of advancement, with all industry and pains following his studies; as if he rather desired to deserve honour than to be honoured.

Profound scholarship and intellectuality did not quell in Smith evangelistic fervor. Patrick informs us that "he was resolved very much to lay aside other studies, and to travel in the salvation of men's souls, after whose good he most ardently thirsted." When preaching in country churches, as at his native place, he adapted his expression, Worthington says, to vulgar capacities, and desired to be understood rather than wondered at for ostentatious exhibitions of learning: and before a university audience his style was no less suitable.

Although of a temper "naturally hot and choleric," betrayed at times in a sudden flushing of the face, Smith had no sympathy with the violent animosities of his times.

He was far from that spirit of devouring zeal that now too much rages. He would rather have been consumed in the service of men, than have called for fire down from heaven, as Elijah did, to consume them. And therefore though Elijah excelled

him in this, that he ascended up to heaven in a fiery chariot; yet herein I may say he was above the spirit of Elijah, that he called for no fire to descend from heaven upon men, but the fire of divine love that might burn up all their hatreds, roughness and cruelty to each other. . . . If he was at any time moved unto anger, it was but a sudden flushing in his face, and it did as soon vanish as arise; and it used to arise upon no such occasions as I now speak of. No, whensoever he looked upon the fierce and consuming fires that were in men's souls, it made him sad, not angry; and it was his constant endeavour to inspire men's souls with more benign and kindly heats, that they might warm, but not scorch their brethren. And from this spirit, together with the rest of Christian graces that were in him, there did result a great serenity, quiet, and tranquillity in his soul, which dwelt so much above, that it was not shaken with any of those tempests and storms which use to unsettle low and abject minds. He lived in a continued sweet enjoyment of God.

After a tedious illness, patiently borne, Smith died of consumption in 1652 at the age of thirty-five. No wonder that his friend's sermon at his funeral seems punctuated with sobs, in which through many quotations from Greek, Latin and Hebrew and not a little scholastic exegesis in the manner of the time we feel a heart beating with genuine affection and grief.

It pleased the only wise God, in whose hand our breath is, to call for him home to the spirits of just men made perfect, after He had lent him to this unworthy world for about five and thirty years. A short life it was, if we measure it by so many years; but if we consider the great ends of life, his life was not to be accounted short, but long. "Honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that which is measured by

number of years: but wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age."

II

The "Select Discourses" were edited by Worthington and published in 1660. In the midst of an arid desert of dogmatic controversy and definition, these discourses are as "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." A pity it is that so few who traverse the desert turn aside to the well: but it is there!

One of the marked features of present Christian thinking is the refreshing and new expression which it is finding in the revival of the Greek theology over against the Latin: and of this movement John Smith was a notable forerunner. Theology has descended through the Latin branch of the church and in some directions had become so Latinized, Augustinized, and Calvinized, that it was in sore need of being re-Christianized. It is just this that Smith did nearly three centuries ago; correcting the Latin theology of his time with the Greek thought with which he was imbued, he re-Christianized Christian truth in living ways. His theology did not come to him by way of Augustine and Calvin. Plotinus and the neo-Platonists were being studied much at Cambridge in his day and they helped him to understand Christ and Paul. It is interesting to know that at the very time when the Westminster Assembly was casting Augustine's and Calvin's Latin theology into iron moulds, the hardness and chill of which are still felt, there was a young man at Cam-

bridge, with the seal of the Assembly's approval upon his teaching, discussing Christ's and Paul's theology in all the sunny warmth and cheer and illumination and vitality of the Greek point of view. It is sunshine in the midst of icebergs.

At almost every point the teaching of Smith differs from the prevailing theology of his time, but it differs without being controversial. The great themes are God in His World, the Divine Immanence; God in Man, the Kinship of the Divine and Human; God in Christ, the Incarnation; and God Himself, "the Altogether Lovely": and all these themes are treated in a way impossible to the current theology of the time, which would not even have proposed them. They are the themes of present-day preaching. Smith was two hundred and fifty years ahead of his time.

Calvinism was teaching the august transcendence of the sovereign God, ruling the world from afar, from His eternal throne in the distant heavens. The divine activity in the world was regarded as only occasional: the earth was a desert drear. Very different from this was Smith's view. To him God was not far off, but everywhere present, the soul of all things: and the world was not a vile, cast-away product, proved a failure, but a holy place, hallowed by the abiding presence and power of the Divine.

> He did not make the world and then throw it away from Himself without any further attention to it; for He is that omnipresent life that penetrates all things. . . . The world is in God, rather than God in the world.

A soul that is truly Godlike cannot but everywhere behold itself in the midst of that glorious unbounded Being, who is indivisibly everywhere. A good man finds every place he treads upon holy ground; to him the world is God's temple; he is ready to say with Jacob, "How dreadful is this place, this is none other but the house of God!"

[In their converse with this lower world good men] find God many times secretly flowing into their souls, and leading them silently out of the court of the temple into the holy place. Religion spiritualizes this outward creation. We should love all things in God, and God in all things, because He is all in all. [All created excellencies are] so many pure effluxes and emanations from God, and in a particular being a good man loves the universal goodness. Thus may a good man walk up and down the world as in a garden of spices, and suck a divine sweetness out of every flower.

Does any modern theologian speak more beautifully of the Divine Immanence?

If Smith's appreciation of the beauty and divineness of nature differs refreshingly from the common view of his contemporaries, still more does his appreciation of the nobility and divineness of humanity. God is in the world, and still more is God in men. The Latin theology had set a great gulf between God and man, as well as between God and His world: to Smith the divine and human are closely akin. There is a divine impress on human souls:

God hath stamped a copy of his own archetypal loveliness upon the soul, that man by reflecting into himself might behold there the glory of God.

Our own souls are the fairest images of the Deity itself, God

having so copied forth Himself into the whole life and energy of man's soul, as that the lovely characters of Divinity may be most easily seen and read of all men within themselves; as they say Phidias, after he had made the statue of Minerva impressed his own image so deeply in her buckler, that no one could destroy it without destroying the whole statue. And if we would know what the impress of souls is, it is nothing but God Himself, who could not write His own image so as that it might be read, but only in rational natures. Whenever we look upon our own soul in a right manner, we shall find an Urim and Thummim there.

In times when human nature was being disparaged and vilified, it is reassuring to hear a voice proclaiming "a law embosomed in the souls of men, which ties them again to their Creator," a law of nature, "which indeed is nothing else but a paraphrase upon the nature of God, as it copies forth itself in the soul of man." How different such an appreciation of human nature sounds from the prevailing note of the time, "What worthless worms are we!"

The divine and human being thus akin, God may freely communicate himself to man, and man may blessedly participate in the divine life. The highest glory of God is communication of Himself to man, the highest glory of man participation in the life of God. "Faith is that which unites men more and more to the centre of life and love." Here is a definition of faith quite different from that of the traditional phrase, amplified in such lovely sentences as these:

All true happiness consists in a participation of God, arising out of the assimilation of our souls to Him.

Enjoyment of God is an internal union, whereby a divine spirit informing our souls, sends the strength of a divine life through them.

The foundation of heaven and hell is laid in men's own souls.

The Gospel is set forth as a mighty efflux and emanation of life and spirit freely issuing forth from an omnipotent source of grace and love, as that true Godlike vital influence whereby the Divinity derives itself into the souls of men, enlivening and transforming them into its own likeness, and strongly imprinting upon them a copy of its own beauty and goodness. Briefly, it is that whereby God comes to dwell in us, and we in Him.

It is life that is communicated. "The divine life" is the one great and glorious phrase throughout.

True religion is an inward principle of life, of a divine life, the best life, that which is life most properly so called.

The Gospel is an internal manifestation of divine life upon men's souls, a vital and quickening thing, that internal form of righteousness that qualifies the soul for eternal life.

It is not so much a system of divinity, but the spirit and vital influx of it, spreading itself over all the powers of men's souls, and quickening them into a divine life; it is not so properly a doctrine that is wrapt up in ink and paper, as it is *vitalis scientia*, a living impression made upon the soul and spirit.

Religion is life and spirit, which flowing out from the source of all life, returns to Him again as into its original, carrying the souls of good men up with it.

It is only life that can feelingly converse with life.

In an age of much dogmatism, how refreshing is this insistence upon Christianity as an indwelling divine life, a communion of man's spirit with God's, an interpenetration of the human and divine! Such a living Chris-

tianity is far different from that "mechanics in religion," that "mimical Christianity," which apes the conventional experience. Smith gives his estimate of the current dogmatism:

There are some mechanical Christians that can frame and fashion out religion so cunningly in their own souls by that book skill they have got of it, that it may many times deceive themselves, as if it were a true living thing. Those Christians that fetch all their religion from pious books and discourses, hearing of such and such signs of grace and evidences of salvation, and being taught to believe they must get those, that so they may go to heaven, may presently begin to set themselves to work, and in an apish imitation cause their animal powers and passions to represent all these. . . a handsome artifice of religion, wherein those mechanics may much applaud themselves.

How different is this "mechanical Christianity" from "that true spirit of regeneration, which comes from heaven, and begets a divine life in the souls of good men"!

Such a living Christianity is the antipode likewise of a merely passive faith.

True religion does not consist in a mere passive capacity, in a sluggish kind of doing nothing, that so God Himself might do all; but it consists in life and power within. When God restores men to a new and divine life, He does not make them like so many dead instruments, stringing and fitting them, which yet are able to yield no sound of themselves, but He puts a living harmony within them.

Here is the note of a new song such as Watts could not sing.

Righteousness in this view is vital, not forensic. The theology of the time hardly got beyond the third chapter of Romans, with its legalistic interpretation. A Christian's justification was regarded as a formal transaction of a legal nature before a heavenly throne. Smith passed beyond the legal metaphors of Paul's dialectic into the high orthodoxy of Paul's ethical mysticism. He passed from the thought of Christ as a Mediator enthroned in heaven to the thought of Christ as "a divine principle" enthroned in holy souls, Christ living in us, "Christ in us, the hope of glory." Christianity is an indwelling of the divine life, for which the forensic acquittal, the pardon of sin, is only the preparation. Pardon is not the end, but only the beginning, which opens the way to the Christian's life in God, and the life of God in him, the life "hid with Christ in God."

A true gospel faith doth not only pursue an ambitious project of raising the soul immaturely to the condition of a darling favorite of heaven, while it is unripe for it, by procuring a mere empty pardon of sin; it desires not only to stand upon clear terms with heaven by procuring the crossing of all the debt-books of our sins there; but it rather pursues after an internal participation of the divine nature. A saving faith is not content to wait for salvation till the world to come. . . . no, but it is here perpetually gasping after it. It is that whereby we live in Christ, and whereby He lives in us.

Here is a faith that is not dogmatic and formal, but spiritual and living. Justification is not a legal fiction, but a vital fact. The divine judgment of everything is

according to the truth of the thing. God can delight only in his own image in men. There is no reconciliation between God and that which is utterly ungodly. A merely formal and abstract justification is of little service, the imagining that Christ is ours, while we find Him not living within us. Pardon and justification are of service only as they open the fountain of the divine grace and love and life, which our sins had closed against us. Pardon cannot be the end, for even if conscience be at peace, there is a restless longing in man for something larger than himself, a participation in the life of God. So did Whichcote's pupil develop his interpretation, and pierce to the heart of Paul's theology, instead of lingering in its metaphors. "Christ liveth in me," "Your life is hid with Christ in God," is there anything in Paul sweeter and deeper than this? And was the man who dwelt on such phrases less orthodox than his contemporaries, who absorbed in a legal terminology penetrated too little to the reality back of it which the terminology was only intended to express? Was he not rather more orthodox?

The divine life is experienced by "spiritual sensation." Spiritual things are more real than material things, and we may be surer of them than of the reports of our senses. There is a spiritual sense; we may "taste and see that the Lord is good." This spiritual sensation is active and clear only in the pure life, only the pure in heart may see God, and such may see Him here. Spiritual knowledge depends upon character, it rises not from speculation and syllogism, but from goodness.

The tree of knowledge grows beside the tree of life. We must have some likeness to God in order to see God. "Such as men themselves are, such will God Himself seem to be." Speculations are barren, unfolding the plicatures of truth's garment, but incapable of beholding truth's lovely face.

There is a knowing of the truth as it is in Jesus, as it is in a Christlike nature, as it is in that sweet, mild, humble and loving spirit of Jesus, which spreads itself like a morning sun upon the souls of good men, full of light and life. . . . There is an inward beauty, life, and loveliness in divine truth, which cannot be known but only when it is digested into life and practice. . . . Divine truth is better understood, as it unfolds itself in the purity of men's hearts and lives, than in all those subtle niceties into which curious wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, who is the great master of it, would not, while he was here on earth, draw it up into a system or body, nor would his disciples after him; he would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions and notions, as with true piety and a Godlike pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote a holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right belief.

The indwelling of the divine life and the vital consciousness of it give a divineness to the present and usher in heaven now. We are to seek not so much an assurance of heaven hereafter, as heaven itself here. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." We can never be well assured of heaven,

until we find it rising up within ourselves and glorifying our own

souls. When true assurance comes, heaven itself will appear upon the horizon of our souls, like a morning light, chasing away all our dark and gloomy doubtings before it. We shall not need then to light up our candles to seek for it in corners; no, it will display its own lustre and brightness so before us, that we may see it in its own light, and ourselves the true possessors of it.

The truest assurance of heaven rises from the consciousness of a heaven already within, as the mere animal life is mortified and there rises in its room a divine life, as a sure pledge of immortality and happiness.

He that beholds the Sun of righteousness arising upon the horizon of his soul with healing in its wings, such a one desires not now the star-light to know whether it be day or not; nor cares he to pry into heaven's secrets, there to see the whole plot of his salvation; for he views it transacted upon the inward stage of his own soul, and reflecting upon himself, he may behold a heaven opened from within, and a throne set up in his soul, and an almighty Saviour sitting upon it, and reigning within him: he now finds the kingdom of heaven within him, and sees that it is not a thing merely reserved for him without him, being already made partaker of the sweetness and efficacy of it.

To the conception of God in His world the Divine Immanence, and God in man, the kinship of the divine and human, must be added, the crown of all, the conception of God in Christ, the Incarnation. The incarnation is broader than the atonement, not only an atonement for sin, but also a revelation of the essential grandeur of humanity. Man needs more than pardon, and Christ does more than to effect pardon: He shows

what humanity was meant to be, God's ideal of humanity, and in the revelation there is "the bringing in of a better hope." Christlikeness is the divine programme for mankind. Not only his suffering and death but also his teaching and life are full of significance and power.

