

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Discussions.

"MIRACLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT."

("The Churchman," January, 1912, p. 9, and February, 1912, p. 100.)

IN your January issue, the Rev. J. M. Thompson is quoted as obtaining his definition of a miracle from "Murray's Dictionary," and putting it forward as "embodying the view of those who regard miracles as being due to supernatural agency."

Through the courtesy of the writer of the article (the Rev. J. A. Harriss), I learn that the definition comes from the monumental and epoch-making "Oxford Dictionary," edited by Dr. Murray.

May I be allowed to point out—

(a) That a dictionary edited from that standpoint is hardly the place to which to go for an exact theological definition to be attributed—by Mr. Thompson—to a particular school of thought in the Church. Mr. Thompson is perhaps still young enough to learn that the first requisite in controversy is to insure that you take your definition of an opponent's views from an authority which he will recognize. That he has not done so in this case, Mr. Harriss has ably pointed out.

(b) That the minds of many readers would naturally turn to a *theological* source for the definition, and therefore "Murray's Dictionary" may, not unnaturally, suggest to many readers the equally well-known "Dictionary of the Bible," published by Mr. John Murray (whether in the 3 vol., 4 vol., or 1 vol. edition), and bearing his name. It seems, therefore, necessary to disavow that definition on behalf of "Murray's Dictionary of the Bible." Probably, every student of theology prefers his own exact definition of miracle, according as he is anxious to protect it against one or other of the current misapprehensions of the term, and therefore no definition may be entirely acceptable to any large school of thought. But, at any rate, the definition in a *Bible* dictionary may be fairly taken to represent one *theological* view, and might be more fittingly used than one from a secular dictionary.

It will be interesting for readers to compare the one quoted (p. 9, CHURCHMAN for January) from the Oxford Dictionary with the following, which is the view of the writer in the latest edition of "Murray's Dictionary of the Bible":

"We define a miracle, then, as a 'special providence'—an act suggesting either in itself, in its results, or in the person who performs it, the direct action of God, revealing His will and purpose towards mankind, *whether or not it can be fitted into the known course of nature.*"

W. C. PIERCY.

"REORDINATION AND REUNION."

(*"The Churchman," December, 1911, p. 910.*)

Owing to the late publication of Mr. Levens' letter, precluding a reply within the usual time limits, I am kindly permitted to meet his criticisms in this present number.

I would cordially agree with Mr. Levens' proposal as to the terms of reunion with Scotch Presbyterians. But, whereas he regards my proposal of "Extended Ordination" as certain to be unacceptable to them, I can but reply that his own proposals as to reordination seem to be absolutely the same as mine, *plus* the proviso that such reordination shall only be carried out gradually (though becoming automatically universal at the end of a generation). But that is merely a question of the practical details, into which I had not entered.

As for his further objection that certain Nonconformists refuse ordination of any sort, even non-episcopal, there are extremists on either side, and, if their wishes were regarded, not even the first steps towards a better state of things would ever be taken. If the moderates prove in actual practice the possibility of reunion, the extremists will either have to give way or to risk being eternally discredited. The responsibility will be theirs, not ours.

H. T. MALAHER.

"THE KIRK OF SCOTLAND AND THE EXPERIMENT OF 1610."

(*The Churchman, January, 1912, p. 44; and February, 1912, p. 148.*)

Although Mr. Levens offers no criticism of my article on the above subject, yet his reference to it in connection with the question of "Reordination and Reunion" entitles me, I think, to point out that, in one particular, his remarks do an injustice to my point of view. When he asks, "Supposing that the Established Church of Scotland and the Church of England were to unite, would it be necessary for the ministers of the former to be reordained?" he goes on to say: "Mr. Henderson would require reordination, but he would qualify it by the formula, 'If thou art not already ordained.'" Now, this is precisely what I do not hold. In my remarks on Mr. Malaher's paper I expressly, and in so many words, left Scottish Presbyterians out of the question altogether, my suggestion as to conditional ordination applying only to those Nonconformist bodies which have been neglectful or indifferent in regard to the principle of historic continuity in ordination. The position of Scottish Presbyterians differs *toto cælo* from theirs, for, as Mr. Levens says, the question of the validity of their Orders gives them no concern, seeing that they "can trace their Orders through ordained Presbyters to the time of the Reformation, when they merged into

Episcopal Orders; and *they are persuaded that the Episcopal power of ordination is inherent in the Presbyterate.*" Quite so; and therefore the purpose of my article on the Experiment of 1610 was to show that this last point was conceded when the three Presbyterian ministers were consecrated to the Episcopate without even conditional ordination to the diaconate and priesthood, and that, as a consequence, the Church of England, by regarding them as fit and proper "consecrandi," recognized as Catholic and Apostolic the source from which their Scottish Orders were derived.

If these facts be admitted, it follows logically that when Dr. Wallace Williamson, or any other duly ordained Presbyterian minister, celebrates the Holy Communion, he does for his own Church and people precisely what an Anglican priest does for his. Since, however, we cannot speak with equal confidence of the ministrations of Nonconformists in general, it would seem that *some* sort of reordination is necessary as a mutually recognized basis of intercommunion. Whether we call this "conditional" or "extended" ordination does not seem to matter much once the *principle* is recognized—that which Mr. Malaher so admirably defines as "the corporate preservation of historic and organic continuity with the original society."

As to the further question of the *expediency* of an interchange of ministry between Episcopally and Presbyterally ordained ministers, that is a matter of jurisdiction, and lies quite apart from the present discussion.

ALEXANDER HENDERSON.

"LIBERAL AND EVANGELICAL CHURCHMANSHIP."

(*"The Churchman," February, 1912, p. 96.*)

The Dean of St. Paul's in his excellent paper accuses the Evangelicals of not being sufficiently explicit in their preaching and teaching.

The advice of a candid friend is not always acceptable, but, when such a statement is made sincerely and kindly by a thoughtful and impartial friend, we feel that we ought at least to weigh the matter carefully and examine ourselves to see how far this statement is true.

Is it a fact that Evangelicals are in the habit of speaking in a language "not understood by the people"?

To some extent it is true, and the reason is fairly obvious. Every profession has its own peculiar phraseology which has grown up around it. In some cases it becomes quite a distinct language. It would be, for instance, comparatively an easy task for an electrical engineer to explain the complex arrangement of some piece of machinery to a brother engineer, but if a friend of another calling were to pay a visit to the works, to be initiated into the mysteries, the task of explanation

would become a task indeed. He would have to interpret the technical terms as far as possible into every-day language.

It is much the same in the matter of religion. It has its own peculiar phraseology, which has grown up around it, and which requires special elucidation when dealing with the uninitiated.

New experiences are bound to seek expression in new words. Hence, in the Bible, in the works of the Fathers, in the writings of the Schoolmen, in the books of the Reformers, we find new words and phrases gradually being coined to express new thoughts and experiences.

With these, the theological specialist has made himself familiar.

The more poetic and the allegorical phrases are used by hymn-writers, who do not find it convenient within the compass of a short hymn to explain allegories.

It is well to remember this, for the majority of children memorize quite as many hymns as they do portions of Scripture, and much of the "popular theology" is gained from hymns.

The candidate for Holy Orders has to concentrate for some years upon religious thought and writing, so that in time religious phraseology flows glibly from his tongue. It is objected that this use of Biblical and religious phraseology hinders the preacher from being explicit.