Here is one that partakes every way of human nature, in whom the Divinity magnifies itself and carries through this world in human infirmities and sufferings to eternal glory: a clear manifestation to the world that God had not cast off human nature, but had a real mind to exalt and dignify it again. The way into the holy of holies is laid as open as may be in Christ, in His doctrine, life and death: in all which we may see with open face what human nature may attain to.

In all these deeply spiritual teachings we are moving in an atmosphere far removed from the severity and gloom of Puritanism, which Smith seems to have in mind, as he writes,

Religion is no such austere, sour and rigid thing as to affright men away from it: no, but those that are acquainted with the power of it, find it to be altogether sweet and amiable. Religion is no sullen Stoicism, no sour Pharisaism; it does not consist in a few melancholy passions, in some dejected looks or depressions of mind: but it consists in freedom love, peace, life and power; the more it comes to be digested into our lives, the more sweet and lovely we shall find it to be. It is no wonder, when a defiled fancy comes to be the glass, if you have an unlovely reflection. Let us therefore labor to purge our own souls from all worldly pollutions; let us breathe after the aid and assistance of the divine spirit, that it may irradiate and enlighten our minds, that we may be able to see divine things in a divine light.

In times when the contemplation of God was melancholy and full of awe, in the thought of an offended Majesty, when the fear of God had a larger place in men's hearts than the love of God, John Smith was blessedly saying:

> While men walk in darkness and are of the night, then it is only that they are vexed with those ugly and ghastly shapes that terrify and torment them. But when once the day breaks, and true religion opens herself upon the soul like the eyelids of the morning, then all those shadows and frightful apparitions flee away. . . . There is no frightful terribleness in the supreme Majesty. Meditation of God is sweet, beyond and above all fears. God is love and loveliness.

Great as were the differences between Christian truth as Smith and as his contemporaries saw it, he never antagonized the current view, but was content to teach his own in all gentleness, trusting in the truth to displace error of itself. And such benignity appears not in times of peace, but in times of war, for the Civil War was raging during the whole period of Smith's teaching, not to mention the fierce conflict of ecclesiastical parties: and such benignity appears not in a man mellowed by years, but in a young man, who died at thirty-five.

Smith taught from the depths of his own experience: such living truth could come only from life. "He lived," said Patrick, "by faith in the Son of God; by it he came to be truly partaker of the righteousness of Christ, and had it wrought and formed in his very soul." His faith was of a kind that "brought down Christ into his soul; which drew down heaven into his heart. He

lived in a continued sweet enjoyment of God. There was so much divinity enshrined in this excellent man's soul, that it made everything about him to have a kind of sacredness in it, and will make his name to be always as a sweet odor unto us."

And the fragrance still abides.

HENRY MORE

HENRY MORE

1614–1687

I

HENRY MORE represents the quintessence of Cambridge Platonism. He lived so completely within that he seemed unconscious of the disturbances without, cloistered mid scenes of violence. "He was so busy in his chamber with his pen and lines as not to mind much the bustle and affairs of the world without." He knew nothing of the agonizing of Hales driven to cover by the storm, of Chillingworth dying a military captive, of Falkland in a frenzy of despair exposing himself to fatal fire. He did not even make the effort to adjust himself to changing conditions like Whichcote, but serenely ignored them. Retiring within, he lived in a great calm. His environment mattered little.

More was born at Grantham, the son of a gentleman of "fair estate and fortune." Like Whichcote, through ample means he was relieved of all sordid cares. His parents were strong Calvinists, and from his childhood were disturbed over the religious welfare of their son, who from his early years evinced a deep interest in spiritual things but quite apart from the Calvinistic

point of view. His uncle, to whose care he was committed during his school-days at Eton, threatened to flog him "for his immature forwardness in philosophizing concerning the mysteries of necessity and free will." His own words give the best picture of the precocious, abstracted school-boy:

I had so firm and unshaken a persuasion of the divine justice and goodness, that on a certain day in a ground belonging to Eton College, where the boys used to play and exercise themselves, musing concerning these things with myself, and recalling to my mind this doctrine of Calvin (Predestination), I did thus seriously and deliberately conclude within myself, viz.: If I am one of those that are predestinated unto hell, where all things are full of nothing but cursing and blasphemy, yet will I behave myself there patiently and submissively towards God, and if there be any one thing more than another that is acceptable to Him, that will I set myself to do with a sincere heart, and to the utmost of my power, being certainly persuaded, that if I thus demeaned myself, He would hardly keep me long in that place. Which meditation of mine is as firmly fixed in my memory, and the very place where I stood, as if the thing had been transacted but a day or two ago.

It was his custom, he says, to walk in the play-ground slowly, with his head on one side, kicking now and then the stones with his feet, and at times "with a sort of musical and melancholic murmur" humming to himself those lines of Claudian which question whether the world is under a divine providence or mere chance.

Yet that exceeding hail and entire sense of God, which nature herself had planted deeply in me, very easily silenced all such

slight and poetical dubitations as these. Yea, even in my first childhood an inward sense of the divine presence was so strong upon my mind, that I did then believe there could no deed, word or thought be hidden from Him. . . . Which thing, since no reason, philosophy or instruction taught it me at that age, but only an internal sensation urged it upon me, I think it is very evident that this was an innate sense or notion.

Here is a school-boy of whom strange things might be expected.

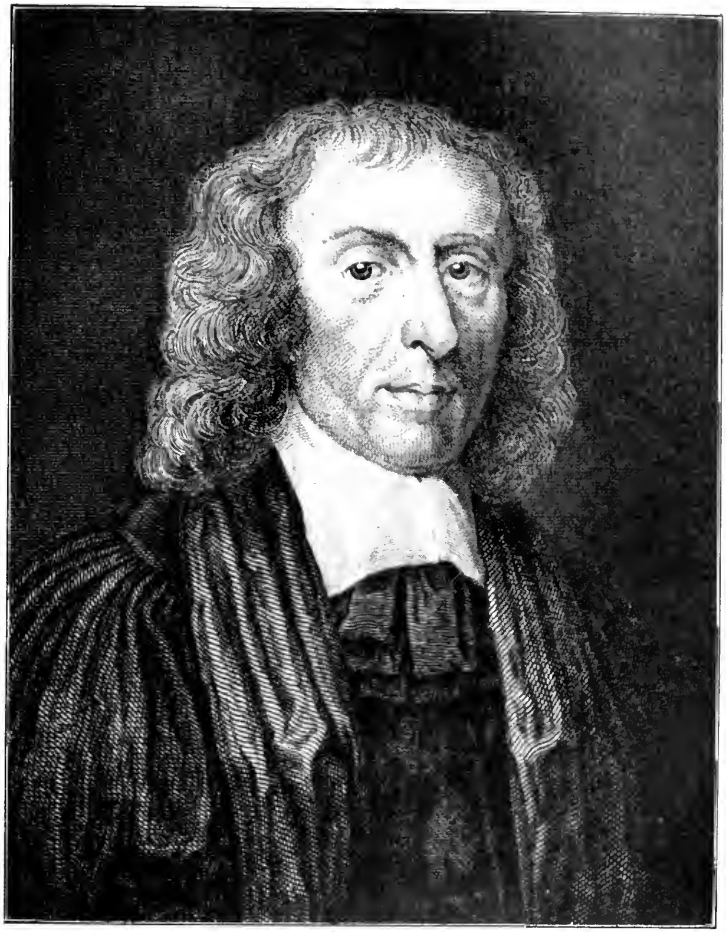
While his parents were distressed by their son's wandering from the familiar paths of Calvinism, they could not resist the unmistakable assurance of his deep spiritual peace and joy. His father came upon him unexpectedly among his books at Cambridge one day, and was so profoundly impressed by his look and whole manner as to declare that he "spent his time in an angelical way," truly a sympathetic appreciation: and sound Puritan that he was, he returned home to write him down for a handsome legacy in his will.

In 1631 More, "a tall thin youth of clear olive complexion and a rapt expression," entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where congenial company welcomed him in Whichcote, Mede, Smith and their friends. His tutor was William Chappell, "a person both learned and pious, and what I was not a little solicitous about, not at all a Calvinist: but a tutor most skilful and vigilant." In a conversation with Chappell, which reveals as in the case of Joseph Mede the spirit and influence of the tutorial system of the time, the attitude of the student appears, as he enters upon his university studies.

When my prudent and pious tutor observed my mind to be inflamed and carried with so eager and vehement a career, he asked me on a certain time, why I was so above measure intent upon my studies; that is to say, for what end I was so. Suspecting, as I suppose, that there was only at the bottom a certain itch, or hunt after vainglory; and to become by this means some famous philosopher amongst those of my own standing. But I answered briefly, and that from my very heart, "That I may know." "But, young man, what is the reason," saith he again, "that you so earnestly desire to know things?" To which I instantly returned, "I desire, I say, so earnestly to know, that I may know." For even at that time the knowledge of natural and divine things seemed to me the highest pleasure and felicity imaginable.

Thereupon More plunged into philosophy, studying Aristotle, Cardan, Julius Scaliger and others, but without finding those satisfactions for which he yearned, so that he took his degree of B.A. in 1635 with a sense of disappointment in his course. In 1639 he was chosen Fellow of Christ's College and took holy orders, although he refused to preach, from a conviction that he could do better service with his pen than with his voice. He would not have known, he says, what to have done in the world, if he could not have "preached at his fingers' ends."

Through philosophy More had failed to find satisfaction, and his disappointment in the results of knowledge led him to seek peace through a different channel, that mystic illumination which comes to the purified soul. The Platonic writers had turned his mind in this direction, but it was the little book that Luther loved,



HENRY MORE

the "Theologia Germanica," that awoke the response from his deepest self. Now he came to feel that truth is revealed not so much to the studious as to the sensitive and pure in heart.

It fell out truly very happily for me, that I suffered so great disappointment in my studies. For it made me seriously at last begin to think with myself, whether the knowledge of things was really that supreme felicity of man, or something greater and more divine was: or, supposing it to be so, whether it was to be acquired by such an eagerness and intentness in the reading of authors and contemplating of things, or by the purging of the mind from all sorts of vices whatsoever: especially having begun to read now the Platonic writers, Ficinus, Plotinus himself, Trismegistus, and the mystical divines, among whom there was frequent mention made of the purification of the soul, and of the purgative course that is previous to the illuminative, as if the person that expected to have his mind illuminated of God was to endeavor after the highest purity. But amongst all the writings of this kind there was none, to speak the truth, so pierced and affected me, as that golden little book, with which Luther is said to have been wonderfully taken, "Theologia Germanica". . . which sense (the sense of divine things) that truly golden book did not then first implant in my soul, but struck and roused it, as it were, out of sleep in me, which it did verily as in a moment or the twinkling of an eye.

The revelation of this new way to truth was followed by a mighty struggle between the "divine principle" and the "animal nature," the Pauline struggle between flesh and spirit. He must purge his soul, if he were to know and experience the truth. Knowledge no longer was the goal, but a more intimate converse with reality.

That insatiable desire and thirst of mine after the knowledge of things was wholly almost extinguished in me, as being solicitous now about nothing so much as a more full union with this divine and celestial principle, the inward flowing well-spring of life eternal. . . . But here openly to declare the thing as it was; when this inordinate desire after the knowledge of things was thus allayed in me, and I aspired after nothing but this sole purity and simplicity of mind, there shone in upon me daily a greater assurance than ever I could have expected, even of those things which before I had the greatest desire to know: insomuch that within a few years I was got into a most joyous and lucid state of mind, and such plainly as is ineffable.

The essence of his new way to blessedness is expressed in a single sentence: "God reserves his choicest secrets for the purest minds: it is uncleanness of spirit, not distance of place, that dissevers us from the Deity."

A sound body and perfect health saved More's mysticism from becoming pathological, and gave even to his highest flights of ecstasy a certain wholesomeness and exhilaration. He ascends into seventh heavens, but without becoming morbid or insane. At times his intensity seemed a blaze that would consume him himself and set those about him on fire, but like the "burning bush," which Moses saw, he was not consumed. More had a tall, thin, graceful figure, a spirited air, hazel eyes as vivid as an eagle's. He had luxurious tastes in dress and the air of a courtier. The portrait which has been preserved represents him in his later years with long hair falling over his shoulders, a slight moustache, a broad forehead, high and prominent cheek-

bones, a massive chin, cheeks firm and far from wasted. He looks the gentleman as well as the scholar, and in spite of his mysticism and otherworldliness gives no evidence of asceticism. His appearance is refined and wholesome. His body, he says, was "a well-strung instrument to his soul, that so they might be both in tune and make due music and harmony together." It "seemed built for a hundred years, if he did not over-debilitate it with his studies." He had a remarkable ability to sleep deeply, "a strange sort of narcotick power," and he arose refreshed. "When yet early in the morning he was wont to wake usually into an immediate unexpressible life and vigor, with all his thoughts and notions raying (as I may so speak) about him, as beams surrounding the centre from whence they all proceed." Every morning there was a sunrise in his soul and the dawning of a fresh day.

Union with the central life, "joining centres with God," lifted him into ecstasies, made him supernatural, set him striding among the stars.

> How lovely, how magnificent a state is the soul of man in, when the life of God inactuating her, shoots her along with Himself through heaven and earth; makes her unite with, and after a sort feel herself animate the whole world. This is to become deiform, to be thus suspended (not by imagination, but by union of life, joining centres with God) and by a sensible touch to be held up from the clotty dark personality of this compacted body. Here is love, here is freedom, here is justice and equity in the superessential causes of them. He that is here looks upon all things as one, and on himself, if he can then mind himself, as a part of the whole.

. . . Nor am I out of my wits, as some may fondly interpret me in this divine freedom. But the love of God compelled me. Nor am I at all enthusiastical. For God doth not ride me as a horse, and guide me I know not whither myself, but converseth with me as a friend; and speaks to me in such a dialect as I understand fully, and can make others understand, that have not made shipwrack of the faculties that God hath given them by superstition or sensuality. . . . For God hath permitted to me all these things, and I have it under the broad seal of heaven. Who dare charge me? God doth acquit me. For He hath made me full lord of the four elements, and hath constituted me emperor of the world. . . . I sport with the beasts of the earth; the lion licks my hand like a spaniel; and the serpent sleeps upon my lap, and stings me not. I play with the fowls of heaven, and the birds of the air sit singing on my fist. All these things are true in a sober sense. And the dispensation I live in is more happiness above all measure, than if thou couldst call down the moon so near thee by thy magic charms, that thou mayst kiss her, as she is said to have kissed Endymion; or couldst stop the course of the sun; or which is all one, with one stamp of thy foot stay the motion of the earth. . . . He that is come hither, God hath taken him to be his own familiar friend; and though he speaks to others aloof off, in outward religions and parables, yet he leads this man by the hand, teaching him intelligible documents upon all the objects of his providence; speaks to him plainly in his own language; sweetly insinuates Himself, and possesseth all his faculties, understanding, reason and memory. This is the darling of God, and a prince amongst men, far above the dispensation of either miracle or prophecy.