How far is this true? It is only partially true in the case of the regular worshipper, who has been educated from earliest days to study the Word of God. First, the *facts* of the Bible came to him. Then, he began to formulate a theology concerning them, and so, bit by bit, the truth dawned upon him. What may not have been explained in one sermon, may possibly have been gleaned from many others; and so, at length, he has a fair knowledge of the facts of the Bible and a theology concerning them. To him, the allegory, parable, and pictures of the Bible are quite clear, and, so far as he is concerned, the teaching of the pastor, given and received through the medium of religious phraseology, is easily understood. In fact, there are some people—once quaintly described by a little girl as "Ebenezer gentlemen"—who in the matter of religious and Biblical phraseology might well quote the words of the psalmist, "I have more understanding than my teachers," so adept are they in its usage. But, to be quite serious, the truly converted Christian is not slow of heart, and will, almost by a religious instinct, quickly divine the meaning of an allegorical saying. But the same cannot be said with regard to those *outside the Church*. What is suitable inside the Church is not so well adapted to the needs of those who are not professing Christians. When we come into contact with the uninitiated, the task of explanation becomes more difficult, and requires much thought and prayer. At the meeting at which the paper was read, the writer submitted, as an instance, the question so frequently asked in the open air, "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" and the Dean, replying, stated that that very phrase was in his mind—in fact, in his notes. Although it

may seem almost incredible to a Christian mind that anybody should fail to understand what is meant, such a phrase really needs a tremendous amount of explanation to the uninitiated. It is necessary to explain Who is the Lamb; why He is called a Lamb; what is the connection between the Lamb and the Sacrifice, between Sacrifice and sin, between Christ's Sacrifice and our sins, between pardon and washing, between washing and cleanness, between cleanness and holiness.

Even the exhortation to "Come to Jesus!" requires much explanation. It should be shown that God is Spirit, that man is spirit, and that the contact between God and man is spiritual.

Another fruitful cause of misunderstanding is the failure on the part of some to explain such an important phrase as "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The words, instead of being explained, are simply reiterated and emphasized. "Only believe, my friend." "All you have to do is to believe." "The moment you believe you are saved." The poor listener cannot believe that this is really all he has to do. It seems too good. "Yes, my brother," says the Evangelist, "It *does* seem too good to be true. But it's gloriously true. Only believe, and you are saved now, once and for ever." It is gloriously true, but it is only a part of the glorious truth. John the Baptist began by preaching *Repentance*. The Lord Jesus began His mission with the words "*Repent* and believe the Gospel." The Gospel says, Repent, believe, surrender, obey, continue.

In like manner the word "saved" is emphasized rather than explained, with the result that the general impression left upon the hearer is that Salvation is from Hell rather than from sin.

It seems, then, that we must admit that the Evangelical party have in the past taken too much for granted, that they are guilty of not clearly explaining their terms.

We are rather surprised, however, to find that this lack of lucidity is attributed to Evangelicals only!

Are we to understand that the "Anglo-Catholics" (let the term pass) are, either inside or outside the Church, more explicit than their neighbours?

Must we believe that there are no nebulous Liberal Churchmen— that all their thoughts are so simply expressed that the wayfaring man, though fool, shall not err therein?

Is it not fairer to state that, although the Gospel of Jesus Christ is undoubtedly adapted to the deepest necessities of human nature, it has been interpreted but inadequately in the past by *all* sections of the Church. It has been overlaid by the "mediævalism" of the "Catholics," hacked to pieces and badly put together by the Liberals, and but vaguely expressed by the Evangelicals.

It remains for the present generation to give earnest heed to the important work of *interpretation*. We Evangelicals, believing, as the

Dean has said, that there is a great future for us in the Church, should gladly take to heart the advice that has been given us, and preach the old glorious Gospel with increasing earnestness, but with a greater regard to lucidity.

P. R. PIERCE.

THE RELATIONS OF LIBERAL AND EVANGELICAL CHURCHMANSHIP.

(*"The Churchman," February, 1912, p. 89.*)

Many Evangelical Churchmen will have read with feelings of sadness and with searchings of heart the paper of the Dean of St. Paul's on the above subject.

They will be led to ask, Is this a true description of the state of parties in the Church, and is the remedy for the present distress to be found in the proposed alliance between Liberal and Evangelical Churchmen?