Mysticism with a vengeance is this, but there is no tinge of morbidness, no suggestion of unhealthy, cloistered confinement: it is ecstasy rising on the wings of the

morning, ascending into heaven, fleeing into the uttermost parts of the sea, but ever in the open air. It is intoxication not with noxious vapors, but with pure oxygen. It is the ecstasy of Thoreau, stroking the fish in Walden pond, in strange sympathy with all creation, and soaring into worlds unknown, not through suppression of breath, but through deeper inhalation of the pines.

More was accustomed to seek pleasant retirement from Christ's College at Ragley, where he lived in the open air, the wind fanning his temples, enjoying "the solemnness of the place, those shady walks, those hills and woods, wherein often having lost the sight of the rest of the world and the world of him, he found out in that hidden solitude the choicest theories." What Lord Falkland and Great Tew were to Chillingworth and Hales, Lady Conway and Ragley were to More. He found in Ragley a place of refreshing and in the society of his hostess and her friends constant sympathy and inspiration. It was a strange company that gathered at Ragley, physicians, mystics, and perchance charlatans, the salon of a remarkable woman, whose mysticism, however, became pathological and neurotic. Greatrakes, the famous Irish "stroker," who performed wonderful cures with a kind of magic touch, was an intimate of the house.

Except for repeated visits at Ragley, More lived almost entirely within the walls of Christ's College. He persistently refused preferment, declining the mastership of his college, the Deanery of Christ Church, Ox-

ford, the Provostship of Trinity College, Dublin, the Deanery of St. Patrick's, and two bishoprics. Through all the vicissitudes of the times he was loyal to the King and church. His friends once induced him to journey to Whitehall to kiss the King's hand, but he turned back on discovering that this act of loyalty was to be the prelude to a bishopric. A friend remonstrates with him in a letter: "Pray be not so morose or humorsome as to refuse all things you have not known so long as Christ's College." More declined advancement from "a pure love of contemplation and solitude, and because he thought he could do the church of God greater service in a private than in a public station." He had spent, he said to one, "many happy days in his chamber," and his labors were to him in looking back upon them, "as an aromatick field." Like Smith, More needed no exalted position in order to exert his influence. Many pupils gathered about him at Christ's College, listening to his words as to an oracle, and being impressed alike by his learning and piety. In him were combined intellectuality and saintliness, mystic ecstasy and sanity, piety and grace. He was a spiritually minded man of the world. He died in 1687, after living more than fifty years within the confines of Cambridge University one of the serenest of lives in the most violent half century his country ever knew. The storm raged without, but he dwelt in the secret place of the Most High and abode under the shadow of the Almighty.

II

More's writings are voluminous, but are less interesting than his personality, and in large part are so foreign to the modern mind as to be almost unreadable. His autobiography, which has been freely quoted, is far more interesting than the philosophical works to which it is the preface. "An Antidote against Atheism" presents a noble Transcendentalism, and carries one along with its argument, until it flies off on a tangent into discussions of witchcraft, apparitions, and extravagant manifestations of the occult. Mystic that he was, More was far from despising matter, and displays a surprising interest in physical phenomena, to which he applies an observation almost scientific. He makes laudable attempts at physiological psychology in his discussions of the spinal marrow, conarium and ventricles of the brain as possible seats of the reasoning faculty. Interesting as are these essays in primitive science from an historical point of view, they could hardly be expected to speak in modern phrase. Worthless as are the results, the spirit of these investigations is altogether admirable. The principle by which More explains physical phenomena is the "spirit of nature." In 1652, thirty-three years before Newton propounded the law of gravitation, More thus describes the action of this subtle incorporeal force:

It remands down a stone toward the centre of the earth as well when the earth is in Aries as in Libra, keeps the water from

swilling out of the moon, curbs the matter of the sun into roundness of figure, restrains the crusty parts of a star from flying apieces into the circumambient ether, everywhere directs the magnetic atoms in their right road, besides all the plastic services it does both in plants and animals.

Why should not a body remain suspended in the air, or if thrown from the earth continue its motion, and why do not all things fly from the earth's surface, repelled by centrifugal force? These questions More answered by the hypothesis of a "spirit of nature." This is the explanation of the strange results produced by the air pump, the difficulty of removing the stopple from an exhausted receiver, and the strong pressure exerted upon it from within when the air is admitted. "It is apparent that there is a principle transcending the nature and power of matter that does umpire all, that directs the motion of every part and parcel of matter backward and forward and contrariwise in pursuance of such general designs as are best for the whole." This is the "spirit of nature," the "vicarious power of God upon this great automaton the world." Newton's principle was soon to dissipate More's "spirit of nature" and Descartes' "vortices," but such speculations have value as showing men's interest in natural science in the seventeenth century, and more particularly in the case of More as showing the attitude of certain Christians of that much-abused century toward science in its beginnings and the startling ideas which it was introducing. These times of ours are not the first in which Christianity has adapted itself to new ideas with sympathy and

grace. Not all heralds of new truth have been burned at bigotry's stake. It is good to behold Henry More, than whom his century produced few more profound and devoted Christians, in his attitude toward the new truths of his day.

The times we are in, and are coming on are times wherein Divine Providence is more universally loosening the minds of men from the awe and tyranny of mere accustomary superstition, and permitting a freer perusal of matters of religion than in former ages.

It sounds like a voice from the present. "Blind obedience to the authority of the church" is being swept away. Scepticism and atheism are resulting: and these should be met not by stemming the tide of the times, but by adapting Christianity to the new conditions. A new Christian phraseology and point of view are demanded, which shall appeal to the naturalist.

The atheist will boggle at whatever is fetched from established religion, and fly away from it, like a wild colt in a pasture at the sight of a bridle. But that he might not be shy of me, I have conformed myself as near his own garb as I might, without partaking of his folly or wickedness: and have appeared in the plain shape of a mere naturalist myself, that I might, if it were possible, win him off from downright atheism. For he that will lend his hand to another fallen into a ditch, must himself, though not fall, yet stoop and incline his body: and he that converses with a barbarian must discourse to him in his own language; so he that would gain upon the more weak and sunken minds of sensual mortals, is to accommodate himself to their capacity.

Here is a Henry Drummond of the seventeenth century!

More was a personal friend of Descartes, and carried on a long correspondence with him. He deplores Descartes' imprisonment, and "the inconvenience this external force and fear does to the commonwealth of learning." Cartesianism and Platonism were making great headway, and More realized that it would be "hugely disadvantageous to religion and theology to seem to be left so far behind, or to appear to be opposite to that, which I foresaw might probably become the common philosophy of the learned." Therefore to prevent all contempt and cavil against the sacredness of Christianity, as holding anything against the solid truths of approved reason and philosophy, by fantastic and allegorical interpretation he discovers Cartesianism and Platonism in the books of Moses. The method was bad, but the object good. Cabalistic exegesis is absurd, but the demand that science, philosophy and religion speak one language is beyond all praise.

Responsiveness to new views and on the other hand downright opposition to them are not uncommon: but to be responsive to new views and at the same time to sympathize with the feelings of those who oppose them, to pass to the new without making a rupture with the old, this is the rare spirit. Such a truly mediating position was More's. He endeavored to write "without any offence or scruple to the good and pious, or any real exception or probable cavil from those whose pretensions are greater to reason than religion." He refuses to be destructive. He will not tear down what others

reverence, but is content to build up what he reverences himself, and for the final result trust to the survival of the fittest. Arguments for the existence of God, which he considers illogical, he will still not confute, for the reason that they help some, and he would not cause any to stumble by the removal even of an unsteady prop.

I think it may not unbeseem one that is faithful to the cause, not to be over-industrious in discovering the weakness of such arguments as are meant for the engendering in men's minds the belief of that truth, which is of so necessary and vast importance for mankind to be persuaded of. For I charitably surmise that the first inventors of those reasons thought them conclusive, or else they would not have made use of them. Whence it will follow that they may still have their force with those that are but of the same pitch with their first proposers. And he that guesseth right and goes on his journey will as certainly come to the place he aims at, as he that perfectly knows the way.

With rare magnanimity More, believing himself in the new truth, respects its opposers, and understands their opposition. He realizes that "that which is strange has something of the face of that which is hostile."

It is a piece of rudeness and unskilfulness in the nature of things and in the perfection of Divine Providence (who has generally implanted a tenacious adhesion to what has accustomarily been received, that the mind of man might be a safer receptacle when it lights upon what is best) to conceit that because a truth is demonstratively evident in itself, that therefore its opposite shall immediately surrender the castle. Which consideration with the

ingenuous cannot but secure the continuance of unfeigned civility and respect even to the jealous suspecters or opposers of new truths and make them look upon it as a piece of surprising ignorance or inhumanity to be otherwise affected toward them.

It has been too often forgotten that toleration is a reciprocal relation, and is demanded of the liberal toward the conservative quite as much as *vice versa.* Of such toleration on the progressive side Henry More is a notable example.

Considerate as was More toward the traditionalist, he does not expect altogether to escape attack from his own side on the part of those who mistake him for a foe.

Wherefore I being so faithfully, and as I conceive so usefully taken up in managing these out-works, as I may call them, I shall not impute it, no not so much as to over-hasty zeal, but to mere mishap, if I be pelted behind my back by any shots of obloquy from any unknown servant of the sanctuary: and presume, if I receive any hurt, that their smart will be the greatest that did it, when they shall consider they have wounded a true and faithful friend, and even then when he was so busily and watchfully employed in facing the common enemy.

In a remarkable passage More explains how authority should be respected, and how disregarded. Only where authority demands belief contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures is it to be rebelled against. It may well be compromised with, especially in terms of expression, in matters of speculation and science.

For mine own part, though I were as certain of Cartesianism

and Platonism as I am of any mathematical demonstration, yet I do not find myself bound in conscience to profess my opinion therein any further than is with the good liking or permission of my superiors. But that I may not seem injurious to myself, nor give scandal unto others by this so free profession, I am necessitated to add, that the conscience of every holy and sincere Christian is as strictly bound up in matters of religion plainly and expressly determined by the infallible oracles of God, as it is free in philosophical speculations: and though out of love to his own ease, or in a reverential regard to the authority of the church, which undoubtedly every ingenuous spirit is sensible of, he may have a great desire to say, profess and do as they would have him; yet in cases of this kind, where anything is expected contrary to the plain and express sense of those divine writings, he will use that short but weighty apology of the apostle, that God is to be obeyed rather than men. But in philosophical theories, such as the preëxistence of the soul, the motion of the earth, and the like, where God has not required our profession, nor our eternal interest is concerned, nor that which dictates is infallible; though we should conceit to ourselves a mathematical assurance of the conclusions, yet I must profess, as I said before, that I do not see that anyone is conscientiously bound to aver them against the authority of the church under which he lives, if they should at any time dislike them, but that he may with a safe conscience compromise with his superiors, and use their language and phrases concerning such things. Certainly it cannot be a vice in us in humble submission and reverence to the governors of the church (let our private judgment be what it will) to receive their definitive modes and phrases of speech in those things where God has not tied us to the contrary.

More was willing to conform in non-essentials, if he might have liberty in essentials.

For a thorough mystic, More's interest in physical science was remarkable, but it was a spiritual interest. He is always in antagonism to Hobbes, "that confident exploder of immaterial substances," and to the materialism of the "Leviathan." It was the "spirit of nature" that he saw behind all material forms and phenomena. He looked in, in order to understand what he saw as he looked out.

In theology More is a transcendentalist. He argues the reality of God from the existence in us of the idea of a perfect and necessary being. The object must exist as the correlate of the idea. The soul is furnished with innate ideas and the natural emanations of the mind are to be trusted as faithful guides. The principles of the circle and triangle are appreciated by the mind, though they are nowhere exhibited in visible form. The geometrical propositions we feel are true of all triangles and circles, the mind confidently leaping to universal conceptions. As a musician sings the whole song at the suggestion from another of a few notes, so the soul leaps to universals and sings out the whole song upon the first hint, "as knowing very well before." "It is plain that we have some ideas that we are not beholding to our senses for." There is more of reality than matter offers through the senses. Man dwells in the borders of two worlds, the spiritual and the material, responding to influences from each, "tugging upward and downward." Man is supernatural. Matter is utterly incapable of such operations as we find in ourselves, therefore there is in us something immaterial or

incorporeal. As our spirit understands and moves corporeal matter, so behind the phenomena of nature is there reason and spirit. The soul of man is a "little medal of God." "As cattle are branded with their owner's name, so God's character sealed upon our souls marks us as his people and the sheep of his pasture." "No bishop, no king"; and "No spirit, no God."

But reason does not yield the great certainties. The comprehension of spiritual truth requires "a certain principle more noble and inward than reason itself and without which reason will falter, or at least reach but to mean and frivolous things. I have a sense of something in me while I thus speak, which I must confess is of so retruse a nature that I want a name for it, unless I should endeavor to term it divine sagacity." "All pretenders to philosophy will indeed be ready to magnify reason to the skies, to make it the light of heaven and the very oracle of God: but they do not consider that the oracle of God is not to be heard but in his holy temple, that is to say, in a good and holy man, thoroughly sanctified in spirit, soul and body." "There is a natural cohesion of truth with an unpolluted soul." "That wisdom which is the gift of God is hardly compatible to any but to persons of a pure and unspotted mind. Of so great concernment is it sincerely to endeavor to be holy and good."

This mystic was not obliged to soar to worlds unknown for the beatific vision. Within and without he saw God, whenever his heart was pure. To him there

were "two temples of God, the one the universe in which the divine Logos is high priest: the other, the rational soul whose priest is the true man": and in both temples he worshipped.

JEREMY TAYLOR

JEREMY TAYLOR

1613–1667

I

If adversity almost extinguished the light of Hales and Chillingworth, it struck out of Jeremy Taylor his brightest spark. In times of peace these would have shone the brighter, but it is to be feared that in prosperity Taylor would never have lighted his highest taper.

In 1634 a young man of twenty-two came up to London from Cambridge to preach at Saint Paul's in the place of his room-mate, Risden, who had been prevented from filling the engagement. He created a sensation. His handsome face and figure, his musical voice, his exuberant fancy carried his hearers by storm. "By his florid and youthful beauty, and sweet and pleasant air, and sublime and raised discourses, he made his hearers take him for some young angel, newly descended from the visions of glory." In appearance Taylor was attractive, above middle height, with rounded face, expansive brow, full, kindly eyes and small chin. "His person was uncommonly beautiful, his manners polite, his conversation sprightly and engaging, and even his voice was harmonious." There

is no lack of portraits of him. The number of engravings of the author, which form the frontispiece of many of his books in their first editions, would seem to indicate that Taylor himself was not unconscious of his pleasing looks.

Up to the time of his appearance at Saint Paul's, Taylor's career had been inconspicuous enough. He was the son of a barber, born in Cambridge in 1613. He attended the free grammar school established by the generosity of Dr. Stephen Perse in 1619, in which year Taylor entered as one of the earliest pupils. Such beneficence has rarely done greater service in opening opportunity to promising boys of slender means. After seven years at the school he was admitted to Caius College, Cambridge, in 1626, where he still enjoyed the benefactions of Perse, being elected scholar and later fellow on foundations in the university provided by the same generous donor. His college course seems to have been solitary, and although Milton, George Herbert and Henry More were contemporaneous with him, he was not admitted to their fellowship, and seems to have been untouched by their ampler spirit.

The preaching at Saint Paul's raised Taylor at once from obscurity to distinction. He became "the fashion." Archbishop Laud heard of the brilliant young preacher, and with his genius for discovering merit was impressed with Taylor's astonishing abilities, "observing the tartness of his discourses, the quickness of his parts, the modesty and sweetness of his temper, and the becomingness of his personage and carriage." Laud at once

JEREMY TAYLOR

took him under his patronage, soon securing him a Fellowship at Oxford, to which university he was transferred, as a more favorable school of that ecclesiastical discipline dear to his patron's heart. At their first interview Taylor made the retort which has become famous. The only fault which Laud found in him was his youth, but Taylor humbly begged his Grace to pardon that, and promised "if he lived he would mend it."

The field of high service and distinction now lay fair before Taylor. In 1636 he was appointed rector of Uppingham, an excellent living, and later a chaplain to the King, but the Civil War was at hand, and the wreck of his fortunes in the disaster of his patrons. At the outbreak of hostilities he was probably with the King at Nottingham. In writings of this period Taylor stoutly defended the royal and episcopal cause against the claims of Parliament. His living was sequestrated and given to another in 1644. His great patron was executed the same year. In 1645, after the Battle of Naseby, sharing the fate of fellow royalists, he was taken captive at Cardigan Castle in South Wales. Set at liberty, probably through an exchange of prisoners, he joined with William Wyatt and Dr. Nicholson in establishing a private school at Llanfihangel-Aberbythych, near Golden Grove, the estate of Lord Carbery. Carbery fell under the spell of his unfailing charm and made him his household chaplain. Here Taylor found an asylum for eight productive years. His eulogist Rust says that he was cast into "a private corner of the

world, where a tender Providence shrouded him under his wings, and the prophet was fed in the wilderness." Taylor himself thus alludes to this period:

In this great storm which hath dashed the vessel of the church all in pieces, I have been cast upon the coast of Wales, and in a little boat thought to have enjoyed that rest and quietness which in England in a greater I could not hope for. Here I cast anchor, and thinking to ride safely, the storm followed me with so impetuous violence, that it broke a cable, and I lost my anchor. And here again I was exposed to the mercy of the sea, and the gentleness of an element that could neither distinguish things nor persons. And but that He, who stille h the raging of the sea, and the noise of His waves, and the madness of His people, had provided a plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study. But I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy.

The voyage was interrupted, the fair weather was gone, the mariner was wrecked with his hopes, but he found himself on an island, where he was to cultivate a rich crop sprinkled with fragrant flowers. We are reminded of that passage, in which he illustrates with a remarkable elaboration of the nautical figure that safety of the righteous in adversity, which he at this time himself experienced.

He is safe in the midst of his persecutions. . . . And so have I often seen young and unskilful persons sitting in a little boat, when every little wave, sporting about the sides of the vessel, and every motion and dancing of the barge seemed a danger, and made them cling fast upon their fellows; and yet all the while

they were as safe as if they sate under a tree, while a gentle wind shaked the leaves into a refreshment and a cooling shade: and the unskilful, unexperienced Christian shrieks out whenever his vessel shakes, thinking it always in danger, that the watery pavement is not stable and resident like a rock; and yet all his danger is in himself, none at all from without: for he is indeed moving upon the waters, but fastened to a rock: Faith is his foundation, and hope is his anchor, and death is his harbour, and Christ is his pilot, and heaven is his country; and all the evils of his poverty, or affronts of tribunals and evil judges, of fears and sudden apprehensions, are but like the loud wind blowing from the right point, they make a noise, and drive faster to the harbour: and if we do not leave the ship, and leap into the sea; quit the interest of religion, and run to the securities of the world; cut our cables, and dissolve our hopes; grow impatient, and hug a wave, and dip in its embraces; we are as safe at sea, safer in the storm which God sends us, than in a calm when we are befriended with the world.

Golden Grove was Taylor's Ragley and Great Tew. Here man and nature alike ministered to him. It was a beautiful country in the valley of the Towey with thick woods broken by the lawns of great estates, the land described seventy years later by the poet, Dyer, as a

> "——long and level lawn,
> On which a dark hill, steep and high,
> Holds and charms the wandering eye;
> Deep are his feet in Towey's flood,
> His sides are clothed with waving wood;
> And ancient towers crown his brow,
> That cast an awful look below.

. . . woods, where echo talks,
The gardens trim, the terrace-walks,
The wildernesses, fragrant brakes,
The gloomy bowers and shining lakes."

By such beauties of nature the exuberant fancy of a florid genius must have been stimulated, and many of the nature pictures which Taylor painted into his sermons with exquisite art are doubtless sketches of scenes in Wales. That description in which one can fairly see the sun rising, is a reminiscence of those mornings at Golden Grove, when Taylor rose early to behold the sun coming out of "the chambers of the east":

The life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But as when the sun approaching towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brows of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still while a man tells the story the sun gets up higher, till he shews a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly: so is a man's reason and his life.

In the words of Edmund Gosse:

It is to this beautiful retreat, in a rich valley of South Wales, that we owe the ripest products of his intellect. The stamp of the physical b auty which surrounded him is imprinted upon the best and happiest of his writings, and we may say that Jeremy

Taylor was nourished by the Muses in the park of Golden Grove, as the goat-herd Comatas was fed with honey by the bees while he lay imprisoned in his master's cedarn chest.

The human environment of his retreat was no less congenial than the physical. In the school he had his friends Nicholson and Wyatt, and in the manor house were Lord and Lady Carbery. His labors alternated between the school and house in an atmosphere of quiet and refinement. The sermons which he preached to the sympathetic little auditory were given a wider circulation through the press of Royston, for many years his faithful publisher.

It was under these favorable circumstances that Taylor wrote his first book of importance and his greatest, "Liberty of Prophesying," published in 1647. It was one of the earliest pleas for liberty of conscience, and is to be held in everlasting remembrance. The fortunes of books are not to be reckoned in advance even by the author, who is often no less surprised at the success of one work than he is disappointed at the failure of another. Taylor considered his *magnum opus*, for which posterity would remember him, the "Ductor Dubitantium," an elaborate and weary encyclopædia of casuistry, with moral directions for all kinds of cases of conscience. To this work he gave the labor of years but it was never widely read. The "Holy Living" and "Holy Dying," published in 1650 and 1651 respectively, have won first place among his works in popular favor. "The Great Exemplar," containing sermons preached at Golden Grove on successive incidents in the life of Jesus,

is a notable work as the forerunner of the modern "Life of Christ." Above all these, however, stands "Liberty of Prophesying," as the herald of a new age of intellectual liberty. It is Taylor's high-water mark, so high indeed that the author himself unhappily receded from it: but it is by such fluctuations that the tide comes in, and of the incoming tide of toleration this book is one of the most advanced waves. It lacks the gorgeous imagery of his other works, and wears the severe garb of the suppliant. The language is not ornate, but direct and clear. It is a voice from exile, chastened as such voices are, like the voice from Babylon which sang in sobs of the suffering Servant of Jehovah. All embellishments are cast aside. The brilliant rhetorician puts off the beautiful garments of his oratory and appears in the plain dress of logic and reason. In general, Taylor was a preacher and orator rather than a theologian or logician, but here he takes a place in the high company of Chillingworth and the first theologians of the time. Taylor and Chillingworth had walked and talked together at Oxford, but the younger man had not been rated high as a thinker by the keen logician, who criticised him as slighting the arguments of those he discoursed with. The influence, however, of the "Religion of Protestants" is manifest in the "Liberty of Prophesying," proving that Taylor gave more heed to the arguments of these Oxford conversations than his critic supposed. "Liberty of Prophesying" was not an expression of Taylor's peculiar genius as a brilliant preacher and splendid rhetorician: it was

a by-product, but a by-product which surpassed in significance his regular work. He turned aside from the beaten path and mounted a hill.

After eight years of shelter at Golden Grove, Taylor emerged from seclusion to be buffeted by the violence of the times. His views were offensive to the Protectorate, and through their diffusion doubtless endangered the fortunes of his patron Lord Carbery, who seems to have withdrawn his support. In the famous Evelyn, Taylor now found a new friend, who supported him from his own funds for several years. Throughout his life Taylor showed a genius for making friends among the great. In 1658 at the suggestion of Evelyn, Lord Conway, a devout Irish Anglican, persuaded Taylor to take up his residence at Portmore, in Ireland, on his sumptuous estate, and to assume the office of lecturer at Lisburn, a few miles distant. The troubled bark was thus brought into harbor again.

At the Restoration Taylor, as his loyalty deserved, was in high favor. He was appointed bishop of Down and Connor, and Vice-Chancellor of Trinity College, Dublin. The great preacher, however, was not a great administrator. His sympathies were not large enough to appreciate the Irish situation, the place of Romanism in the popular heart, and the importance of the native language. The polished preacher to polite society was not fitted to grapple with the problems of a downtrodden, crude people. The Presbyterians also gave him trouble, and the author of "Liberty of Prophesying" so far forgot his own high counsels as to instigate

the imprisonment of all the Presbyterian ministers who could be found in the counties of Antrim and Down. The story is told that Taylor sent his chaplain Lewis to England to buy up all the extant copies of his great work, and that he burned these after a day of fasting and prayer. It was a sad apostasy. Taylor's life in Ireland was unhappy. He was above all a preacher to the cultivated classes, and was utterly unfitted to the work of reconstruction in the midst of a turbulent populace. He died of fever at Lisburn in 1667. The "Liberty of Prophesying" was the acme of his theological work, and had he failed, like Hales and Chillingworth, to survive the evil days which put him to his best endeavors, he would have bulked larger on the horizon. After Golden Grove his life was an anti-climax. His greatest fragrance came from the smoking flax. Never were there sweeter uses of adversity.

II

In one of the first pages of the "Liberty of Prophesying" Taylor remarks that the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost in the form of cloven tongues, a parable to teach that differing expressions may proceed from the one Spirit. Unanimity of opinion is not to be expected. Charity is to unite those differing in doctrine.

> It is not the differing opinions that is the cause of the present ruptures, but want of charity. . . . There is no cure for us but piety and charity. . . . All these mischiefs proceed not from this, that all men are not of one mind, for that is neither necessary nor

possible, but that every opinion is made an article of faith, every article is a ground of a quarrel, every quarrel makes a faction, every faction is zealous, and all zeal pretends for God, and whatsoever is for God cannot be too much. We by this time are come to that pass, we think we love not God except we hate our brother; and we have not the virtue of religion, unless we persecute all religions but our own: for lukewarmness is so odious to God and man, that we proceeding furiously upon these mistakes, by supposing we preserve the body, we destroy the soul of religion; or by being zealous for faith, or which is all one, for that which we mistake for faith, we are cold in charity, and so lose the reward of both.

The position in regard to heresy is notable. Heresy is an act of the will, not of the intellect. It is something more than an error of opinion, which is generally excusable. Harmless prejudice, weakness, education, mistaking piety may produce erring convictions, but these are not heretical where there is nothing of venom behind them. Error of opinion in a pious person is innocent. "No man is an heretic against his will." Heresy is not to be accounted in merely speculative opinions, and never to the pious. A truly good man is never a heretic, whatever his views: an evil man, whatever his views, is a heretic.

For whatever an ill man believes, if he therefore believe it because it serves his own ends, be his belief true or false, the man hath an heretical mind; for to serve his own ends, his mind is prepared to believe a lie. But a good man, that believes what according to his light, and upon use of his moral industry he thinks true, whether he hits upon the right or no, because he hath

a mind desirous of truth, and prepared to believe every truth, is therefore acceptable to God.

The treatment of heresy which is recommended is equal to the definition.

It is unnatural and unreasonable to persecute disagreeing opinions. Unnatural, for understanding being a thing wholly spiritual, cannot be restrained, and therefore neither punished by corporal afflictions. It is a matter of another world: you may as well cure colic by brushing a man's clothes. . . . Force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will, or be satisfied in his reason that his opinion is false because discountenanced. . . . But if a man cannot change his opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force may make him an hypocrite, but never to be a right believer: and so instead of erecting a trophy to God and true religion, we build a monument for the devil.

Persecution "either punishes sincerity or persuades hypocrisy. It teaches a man to dissemble and to be safe, but never to be honest." The heretic is to be pitied and instructed, not condemned nor excommunicated. Chrysostom's maxim is to be observed, "We ought to reprove and condemn impieties and heretical doctrines, but to spare the men, and to pray for their salvation." The Scriptures are to be remembered, "Restoring persons overtaken with an error in the spirit of meekness, considering lest we also be tempted," and "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the

acknowledging of the truth." In the midst of the wind, earthquake and fire of the seventeenth century, and the boom of Cromwell's cannon, there rises this still, small voice, and we feel that God is in the voice, and the promise of better things.

In the discussion of creeds, the contention is for simplicity. "The church hath power to intend our faith, but not to extend it: to make our belief more evident, but not more large and comprehensive." The New Testament creeds are emphasized in their simplicity, the creed of Paul and Peter and Martha and the Ethiopian. The "Apostles' Creed" is urged as a basis of communion. Taylor takes the liberty of criticising even the Nicene Creed. He deplores its subtleties and departure from Biblical simplicity.