The statements made as to the relative condition of parties in the Church seem to require modification. It is true that the dominant party is that which would describe itself as "Catholic." It is, however, probable that at no time in the history of the Church were the "Evangelical" clergy in the majority. In the early part of the last century the High Church party comprised not merely persons of strong Church views, but the large number of persons who did not wish to be called party men. The fashion in the present day is for a clergyman to describe himself as a "Catholic," or as a "good Churchman," or, at least, as a "moderate" man. The last thing that a clergyman is willing to do is to subscribe himself an "Evangelical." This may arise in some cases from the feeling that in so doing he might seem unjustly to deny this title to others. The fact remains. The avowed "Evangelicals" as a party are in a minority. Their number, however, is not insignificant, though they may not be very ready to assert themselves. The lay people who stand behind them are, however, a great company and they probably largely outnumber the "Catholic" laymen. The action of extreme Ritualists has caused a deep cleavage in this matter. This is increasingly manifest. The same causes that drove the Wesleyans from the Church are still at work, especially in country parishes.

Dr. Inge draws attention to the fact that "there are some who predict the ascendancy of the Anglo-Catholic party in the near future." Some things certainly point that way. The great majority in the Southern Convocation were found ready to accept, without serious investigation, the Report of the Five Bishops on the Ornaments Rubric. A very large number of the same body were prepared to recommend a return to the first Prayer-Book of Edward VI. These facts show the

lengths to which the official clergy of the South are willing to go in an anti-Protestant direction. We must not forget, however, that this Convocation is not representative of the Parochial clergy, that it contains no lay element, and that the Northern Convocation has shown, particularly in its Upper House, a different temper.

We must, however, look before us. Dr. Inge points out that there are signs that the Anglo-Catholic movement has "reached its height." Disintegrating forces are at work. The isolation of the party which assumes to itself the title of "Catholic," is becoming more evident, especially through our intercourse with Nonconformists at home, in the colonies, and in the Mission field. But there is a falling away among the High Church party of a more serious kind. Many of our younger men at the Universities who come from "Catholic" homes, as well as those who come from "Protestant" families, are in danger of losing their hold upon the principles in which they have been brought up. The manuals which are placed in their hands, and from which their knowledge is largely drawn, contain not only extreme Church teaching, but the cut and dried conclusions of the Higher Criticism.

Dr. Inge writes of the younger generation of High Churchmen as "willing within certain limits to accept the results of scholarship and science." We should gladly learn what these "well-defined limits" are. Do they include the wild speculations of Dr. Cheyne on the Psalms, or the assumptions of Wellhausen and his followers, as to the origin of the Book of Deuteronomy? It is easy to demand a "theory of inspiration which shall satisfy the results of critical scholarship," even when those results seem assured. May we not demand in return some account of the "assured results" referred to? This, however, is a certain and lamentable fact, that many who have entered our Universities with the intention of taking Holy Orders have abandoned that purpose under the influence of what some would call "Liberal" theology.

This fact tends to break up the "Catholic" party. Many High Anglicans are becoming very anxious as to the maintenance of the Creeds. They oppose on this ground any modification of the opening and closing words of the "Quicunque Vult." They put this question in the forefront of their objection to any revision of the Prayer-Book, and they claim on this account the help of the Evangelical party in opposition to any change. We may gladly sympathize with them in any efforts to maintain "the faith of the Gospel," even if we would approve of some change in the use of the minatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed and desire some adaptation of the Prayer-Book to modern needs. Evangelical Churchmen have much sympathy with those High Churchmen, and they are many, who do not push to their extreme and logical conclusions the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, and their claims to sacerdotal prerogatives. We recognize them as allies in the defence of the faith.

Such are some of the considerations by which the description of parties in the Church given by the Dean of St. Paul's must be qualified.

But what are we to say to his invitation to the Evangelical party? What is the object of the proposed alliance? What is the "citadel" which they are to defend? Is it the Church as an Establishment, or as a "witness and keeper of Holy Writ." If the latter, then there must be some kind of agreement as to what the authority and value of Holy Scripture is.

When we turn to the Dean's paper to learn what his view of inspiration is, we are perplexed. I will not repeat the terms in which the Christian faith is spoken of on pages 93-5. I will take one sentence only—"The dogmas of the Church's Creeds, to come to close quarters with the burning question, are not believed in by Christians as brute facts, but are something rather different." We are not told what is meant by "brute facts." Bare facts, or facts that have no connection with our spiritual life, we understand. The facts of common life, of secular history, of science, these we can discuss and examine "coldly." But the facts of the Creeds, the truths of the Gospel we cannot treat thus. "It is not a vain thing, because it is your life. If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins."