There are some wise personages, who think the church had been more happy, if she had not been in some sense constrained to alter the simplicity of her faith, and make it more curious and articulate, so much that he had need to be a subtle man to understand the very words of the new determinations.

Those creeds are best, which keep the very words of Scripture; and that faith is best, which hath greatest simplicity; and it is better in all cases humbly to submit, than curiously to inquire and pry into the mystery under the cloud, and to hazard our faith by improving our knowledge: if the Nicene fathers had done so too, possibly the church never would have repented it. . . . If the article had been with more simplicity and less nicety determined, charity would have gained more, and faith would have lost nothing.

The definitions as to "one substance" and "hypos-

tases" were unfortunate as engendering strife. The mysteries in the Bible are to be made "occasions of mutual charity and toleration and humility, rather than repositories of faith and furniture of creeds and articles of belief." The view, often expressed to-day, is strongly presented by Taylor, that theological statements may be put on record in the form of expositions and rescripts, without being incorporated in the creed; that theologians should publish their decrees "declaratively not imperatively, as doctors in their chairs, not masters of other men's faith and consciences."

No modern advocate of toleration could insist more strenuously than does Taylor that the way to heaven is not to be made narrower than it is in the Scriptures.

I see not how any man can justify the making the way to heaven narrower than Jesus Christ hath made it, it being already so narrow, that there are few that find it.

To make the way to heaven straiter than God made it, or to deny to communicate with those whom God will vouchsafe to be united, and to refuse our charity to those who have the same faith, because they have not all our opinions, and believe not everything necessary which we overvalue, is impious and schismatical: it infers tyranny on one part, and persuades and tempts to uncharitableness and animosities on both: it dissolves societies and is an enemy to peace: it busies men in impertinent wranglings, and by names of men and titles of factions it consigns the interested parties to act their difference to the height, and makes them neglect those advantages which piety and a good life bring to the reputation of Christian religion and societies.

Overstrict confessions are to be deplored as pro-

ducing schism, and real schismatics are those who make the separation necessary.

Few churches that have framed bodies of confession and articles will endure any person that is not of the same confession; which is a plain demonstration that such bodies of confession and articles do much hurt, by becoming instruments of separating and dividing communions, and making unnecessary or uncertain propositions a certain means of schism and disunion. But then men would do well to consider whether or no such proceedings do not derive the guilt of schism upon them who least think it; and whether of the two is the schismatic, he that makes unnecessary and inconvenient impositions, or he that disobeys them because he cannot, without doing violence to his conscience, believe them: he that parts communion because without sin he could not entertain it, or they that have made it necessary for him to separate, by requiring such conditions which to man are simply necessary, and to his particular are either sinful or impossible.

Liberty of conscience did not mean to Taylor license nor indifference, as "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" did not mean slavery. It may be well to quote in connection with the "Liberty of Prophesying" a notable passage from a sermon preached in 1651:

Indifferency to an object is the lowest degree of liberty, and supposes unworthiness or defect in the object or the apprehension: but the will is then the freest and most perfect in its operation, when it entirely pursues a good with so certain determination and clear election, that the contrary evil cannot come into dispute or pretence. Such in our proportions is the liberty of the sons of God; it is an holy and amiable captivity to the Spirit. The will

of man is in love with those chains which draw us to God, and loves the fetters that confine us to the pleasures and religion of the kingdom. And as no man will complain that his temples are restrained, and his head is prisoner, when it is encircled with a crown; so when the Son of God hath made us free, and hath only subjected us to the service and dominion of the Spirit, we are as free as princes within the circles of their diadem, and our chains are bracelets, and the law is a law of liberty, and his service is perfect freedom, and the more we are subjects the more we shall reign as kings; and the faster we run, the easier is our burden; and Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird, when in summer we wish them unfeathered, that they might be cooler and lighter.

The quotation with which this remarkable book closes is a gem in which its essential spirit is crystallized:

I end with a story which I find in the Jews' books: When Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was an hundred years of age; he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, and caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not nor begged for a blessing on his meat, asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven? The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other god; at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was; he replied, "I thrust him away because he did not worship thee": God answered him, "I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonored me, and could'st thou not endure him one night, when he gave thee

no trouble?" Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.

The prophet was indeed "fed in the wilderness"; and more, he made the wilderness rejoice and blossom like the rose.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

1605–1682

I

LATE on a December evening of 1642 Sir Kenelm Digby received a letter from his friend Lord Dorset, commending to his attention a little book that had recently appeared, the "Religio Medici." Digby at once sent out his servant to procure a copy, and in his absence retired. On the servant's return with the book, Digby read it through in bed, and early the next morning began to write a glowing criticism of it, apparently before rising. In a letter of the same morning he writes to Dorset:

> This good-natured creature (Religio Medici) I could easily persuade to be my bedfellow, and to wake with me as long as I had any edge to entertain myself with the delights I sucked from so noble a conversation. And truly, my Lord, I closed not my eyes till I had enriched myself with, or at least exactly surveyed, all the treasures that are lapped up in the folds of those few sheets.

It was Digby's "Observations" that brought the "Religio Medici" and its author into prominence. The book created a sensation that extended to the Conti-

nent, appearing in Latin, Italian, German, Dutch and French translations.

The writer thus suddenly made famous had settled five years before as a physician in Norwich, and had evidently been at work upon his reflections at intervals for seven years, as a "private exercise" lovingly wrought with exquisite art. The author's life, in his own words, had been "a miracle of thirty years," although one searches in vain for anything extraordinary in his early career to warrant such enthusiasm. It was an exquisite inner experience, soaring like Henry More's among the constellations. For outer circumstance those thirty years seem far from miraculous, pursuing the even tenor of prosperity and development, experiencing neither marked successes nor struggles nor deliverances. Browne's whole life appears calm and prosperous. He was a child of privilege, inheriting from his father, who died in the son's boyhood, an ample fortune, allowing the best advantages of education and travel. After the father's death the mother married Sir Thomas Dutton, who occupied an important position in the government of Ireland. In 1626 Browne was graduated from Broadgate Hall, afterward Pembroke College, Oxford. For several years he travelled in Ireland, France and Italy, making the "grand tour," and attending lectures at the famous schools of medicine in Montpellier and Padua. He received the degree of doctor of medicine at Leyden in 1633, and at Oxford four years later. On returning from his foreign travels and studies he began his practice about 1635 at Shipden Hall, where in the

leisure of a young physician he seems to have begun the writing of those intimate reflections which developed into the "Religio Medici." In 1637 he removed to Norwich, where for nearly fifty years, until the time of his death, he enjoyed a large and lucrative practice, "much resorted to for his skill in physic."

Browne knew nothing of Jeremy Taylor's school of adversity, and suffered nothing of Falkland's and Chillingworth's agonies over the evil of the times. He was a faithful royalist and Episcopalian, but without antipathies which would make him obnoxious to the opposite parties, or unhappy in their domination. "He attended the public service very constantly, when he was not withheld by his practice; never missed the sacrament in his parish, if he were in town; read the best English sermons he could hear of, with liberal applause; and delighted not in controversies." There was nothing of the martyr in him. Differences political and religious he did not consider worth dying for, as the following passage reveals:

I have often pitied the miserable bishop that suffered in the cause of Antipodes, yet cannot but accuse *him* of as much madness for exposing his life on such a trifle, as those of ignorance and folly, that condemned him. I think my conscience will not give me the lie, if I say there are not many extant that in a noble way fear the face of death less than myself. Yet, from the moral duty I owe to the commandment of God, and the natural respects that I tender unto the conservation of my essence and being, I would not perish upon a ceremony, politic points, or indifferency. Nor is my belief of that untractable temper, as not to bow at their

obstacles, or connive at matters wherein there are not manifest impieties. The leaven, therefore, and ferment of all, not only civil but religious actions, is wisdom, without which, to commit ourselves to the flames is homicide, and, I fear, but to pass through one fire into another.

Herein is more of sanity than heroism. The conditions of his time evidently would not disturb such equanimity. The Norwich doctor could go calmly about his practice, jotting down exquisite thoughts in all serenity, while the partisans were approaching their life-and-death struggle. The "Religio Medici" was published in the year when other minds were framing the Solemn League and Covenant.

During the Civil War Browne was busy with his patients, employing his leisure moments in reading in many languages, in correspondence with kindred spirits, in studying flowers, trees and stars. He was deeply interested in nature studies, and was a faithful observer, although imbued with the superstitions of alchemy and astrology. He corresponds with Evelyn on gardening and grafting, describing in one of his letters the great linden at Depeham. To Sir William Dugdale he writes of embanking and draining. For twenty years he was in communication with Theodorus Jonas, minister of Hitterdale in Iceland, letters in Latin being exchanged between them annually by means of the ships sailing from Yarmouth. Browne looked up to the stars and down to the flowers and off to the ice-fields, and forgot the war raging about him. When others were throwing up earthworks, he was digging drains.

His home also gave him sweet occupation. While one would hardly discover that Jeremy Taylor had a family except for the occasional reference to a bereavement, one cannot become acquainted with Browne without meeting also his wife and children. In 1641 he married Dorothy Mileham, described by one who knew them both well during the whole period of their married life as "a lady of such symmetrical proportion to her worthy husband, both in the graces of her body and mind, that they seemed to come together by a kind of natural magnetism." Delightful letters between Browne and his sons have been preserved, which reveal the father as much as the children. The second son, affectionately known at home as "honest Tom," was sent to school in France at the age of fourteen. Lord Chesterfield and Polonius are suggested in the letters which exhort the boy to put off rustic bashfulness, to put on a "commendable boldness," and to "have a good handsome garb on his body." He is earnestly enjoined to "hold firm to the Protestant religion, and be diligent in going to church." "Be constant," the father urges, "not negligent in your daily private prayers, and habituate your heart in your tender days unto the fear and reverence of God." Here is piety without Puritanism and cosmopolitanism without irreligion. The wisdom of such liberal education was vindicated in the result, for "honest Tom" developed into a kindly, frank, spirited young man. He entered the navy, and seems to have been lost at sea early in a career full of promise.

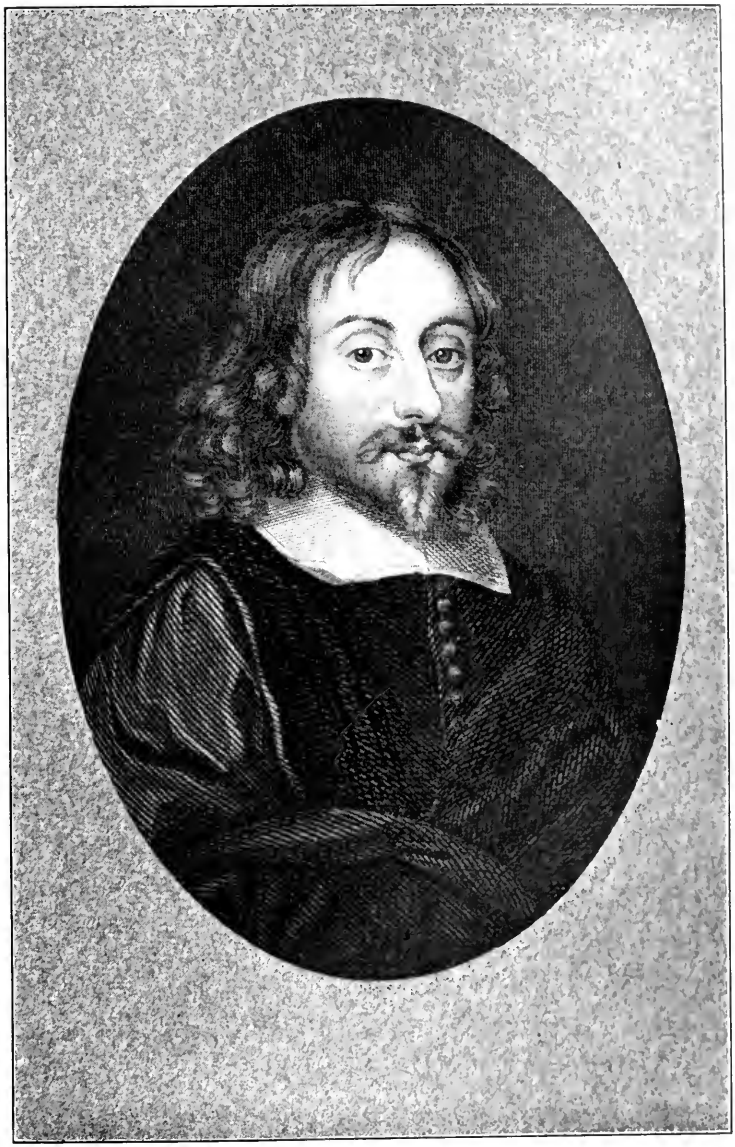
The eldest son, Edward, was educated with like

liberality. We read of him "dancing, dissecting and going to church," wholesome union of pleasure, work and worship, of grave and gay. Edward Browne was a great traveller and keen observer, and became a London physician of note. In 1664 he met in Paris Dr. Guy Patin, dean of the faculty of medicine, who had been one of the first to appreciate the "Religio Medici," thus commenting on it in 1644:

> A little new book entitled "Religio Medici," written by an Englishman and translated into Latin by a Dutchman. It is a book all gentle and singular, but very delicate and mystical: the author has no lack of spirit: you will see strange and transporting thoughts. There are few books of this sort.

When Edward Browne met Dr. Patin twenty years after this comment, he "saluted me very kindly," he writes to his father, "asked me many things concerning my father, whom he knew only as author of 'Religio Medici,' discoursed with me very lovingly, and told me he would write to my father." As we behold these delightful relations between father and sons, we are reminded of a sweet story of Dr. Browne's own infancy, that his father used to lay bare the child's breast when he was asleep, and kiss it in prayers over him that the Holy Ghost would take possession there.

Although Browne suffered little from the war, he was heartily rejoiced at the Restoration. On Coronation Day, he went up and down the streets of Norwich exchanging greetings and felicitations, "civil and debonair." On a royal visit to Norwich in 1671, the King



THOMAS BROWNE

desired to knight some distinguished citizen, selecting the Mayor as the candidate, but the Mayor with rare grace and propriety proposed the city's distinguished doctor for the honor in his stead.

Although the complete biography of Dr. Browne, long contemplated by Archbishop Tenison, was never written, most fortunately the Rev. John Whitefoot soon after Browne's death in 1682 wrote a sketch of his life that is really descriptive, and happily devoid of those glittering generalities which make the conventional eulogy of the seventeenth century colorless and indiscriminate. It is to this sketch that we are most indebted for the facts of Browne's life and the characterization of the man. Moreover, Dr. Johnson seventy years later wrote a biographical and critical sketch, incorporating for the most part Whitefoot's minutes, as a preface to an edition of the "Christian Morals," which Johnson particularly admired. In his introduction Whitefoot writes:

> I ever esteemed it a special favour of Divine Providence to have had a more particular acquaintance with this excellent person, for two-thirds of his life, than any other man that is now left alive; but that which renders me a willing debtor to his name and family, is the special obligations of favour that I had from him above most men.

Browne is described as in "stature moderate," and in "habit of body neither fat nor lean." The face looks out to us from his pictures, full of distinction and kindliness, with VanDyke beard, large eyes, and smiling mouth. His taste in dress was simple, and he always

dressed very warmly. His manner was modest, and he blushed easily. He was a hard student, and impatient of interruption in his studies. In conversation he was "always singular and never trite or vulgar." "He was never seen to be transported with mirth or dejected with sadness: always cheerful, but rarely merry." "He was excellent company, when he was at leisure, and expressed more light than heat in the temper of his brain." This perhaps is Browne's highest encomium, that in times of ferment and darkness he expressed more light than heat. Unconsciously he was describing himself when he wrote:

> Bright thoughts, clear deeds, constancy, fidelity, bounty, and generous honesty are the gems of noble minds; wherein—to derogate from none—the true heroic English gentleman hath no peer.

If it had been a funeral sermon that he was writing, Whitefoot says that he would have chosen his text from Ecclesiasticus:

> Honour a physician with the honour due unto him; for the uses which you may have of him, for the Lord hath created him; for of the Most High cometh healing, and he shall receive honour of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head, and in the sight of great men shall be in admiration.

II

The style of the "Religio Medici" is as quaint as its catholicity is modern. It is charged with Latinity. Boswell says that Dr. Johnson imitated Browne. The

great critic certainly defended Browne's style, and his comments are interesting, as they appear in the preface to which reference has been made.

His exuberance of knowledge and plenitude of ideas sometimes obstruct the tendency of his reasoning, and the clearness of his decisions: on whatever subject he employed his mind, there started up immediately so many images before him, that he lost one by grasping another. . . . He was always starting into collateral considerations; but the spirit and vigor of his pursuit always gives delight; and the reader follows him without reluctance through his mazes, in themselves flowery and pleasing, and ending at the point originally in view. . . . Browne poured in a multitude of exotic words; many, indeed, useful and significant—but many superfluous—and some so obscure, that they conceal his meaning rather than explain it. . . . In defence of his uncommon words and expressions, we must consider, that he had uncommon sentiments, and was not content to express in many words that idea for which any language could supply a single term. But his innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy: he has many "*verba ardentia*," forcible expressions, which he would never have found, but by venturing to the utmost verge of propriety; and flights which would never have been reached, but by one who had very little fear of the shame of falling.

The reader's attitude will determine whether he will be annoyed by pedantry, or pleased with the "learned sweetness of cadence."

The "Religio Medici" is written by a man without antipathies.

I have ever endeavored to nourish the merciful disposition and humane inclination I borrowed from my parents, and regulate

it to the written and prescribed laws of charity. . . . I am of a constitution so general that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things; I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncrasy, in diet, humour, air, anything. I wonder not at the French for their dishes of frogs, snails, and toadstools, nor at the Jews for locusts and grasshoppers; but being amongst them, make them my common viands; and I find they agree with my stomach as well as theirs. I could digest a salad gathered in a churchyard as well as in a garden. I cannot start at the presence of a serpent, scorpion, lizard, or salamander; at the sight of a toad or viper, I find in me no desire to take up a stone to destroy them. I feel not in myself those common antipathies that I can discover in others: those national repugnances do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch; but, where I find their actions in balance with my countrymen's, I honour, love and embrace them in the same degree. I was born in the eighth climate, but seem to be framed and constellated unto all. I am no plant that will not prosper out of a garden. All places, all airs, make unto me one country; I am in England everywhere, and under any meridian. I have been shipwrecked, yet am not enemy with the sea or winds; I can study, play, or sleep in a tempest. In brief, I am averse from nothing: my conscience would give me the lie, if I should say I absolutely detest or hate any essence, but the devil; or so at least abhor anything, but that we might come to composition.

It is refreshing to have such a genial spirit, at home everywhere, catholic and cosmopolitan, greet us out of the malignant partisanships of the seventeenth century. Browne looks upon all men with fairness. He believes that real atheism does not exist; no more does real badness; "Methinks there is no man bad." It is mad-

ness to "miscal and rave against the times." "Saint Paul, that calls the Cretans liars, doth it but indirectly and upon quotation from their own poet."

It is a tribute to Browne's catholicity that he was reckoned Deist, Atheist and Romanist (although the "Religio Medici" was put upon the Index Prohibitorius) and that the "Friends" sought to win him, while he defines himself as a Christian, a Protestant, and an Anglican. He assumes "the honorable style of a Christian," but in such general charity toward humanity at large, that toward Turks, infidels and Jews he feels pity rather than hate. He is a Protestant, "of the same belief our Saviour taught," restored to its primitive integrity: but he is not at enmity with Romanism. "We have reformed from them, not against them." He could worship with them with good heart.

Holy water and crucifix (dangerous to the common people) deceive not my judgment, nor abuse my devotion at all. At my devotion I love to use the civility of my knee, my hat, and my hand, with all those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible devotion. At the sight of a cross or crucifix, I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour. I could never hear the Ave Maria bell without an elevation, or think it a sufficient warrant, because they erred in one circumstance, for me to err in all—that is in silence and dumb contempt. Whilst, therefore, they directed their devotions to her, I offered mine to God; and rectified the errors of their prayers by rightly ordering my own.

He is of the Church of England. "In divinity I love to keep the road; and though not in an implicit, yet an

humble faith, follow the great wheel of the church." He has had doubts, which he has conquered "not in martial posture, but on his knees." Anglican, he is without animosity toward dissenters. He refuses to call names, however much his own position may be maligned. "It is the method of charity to suffer without reaction." "A good cause needs not to be patroned by passion, but can sustain itself upon a temperate dispute." "I have no genius to disputes in religion." And what a passage is this on charity in differences of opinion!

I cannot conceive why a difference of opinion should divide an affection. . . . There remain not many controversies worthy a passion. How do grammarians hack and slash for the genitive case in Jupiter! Yea even among wiser militants, how many wounds are given and credits slain for the poor victory of an opinion, or beggarly conquest of a distinction! Scholars are men of peace, they bear no arms, but their tongues are sharper than Actius' razor; their pens carry further, and give a louder report than thunder. I had rather stand in the shock of a basilisk than in the fury of a merciless pen. . . . In all disputes, so much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose.

Browne is a mystic. He is weary of arguments and syllogisms. He delights to contemplate an insoluble mystery in humble reverence. He can believe the impossible. "To believe only possibilities is not faith, but mere philosophy." There are not impossibilities enough in religion to satisfy his faith. He regrets the clearing of mystery.

I love to lose myself in a mystery; to pursue my reason to an O *altitudo!* 'Tis my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension

with those involved enigmas and riddles of the Trinity, incarnation, and resurrection. I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est.* I desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest point; for to credit ordinary and visible objects is not faith, but persuasion.

He is thankful that he did not live in the days of miracles, that he never saw Christ nor his disciples, for then faith would have been almost compulsory.

I would not have been one of those Israelites that passed the Red Sea; nor one of Christ's patients, on whom He wrought His wonders: then had my faith been thrust upon me; nor should I enjoy that greater blessing pronounced to all that believe, and saw not.

Even for the present believer is faith too simple, for it is grounded on history.

They only had the advantage of a bold and noble faith, who lived before His coming, who upon obscure prophecies and mystical types could raise a belief, and expect apparent impossibilities.

With his mysticism there is mingled strangely a love of inquiry, as in Henry More and Thoreau. He is at once mystic and scientist. His rebellion against reason is only in the weary realm of dogmatism. He will not argue, where insight brings him into immediate contact with the truth, but he delights to exercise his reason upon nature.

The wisdom of God receives small honor from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire

His works. Those highly magnify Him, whose judicious inquiry into His acts, and deliberate research into His creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration.

He is profoundly interested in natural science. He studies the bees, ants and spiders, the tides, the increase of the Nile, the turning of the needle to the north. His mysticism is not of the type that despises the material world: and his science is not of the type that despises the spiritual world, for in the midst of the discussion of the tides, the Nile and the compass, he turns to the mysteries within, "the cosmography of myself." "We carry with us the wonders we seek without us: there is all Africa and her prodigies in us." He lived in two worlds, and read two books.

Thus there are two books from whence I collect my divinity. Besides that written one of God, another of His servant, nature, that universal and public manuscript that lies expansed unto the eyes of all. Those that never saw Him in the one have discovered Him in the other.

Browne believes in God, not as an abstraction of dogma, but as a reality of experience. His God is immanent, "a universal and common spirit to the whole world," "the life and radical heat of spirits."

This is that gentle heat that brooded on the waters. . . . This is that irradiation that dispels the mists of hell, the clouds of horror, fear, sorrow, despair; and preserves the region of the mind in serenity. Whosoever feels not the warm gale and gentle ventilation of this spirit (though I feel his pulse) I dare not say he lives: for truly without this, to me there is no heat under the tropic, nor any light, though I dwelt in the body of the sun.

The mercies of God are felt more than his judgments.

I fear God, yet am not afraid of Him; His mercies make me ashamed of my sins, before His judgments afraid thereof. . . . I can hardly think there was ever any scared into heaven: they go the fairest way to heaven that would serve God without a hell. . . . And to be true, and speak my soul, when I survey the occurrences of my life, and call into account the finger of God, I can perceive nothing but an abyss and mass of mercies, either in general to mankind, or in particular to myself.

He is certain of God's providence.

There is therefore some other hand that twines the thread of life than that of nature. . . . Our ends are as obscure as our beginnings; the line of our days is drawn by night, and the various effects therein by a pencil that is invisible; wherein, though we confess our ignorance, I am sure we do not err, if we say, it is the hand of God.

God is a spirit, and there is a spirit in man. This seventeenth-century doctor, to whom life meant something more than a pulse beat, felt the presence in humanity of something which anatomy cannot reveal.

Amongst all those rare discoveries I find in the fabric of man, I do not content myself so much, as in that I find not—that is, no organ or instrument for the rational soul. . . . Thus we are men, and we know not how; there is something in us that can be without us, and will be after us, though it is strange it hath no history what it was before us, nor cannot tell how it entered us.

And this is his definition of a spirit:

Conceive light invisible, and that is a spirit.

In a notable passage Browne bears testimony to the greatness of the world within. History, as we have seen, records no wonders in his outer life, which was quiet and uneventful, but he is able to say:

> Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable. The world that I regard is myself. . . . Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude; for I am above Atlas' shoulders. The earth is a point not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind. That surface that tells the heavens it hath an end, cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or a little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as Scripture. He that understands not thus much, hath not his first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man.

The seventeenth century was deluged with controversy, but the "Religio Medici" is as the olive leaf which the dove brought back to the ark, an indication that at least from the elevation of some high souls the waters of conflict had subsided.

RICHARD BAXTER

RICHARD BAXTER

1615–1691

I

When the Pilgrims were setting sail for New England in 1620, Richard Baxter, a boy of five years, was growing up at Eaton-Constantine in a home which was Puritan, without being impelled to separation from mother country and mother church. It was a home Puritan and Anglican at once, respecting Prayer Book and bishop in loyalty to the church, and also yearning with the Puritan spirit for a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures, a richer spirituality, and a more godly life. In his boyhood Baxter was distressed by the prevalent desecration of the Sabbath, and became familiar with simple home talks about religion: yet in this Puritan home there was opposition neither to bishops nor the established order, and the only prayers offered were from the authorized book. In the "Reliquiæ Baxterianæ," Baxter presents a vivid picture of the times in their sad need of reform: but the spirit of reform was one that conformed. There was little preaching in the churches. In his own village the reader was about eighty years of age, and never preached. His sight

failing, he said the prayers from memory, but employed for the Scriptural readings a common thrasher one year, a tailor another, and at last a kinsman, "the excellentest stage-player in all the country, and a good gamester and good fellow, that got orders and supplied one of his places." This "ingenious stage-player" accommodated a neighbor's son, who desired to enter the ministry, by forging his orders. Such were the schoolmasters of Baxter's youth, tippling on the week-days and whipping the boys when they were drunk. Only three or four competent preachers lived in his vicinity, and these, though all were conformable but one, were marks of obloquy, and any who went to hear them, were treated with derision "under the odious name of a Puritan."

In the village where I lived the reader read the Common Prayer briefly, and the rest of the day, even till dark night almost except eating time, was spent in dancing under a May-pole and a great tree, not far from my father's door, where all the town met together: and though one of my father's own tenants was the piper, he could not restrain him, nor break the sport: so that we could not read the Scripture in our family without the great disturbance of the taber and pipe and noise in the street. Many times my mind was inclined to be among them, and sometimes I broke loose from conscience and joined with them; and the more I did it, the more I was inclined to it. But when I heard them call my father Puritan, it did much to cure me and alienate me from them: for I considered that my father's exercise of reading the Scripture was better than theirs, and would surely be better thought on by all men at the last; and I considered what it was for that he and others were thus derided. When I heard them speak scornfully of others as Puritans whom I never knew, I was

at first apt to believe all the lies and slanders wherewith they loaded them: but when I heard my own father so reproached, and perceived the drunkards were the forwardest in the reproach, I perceived that it was mere malice: for my father never scrupled Common Prayer or ceremonies, nor spake against bishops, nor ever so much as prayed but by a book or form, being not ever acquainted then with any that did otherwise: but only for reading Scripture, when the rest were dancing on the Lord's Day, and for praying (by a form out of the end of the Common Prayer-Book) in his house, and for reproving drunkards and swearers, and for talking sometimes a few words of Scripture and the life to come, he was reviled commonly by the name of Puritan, Precisian and Hypocrite: and so were the godly, conformable ministers that lived anywhere in the country near us, not only by our neighbours but by the common talk of the vulgar rabble of all about us. By this experience I was fully convinced that godly people were the best, and those that despised them and lived in sin and pleasure were a malignant, unhappy sort of people: and this kept me out of their company, except now and then, when the love of sports and play enticed me. . . .

Till this time I was satisfied in the matter of conformity: whilst I was young I had never been acquainted with any that were against it or that questioned it. I had joined with the Common Prayer with as hearty fervency as afterward I did with other prayers. As long as I had no prejudice against it, I had no stop in my devotions from any of its imperfections.

Here is Puritanism in all sincerity, but without a note of Separation, a devout Puritanism within the church, breathing the hope of a reformation from within, a hope unhappily not to be fulfilled. As one gazes into such a home, the vision rises of a great church purified without

schism, maintaining its integrity without losing its spirituality, the vision of an established order energized with a passion for righteousness, and of a rare spirituality restrained from excesses of expression by ordered decency, and tempered with saneness.

Baxter's education, beginning thus under incompetent and unfaithful tutors, was unfortunate throughout. On the point of entering Oxford, he was badly advised instead to put himself under the tuition of Wickstead, chaplain at Ludlow Castle, where it was thought his advantages would be great. Here he received little instruction; but a good library was at his disposal, in which he read, though without direction: and it was at Ludlow that he came under the influence of a friend whose piety, although he afterward became dissolute, exercised a critical and lasting influence, of which he wrote in later life with affectionate gratitude. Leaving Ludlow at the age of eighteen, he taught for a short period in the school at Wroxeter, and then being encouraged to enter court life, was commended by Wickstead to the Master of Revels, Sir Henry Herbert: but the essential Puritanism of the lad caused him within a month to turn in disgust from Whitehall. If Baxter had gone to Oxford, as he desired, he could hardly have failed to come under the influence of Chillingworth, Lord Falkland and their intimates, for he would have entered in the halcyon days of Great Tew and its Oxford coterie. To have missed this was an irreparable loss. No man could have made better use of a liberal education than this great writer and preacher.

Returning home from Whitehall in the winter of 1633, Baxter was enveloped in gloom, for within the house his mother was dying of a painful disease, and without was a protracted snow-storm, which rendered roads impassable for months. Under these melancholy conditions, the naturally morbid mind of the youth was confirmed in the purpose of entering the ministry and preaching "as a dying man to dying men." His theological studies were begun under the guidance of Francis Garbet, parish clergyman of Wroxeter, a stout churchman. It is to be noted that up to this time Baxter had had little acquaintance with non-conformity. His parents adhered to the church, he himself had been regularly confirmed, and the only non-conforming minister he knew was Barnell of Uppingham, whose piety exceeded his scholarship. About his twentieth year, he became acquainted with Joseph Symonds and Walter Cradock, who later attained distinction among non-conformists. It was at first not so much positive argument nor personal influence as the silencing and persecution of men he respected that led him to study the grounds of dissent.

Being appointed head-master of a newly endowed school in Dudley, he was ordained in 1638 at Worcester by Bishop Thornborough. His first preaching was at Dudley, where he made intimate non-conformist friends. Upon the ecclesiastical points, about which controversy was raging, he occupied at this time as always a sane and mediating position. The use of the cross in baptism he considered unlawful, and of the surplice doubtful, but he was willing to administer the

sacraments to communicants in any posture, kneeling, standing or sitting, and although he considered the liturgy defective, it was to his mind lawful, and might even be imposed. To Baxter the great fault in the church was lack of discipline, particularly as manifested in the neglect of pastoral care, and the admission of persons of unworthy and scandalous life to confirmation and the communion. Reformation, not schism, was his life-long programme. It was not the posture of the body, but the posture of the soul, that seemed important to him, before the sacraments.

Baxter was assistant minister at Bridgenorth in Shropshire, when the "*et cetera*" oath, demanding sweeping and indiscriminate adherence to the constituted Anglican order, was issued; and by this extreme measure the conscientious adherent of the church was impelled to go back through research and examine the original claims of Episcopacy. His conclusion from these studies was that the Anglican bishopric was different from the primitive bishopric of the New Testament.

In 1640, Dance, the dissolute and incompetent vicar of Kidderminster, compromised with the Puritan sentiment in his parish by allowing sixty pounds a year from his living for the support of a "lecturer," to be installed as his curate. Appointed to this office, Baxter was introduced to the field of his notable service. During the first two years at Kidderminster his influence was hampered by poor health, intense political agitation, and slander. Having withdrawn in 1642 to Gloucester for a month's respite, and finding on his return condi-

tions unfavorable to pastoral work in the great excitement of the opening war, he went to Coventry "with a purpose to stay there till one side or other had got the victory, and the war was ended; for so wise in matters of wars was I, and all the country besides, that we commonly supposed that a very few days or weeks, by one other battle, would end the wars." The battle of Edgehill already had been fought on a Sunday, when Baxter was preaching at Alcester within sound of the booming cannon. After the battle of Naseby, having spent the two years before it in Coventry, he visited the army in the field, being persuaded to accept the chaplaincy of Whalley's regiment, a post which he occupied from 1644 to 1646. The story of this visit and the impressions received from it may best be given in Baxter's own words. His loyalty to Parliament, Church and King, his condemnation of the subversive political sentiments of the army, and his estimate of Cromwell as a misguided usurper, swept away by ambition, are evident in every line.

Naseby being not far from Coventry where I was, and the noise of the victory being loud in our ears, and I having two or three that of old had been my friends in Cromwell's army, I was desirous to go see whether they were dead or alive; and so to Naseby field I went two days after the fight, and thence by the army's quarters before Leicester to seek my acquaintance. When I found them, I stayed with them a night, and I understood the state of the army much better than ever I had done before. We that lived in Coventry did keep to our old principles, and thought all others had done so too, except a very few inconsider-

able persons: we were unfeignedly for King and Parliament: we believed that the war was only to save the Parliament and kingdom from papists and delinquents, and to remove the dividers, that the king might again return to his parliament; and that no changes might be made in religion, but by the laws which had his free consent: we took the true happiness of King and people, church and state, to be our end and so we understood the Covenant, engaging both against papists and schismatics. But when I came to the army among Cromwell's soldiers, I found a new face of things, which I never dreamt of. I heard the plotting heads very hot upon that which intimated their intention to subvert both church and state. Abundance of the common troopers, and many of the officers, I found to be honest, sober, orthodox men, and others tractable, ready to hear the truth, and of upright intentions: but a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed sectaries had got into the highest places, and were Cromwell's chief favorites, and by their very heat and activity bore down the rest, or carried them along with them, and were the soul of the army, though much fewer in number than the rest. . . . By law or without it, they were resolved to take down not only bishops and liturgy and ceremonies, but all that did withstand their way. They were far from thinking of a moderate Episcopacy, or of any healing way between the Episcopal and the Presbyterians. They most honored the separatists, Anabaptists and Antinomians. . . .

As soon as I came to the army, Oliver Cromwell coldly bid me welcome, and never spake one word to me more while I was there. And his secretary gave out that there was a reformer come to the army to undeceive them, and to save church and state, with some such jeers. . . .

He would not dispute with me at all, but he would in good discourse very fluently pour out himself in the extolling of free

grace, which was savoury to them that had right principles, though he had some misunderstandings of free grace himself. He was a man of excellent natural parts for affection and oratory; but not well seen in the principles of his religion; of a sanguine complexion, naturally of such a vivacity, hilarity and alacrity as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much; but naturally also so far from humble thoughts of himself that it was his ruin.

Hereupon Cromwell's general religious zeal giveth way to the power of that ambition, which still increaseth as his successes do increase. Both piety and ambition concurred in his countenancing of all that he thought godly of what sect soever; piety pleadeth for them as godly, and charity as men, and ambition secretly telleth him what use he might make of them. He meaneth well in all this at the beginning, and thinketh he doth all for the safety of the godly and the public good, but not without an eye to himself. When successes had broken down all considerable opposition, he was then in the face of his strongest temptations, which conquered him, when he had conquered others.

In the day of Cromwell's success Baxter still stoutly maintained his criticism:

At this time Lord Broghill and the Earl of Warwick brought me to preach before Cromwell the Protector. I knew not which way to provoke him better to his duty than by preaching on 1 Cor. 1 : 10, against the divisions and distractions of the church, and shewing how mischievous a thing it was for politicians to maintain such divisions for their own ends, and to shew the necessity and means of union. But the plainness and nearness I heard was displeasing to him and his courtiers; but they put it up.

A while after Cromwell sent to speak with me, and when I came, in the presence only of three of his chief men, he began a

long and tedious speech to me of God's providence in the change of the government, and how God had owned it, and what great things had been done at home and abroad. When he had wearied us all with speaking thus slowly about an hour, I told him, it was too great condescension to acquaint me so fully with all these matters which were above me, but I told him that we took our ancient monarchy to be a blessing and not an evil to the land, and humbly craved his patience, that I might ask him how England had ever forfeited that blessing, and unto whom the forfeiture was made. Upon that question he was awakened into some passion, and told me it was no forfeiture, but God had changed it as pleased Him; and then he let fly at the Parliament, and especially by name at four or five of those members which were my chief acquaintance; and I presumed to defend them agains his passion; and thus four or five hours were spent.

Here is staunch Puritanism and staunch loyalty to Church and King. The year before Baxter's chaplaincy in Cromwell's army began, Chillingworth and Falkland were holding their conferences in the camp of the King, as conscious of the errors of the royal party, as was Baxter of the errors of the sectaries. Could such representatives of the royal army have met such a representative of the army of Cromwell, the differences would soon have been composed. On both sides were men of catholicity and moderation.

During the two years of his service with the army, Baxter continually suffered from his constitutional maladies, for he was a consumptive from youth, and in 1646 he was forced to retire. A haven of rest was opened to him by Lord and Lady Rous, whose friendship he had won in Worcestershire, and in the peace of

their house at Rous-Lench he spent three months, "entertained with the greatest care and tenderness." It was here that he wrote the first part of "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," at the very time when Jeremy Taylor was writing the "Liberty of Prophesying" in the seclusion of Golden Grove. The times were hardly more satisfactory to the Puritan protected by Cromwell than to the friend of Laud in exile. "The Saints' Everlasting Rest" in outlook and inspiration is a reminder of Bernard's "Hora Novissima, Tempora Pessima," for before each of these pious souls in evil times rose the vision of peace eternal in the better country. The world's indebtedness to Baxter and Taylor and More and Chillingworth is an indebtedness also to their gracious hosts at Rous-Lench and Golden Grove and Ragley and Great Tew, whose shelter proved to great souls a "secret place of the Most High," where they abode "under the shadow of the Almighty." Baxter, however, did not linger in mystic visions, for before he entered into his rest, he girded himself for mighty labors. His vision of the saints' everlasting rest was a stimulant, not a narcotic, a *sursum corda*, laboring in the might of which many a glimpse was vouchsafed him of the holy city here below, "coming down from God out of heaven."

On his recovery at Rous-Lench, he returned to Kidderminster, and from 1646 to 1660 exercised that "awakening ministry," the thrill of which is still felt. Vigorously as he had criticised Cromwell for his disloyalty to Parliament, Church and King, the great

Protector did not retaliate, but allowed the Kidderminster preacher "fourteen years liberty in such sweet employment." At Kidderminster we behold Baxter's principles at work, a model, unfortunately not followed elsewhere, of an Anglican parish reformed by a Puritan pastor. Here the spectacle greets us of an active Puritanism within the established order. The "reformed pastor" preached living sermons to the heart in place of the perfunctory addresses into which preaching had degenerated. He held meetings in private houses, instructed the ignorant in the truths of religion, taught men how to pray, encouraged them to discuss religious themes, catechised untiringly and systematically, held personal interviews. It was "an awakening ministry" indeed! The preacher tells his own story:

One advantage was that I came to a people that never had any awakening ministry before (but a few formal cold sermons of the curate): for if they had been hardened under a powerful ministry, and been sermon proof, I should have expected less.

Another advantage was that at first I was in the vigor of my spirits, and had a naturally familiar, moving voice (which is a great matter with the common hearers); and doing all in bodily weakness, as a dying man, my soul was the more easily brought to seriousness, and to preach as a dying man to dying men; for drowsy formality and customariness doth but stupefy the hearers, and rock them asleep. It must be serious preaching, which must make men serious in hearing and obeying it.

The congregation was usually full, so that we were fain to build five galleries after my coming thither. Our private meetings were also full. On the Lord's Days there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear an hundred families

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singing Psalms and repeating sermons, as you passed through the streets. In a word, when I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on His name, and when I came away, there were some streets, where there was not passed one family in the side of a street that did not so; and that did not by professing serious godliness give us hopes of their sincerity; and those families which were the worst, being inns and alehouses, usually some persons in each house did seem to be religious.

The point is not to be forgotten, that this was not a community of the pious, who had separated themselves from the established church, but a regular Anglican parish reformed by a Puritan pastor, a piety within the church. A pity it is that the way to piety without schism did not remain open.

Jeremy Taylor and Dr. Thomas Browne welcomed the Restoration no more heartily than did Baxter. His political convictions were not prejudiced by his personal fortunes, for he considered the Protectorate, which allowed him liberty, a usurpation, and rejoiced in the restoration of royalty, by which he was silenced. At the first he was in royal favor. In 1660 he preached before the House of Commons at Saint Margaret's, Westminster on the day before the Restoration was voted, and before the Lord Mayor and all London in Saint Paul's on the day of thanksgiving for Monk's success. As long as sane counsels prevailed, he was heartily with the royal and Episcopal cause. He was offered the Bishopric of Hereford by Clarendon, but declined it, requesting instead to be returned to his

lectureship at Kidderminster. Appointed a member of the Savoy Conference, he gave untiring zeal to the effort to reform the liturgy and to make the church comprehensive of all parties. Evil counsels, however, of reaction and retaliation soon prevailed. The Act of Uniformity and the Five Mile Act required more than men like Baxter could give, and put them under the ban.

Twenty years followed of intermittent persecution and imprisonment, with scattered opportunities for noble and wise preaching, untainted by bitterness. Several of these years were passed at Acton, where he enjoyed the friendship and support of Sir Matthew Hale, as an oasis in the desert. In 1685 he was charged with libelling the church in his innocent "Paraphrase of the New Testament," and tried with shameless treatment before the notorious Jeffreys, was sentenced to pay a fine, in default of which he was imprisoned for a year and a half. On his release, and especially after the revolution of 1688, he was free from molestation, and seems to have spent his last days in peace. He died in 1691 at the age of seventy-six, physically weak and consumptive from his youth, frequently disabled by extreme weakness, but preaching for more than fifty years as "a dying man to dying men," in all things approving himself as the minister of God, "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor

of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceiver, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold he lived; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

A statue erected in Kidderminster in 1875 represents the preacher preaching, and bears this inscription:

Between the years 1641 and 1660 this town was the scene of the labors of Richard Baxter, renowned equally for his Christian learning and his pastoral fidelity. In a stormy and divided age he advocated unity and comprehension, pointing the way to everlasting rest.

Churchmen and Nonconformists united to raise this memorial A. D. 1875.

Two hundred years after his labors, churchmen and non-conformists beheld their essential unity realized and anticipated in this great soul.

II

As Jeremy Taylor's "Liberty of Prophesying" has been overshadowed by the popularity of "Holy Dying," so Baxter's "Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of His Life and Times," the "Reliquiæ Baxterianæ," has been neglected for the "Saints' Rest." Devotional works looking to the future world, which teach men how to die, should not be allowed to eclipse practical treatises absorbed in earthly conditions, which teach men how to

live. The seventeenth century knew how to die better than it knew how to live. It bred many heroic souls glad to die for a partisan principle: it was not lacking in martyrs: but it produced few minds capable of rising above all partisanship into the vision of a state polity and a church catholicity, in which all parties, conserving their essential principles and virtues, might be comprehended. To this high and small company belonged Richard Baxter.

In the story of his life and times, written for the most part in 1664, 1665 and 1670, years to him of persecution, there breathes a catholic spirit, exerting itself to the utmost in irenic endeavors, none the less to be honored, because they failed.

It was the greatness of Baxter ever to preach and practise moderation in an age of passion.

Rash attempts of headstrong people do work against the good ends which they themselves intend; and the zeal which hath censorious strife and envy doth tend to confusion and every evil work: and overdoing is the ordinary way of undoing.

While we wrangle here in the dark, we are dying and passing to the world that will decide all our controversies: and the safest passage thither is by peaceable holiness.

Now I can see so easily what to say against both extremes, that I am much more inclinable to reconciling principles.

He opposes alike the censoriousness of the nonconformist and the persecuting ardor of the Anglican.

To persecute men, and then call them to charity is like whipping children to make them give over crying. I saw that he that will

be loved, must love. And he that will have children must be a father; and he that will be a tyrant must be contented with slaves.

He blames both parties. The indiscretion and "headiness" of separatists in their violence against King, bishops and liturgy have blown the coals of a wicked retaliatory persecution. He alludes to some, who stand at the church doors, while the Common Prayer is being read, saying, "We must stay, till he is out of his pottage." Quite different from such exasperating narrowness is Baxter's spirit:

I cannot be so narrow in my principles of church-communion as many are; that are so much for a liturgy, or so much against it, so much for ceremonies or so much against them, that they can hold communion with no church that is not of their mind and way.

He is ready to commune with Greeks, Lutherans, Independents, Anabaptists.

I cannot be of their opinion that think God will not accept him that prayeth by the Common Prayer Book, and that such forms are a self-invented worship which God rejecteth: nor yet can I be of their mind that say the like of extemporary prayers.

He is opposed to all extremes, and recognizes that one extreme excites the opposite. He sees that the sufferings of both parties are the reaction of their own violence. He opposes Cromwell's indiscriminate silencing of the royalist clergy no less than the King's silencing of the

opposite party in the Act of Uniformity. Of his sermon at the King's restoration he says:

The moderate were pleased with it; the fanatics were offended with me for keeping such a thanksgiving; the diocesan party thought I did suppress their joy.

In days of intense partisanship, Baxter's moderation left him almost alone.

Baxter is continually speaking of a "moderate Episcopacy." In one passage of great historical interest he shows that extreme views of Episcopacy were new to his day, and that the denial of the validity of non-Episcopal ordination was a decided innovation.

There were at that time two sorts of Episcopal men, who differed from each other more than the more moderate sort differed from the Presbyterians. The one was the old common moderate sort, who were commonly in doctrine Calvinists, and took Episcopacy to be necessary to the well being, but not the being of the church; and took all those of the reformed that had not bishops for true churches and ministers, wanting only that which they thought would make them more complete.

The other sort followed Dr. Hammond, and (for aught we knew) were very few, and very new. They held that ordination without bishops was invalid, and a ministry so ordained was null, and the reformed churches that had no bishops, nor presbyters ordained by bishops, were no true churches, though the Church of Rome be a true church, as having bishops. These men in doctrine were such as are called Arminians; and though the other sort were more numerous and elder, yet Dr. Hammond and the few that at first followed him, by their parts and interest in the nobility and gentry did carry it at last against the other party.

Now in my Christian Concord I had confessed that it was only the moderate ancient Episcopal party which I hoped for agreement with; it being impossible for the Presbyterian and Independent party to associate with them that take them and their churches and all the reformed ministers and churches that have not Episcopal ordination for null. And knowing that this opinion greatly tended to the division of the Christian churches, and gratifying the Papists, I spake freely against it, which alienated that party from me.

The insistence upon Episcopal ordination as alone valid was evidently a novelty in Baxter's day, and no such exclusive idea could have a place in the wide catholicity of his mind. It would be interesting to discover whether it was the Episcopal or non-conformist party that first sought to defend its polity and ministry as the order of the New Testament and of divine origin, with the denial that any body with a different polity could be a church at all. The argument was freely expounded on both sides. The distinction of originating it, however, would deserve no great honor.

In describing Baxter's position, moderation is the first note: reformation is the second. His platform was reformation, not separation. The parishes were to be taken as they were, and reformed: the stricter Christians were not to secede from them: the leaven was to remain in the lump. Instead of snatching brands from the burning, the fire was to be put out.

It is a better work to reform the parishes than to gather churches out of them, without great necessity.

And this began but in unwarrantable separations, and too much

aggravating the faults of the churches and common people, and Common Prayer Book and ministry; which indeed were none of them without faults to be lamented and reformed. But they thought that because it needed amendment, it required their obstinate separation.

Reformation of the existing parishes was a true mediating principle. It was a protest equally against the secession of the separatists and Anglican carelessness of living. The parishes were to remain in their integrity, but they were to be reformed. Baxter had a passion for discipline. He opposed on the one hand those who would separate the few strictly pious in churches by themselves. He said brave words, quite of the modern tenor, against overstrict and dogmatic tests of church membership. He did not wish the church of Christ unduly narrowed.

The doubt was, when I came to Kidderminster, whether it were better to take twenty professors for the church, and leave a reader to head and gratify the rest; or to attempt the just reformation of the parish.

On the other hand, however, he insisted equally that there must be discipline. The old laxity could not be tolerated; and it was on this practical ground that he attacked the diocesan bishopric. A bishop should have under his care no more souls than one man could care for. He favored the primitive bishopric of the New Testament, which to his mind consisted of one parish. The diocesan bishop was unable to discipline so many parishes. Baxter was for the parish, but

against the diocese. Each parish was to constitute a complete church in itself. He was with the Episcopal party in maintaining the parishes, but against it in the laxity of its discipline. He was with the Independents in their reforming fervor and in their contention that a single parish constituted a church, but against them in their overstrict communion and separation from the original parishes. He was a consistent mediator. Of the practicability of his mediating principles Kidderminster is the everlasting memorial.

To moderation and reformation a third principle must be added in characterizing Baxter, comprehension. He speaks of "sober, unanimous Christians," men "adhering to no faction, neither Episcopal, Presbyterian nor Independent, as to parties, but desiring union, and loving that which is good in all." He was tireless, almost tiresome, in proposing various schemes of union. He drew up elaborate platforms for harmony. Presbyterians and Episcopalians might unite, if the Presbyterians would have the presbyters elect a permanent president, and if the Episcopalians would recognize in him a bishop. The Anabaptists were to be satisfied by a stricter care of baptized children, and a more serious confirmation, so that adult membership in the church might mean a genuine Christian experience and faith. Congregationalists and Presbyterians should compose their differences by a mutual compromise, Presbyterians recognizing a church in a particular congregation, Congregationalists agreeing to the laying on of hands by elders in ordination. All parties were

to preach the fundamental truths in which all were agreed, and were to refrain from giving undue prominence to controverted points in which they differed. What golden precepts are these!

Let us agree that we will not preach for or against infant baptism, when our consciences tell us that the people's ignorance of greater truths, or their ungodliness, doth require us to deal with them on more weighty points.

Let us preach as seldom for or against infant baptism as conscience will permit; and particularly let that which herein we account the truth have but its due proportion of our time, compared with the multitude and greatness of other truths.

Let these points also have but an answerable proportion of our zeal, that we may not make people believe that they are greater matters than they are.

Let us not endeavor to reproach one another, when we think we are bound to speak for our opinions: that we make not each other uncapable of doing the people good.

To know God in Christ is life eternal. As the stock of the tree affordeth timber to build houses and cities, when the small though higher multifarious branches are but to make a crow's nest or a blaze: so the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, of heaven and holiness, doth build up the soul to endless blessedness, and affordeth it solid peace and comfort; when a multitude of school niceties serve but for vain janglings and hurtful diversions and contentions.

All honor to Cromwell and the "Ironsides" and the Pilgrims! Perhaps in no other way than by violence and separation, by the fierce clashing of extreme with extreme, could religion be purified: but the agitation that purified the church almost wrecked it. In Baxter,

with his moderation, reformation, comprehension, we seem to hear a voice saying both to belligerent churchmen and to belligerent separatists:

And yet I show unto you a more excellent way. Charity suffereth long and is kind, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.

CONCLUSION

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THESE blessed peace-makers manifest both the strength and weakness of the irenic. Without antipathies, they genially appreciated the truth and good in all the contending parties. Without partisanship, they lacked the effectiveness of men of one idea, the intensity of narrowness. Without a definite programme, political, ecclesiastical or doctrinal, they did not secure the immediate and striking results achieved in turn by the extreme Puritan and the extreme Anglican, but the reality of their abiding influence is manifest.

Hales, Chillingworth and Taylor are associated in thought, experience and mutual influence. Protégés of Laud, they were partners in suffering from Puritan persecution. Whichcote, Smith, More and Browne form a second group, known as "Cambridge Platonists." Unobnoxious to Puritanism, they suffered little from the stress of the times. Affiliated with neither group, Baxter in the peace-making spirit comes forward to meet these churchmen from the more Puritan and evangelical side.

In the first group there was a revival of the original Protestant emphasis upon freedom of personal inquiry, which unfortunately had been stifled as the Reforma-

tion advanced by a period of dogmatic uniformity. The authority of the Roman Church had been exchanged for the authority of Protestant dogma, and against both authorities the rights of the individual reason needed to be championed, the true Protestant self-reliance. These clear minds refused to consider reason vicious or hostile to revelation. Reason illumined by revelation is to be trusted, and personal responsibility, even at the cost of possible error, is to be preferred to any external infallibility. Intellectual errors are not dangerous in those whose wills and hearts are true. In maintaining the rights of the individual reason, variations of creed are likewise involved, but are not to be feared. It is one of the glories of these men that they made Christian unity to consist in unity of spirit rather than in uniformity of doctrine, which they considered not greatly to be desired, if it were possible. Diversity of opinion, in their view, is to be expected, and is not unfavorable to the unity of a church, in which many minds meet in mutual charity. The highest unity is that which combines not the homogeneous but the diverse.

Christian unity is to be sought as little in uniformity of ritual as in uniformity of doctrine. The Anglican tyranny of worship is opposed as vigorously as the Puritan tyranny of doctrine. The Anglican insisted upon liberty of belief, without allowing liberty of worship. The Puritan insisted upon liberty of worship without allowing liberty of belief. These broad souls espoused both liberties together, a true and sound mediation.

In distinguishing between essentials and non-essentials, they did further service to the cause of Christian unity. The fundamentals of faith, they held, were evident, a clear ground of unity, and divisions arose from precise and excessive definition of things not clearly revealed. A wholesome Christian agnosticism before unnecessary questions they encouraged as an aid to concord. They insisted that the way of life was not to be made narrower than Christ made it. If Papists, Calvinists, Lutherans and Anglicans would forget party names and be content to be plain and honest Christians, divisions would be dissipated. It was the spirit of the modern cry, "Back to Christ!"

Their views of the Bible were notable. The Scriptures were not to be approached with prepossessions, but were to be allowed to yield their original and natural sense. The essentials of faith stood forth clear and unquestioned. Before obscure passages an excessive curiosity to know more than has been revealed was to yield to patience and caution. Not a theory of the Bible, but the appreciation and practice of its God-given truth does it honor. Its authority is not external but internal, springing from its content, and its power over reason and conscience. The way was thus being cleared for a new and more vital appreciation of the Scriptures.

It was the peculiar service of the Cambridge Platonists to ignore the Roman theology, which through Augustine and Calvin dominated in the western church, and to revive the spirit of the Greek interpretation.

Whichcote and Smith, More and Browne rejoiced in a thought and experience of the divine immanence, which brought the transcendent God of Augustinianism near as Immanuel, God with us. To their insight God immanent in His world glorified nature, immanent in man established a kinship between the divine and human, immanent in Christ exalted the incarnation. The false Augustinian separation between God and man was nullified. Faith rose from an assent to doctrine to a participation in the divine life, carried perhaps to an extreme in the ecstatic mysticism of More and Browne. Paul's ethical mysticism, his blessed experience of vital union with Christ, was rescued from the oblivion into which it had fallen, and was exalted above his forensic doctrine of justification. The fulness of the incarnation, it was held, was not exhausted by the atonement. Forgiveness in Christ was not an end, but a means, preparatory to the supreme experience of the divine indwelling. There was a fresh appreciation of humanity, and of redemption as humanity's restoration to its true estate through the divine stimulation of "resident forces." The so-called "new theology" of the nineteenth century was thus clearly in evidence in the seventeenth. Whichcote and Smith were prophetic spirits indeed!

In More and Browne a rare interest in nature without was strangely combined with mystic contemplation of the life within. Their crude investigations of natural phenomena on the one hand, and their superstitious credulity toward the occult on the other are easily

criticised, but the union of interest in both nature and spirit is not easily overpraised. Mystics, they did not ignore the outer world. Naturalists, they did not ignore the inner world. They studied matter without being materialists. Living to-day, they would be interested alike in natural science and psychical research. Materialism has failed to explain matter. The scientific ultimate is no longer the atom but force, something less akin to matter than to spirit. It may be that in these mystic naturalists there was an anticipation of a union of science and religion still to come, in which science shall be religious and religion scientific, the world without finding its explanation in the world within.

In Baxter a devoutly evangelical spirit devotes itself to reformation of the church instead of separation from it, to a policy of comprehension without sacrifice of vital piety.

These men of moderation and insight were thus mediators, not only between the warring factions of their own time, but also between the past and present. In their atmosphere the modern spirit can freely breathe. Below the tumultuous waves of theological storm their spirits sounded the deeps where peace abides and the great currents smoothly but surely run.

Date Due