"The word of the truth of the Gospel" cannot be treated by Christians as an open question. The Christian must have examined for himself the "many infallible proofs" that have been given to us of "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." He must "hold fast the form of sound words" committed unto him. The Gospel of Christ has from the first preaching of it been "the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe." It has commended itself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God." To this Gospel we hold fast. We cannot be again and again inquiring into the character of our tried friends.

"The friends he had, and their adoption tried, he grappled them to his soul with hooks of steel." We seem now to be invited to forsake "our confidence which hath great recompense of reward" and to trust in a "sacramental, or symbolic element in belief, mediating somehow between the world of science and the world of faith." Those who follow this new light are described by the Dean of St. Paul's as "reduced to a perplexed and troubled silence" in their conflict with prevailing doubts. He says to such "I have no answer to give." May we reasonably ask Evangelical Churchmen to accept this new Gospel? We find that St. Thomas demanded, and received that kind of proof of the resurrection which Dr. Inge says we might be supposed to seek.

The result was that St. Thomas did say, in effect, that "his faith was established on an absolutely sure basis." He did say that "Christ was certainly God." His devout and joyful exclamation was, "My

Lord, and my God." So far, however, are we from being taught to make a like demand that we are admonished not to imitate him. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Our faith rests upon attested facts. They are not bare facts, but are full of significance and power. "Because I live, ye shall live also." St. Paul desired to "know the power of Christ's Resurrection." The Gospel he preached is thus described, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." If it can be shown that these are not facts, then is our faith and preaching vain, and nothing can take its place.

We come therefore to the conclusion that the Evangelical clergy cannot unite with the party whose views are expressed in this paper. They believe that they are "set for the defence of the Gospel." Others, who hold different views on Church order, and who may lay claim to sacerdotal powers which we do not believe to be warranted, may yet unite with us in the maintenance of the literal truth of the Creeds of the Church. If it be true, as is alleged in this paper, that "the younger generation when they hear sermons about resting in the finished work of the Saviour, and being washed in the blood of the Lamb, wish to understand what the preacher means, but the words convey little or no meaning to them," then we must sorrowfully confess our fault, that we have allowed the children of our day to grow up without the knowledge of "the grace of God which bringeth salvation," and of the song of the redeemed. The remedy is plain. We must "strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die." The people are still waiting for the voice that says, "Come unto me." The Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, is present to "convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." It is recorded of one recently taken from us that "his whole heart was thrown into his extempore address at the evening service when he seldom failed to preach, and when he was listened to by a crowded congregation. There was no attempt at oratory . . . and though the sermons were by no means short, the hearers would often say they could have listened to him all night." What then did he preach about? "These discourses abounded in references to the blessedness of man's reconciliation to God through the merits of His Son." ("Life of Archbishop Maclagan," by F. D. How, p. 65).

JOSEPH NUNN.

THE RELATIONS OF LIBERAL AND EVANGELICAL
CHURCHMANSHIP.

(“*The Churchman*,” February, 1912, p. 89.)

As one of the younger Evangelical clergy, may I be allowed to welcome the article by Dr. Inge? All is not well with the Church of England, though there is no reason for despondency, and if the Liberal Churchmen and the Evangelicals can agree to unite on a common policy for the future, the Church of England may have a still more glorious future than its past has been.

I, too, speak as one who wishes to see the Church of England representative of the Christianity of England. Though still the Established Church, we have long since ceased to be the Church of the nation, and are in danger of still further sinking to be only one of the many denominations. This increasing weakness, relatively to the other great Christian bodies, has undoubtedly been brought about largely by the Church's own mistakes and lack of statesmanship.

Both Liberals and Evangelicals deplore the dominance of the sacerdotal party in the Church. It has gained an ascendancy far beyond its mere weight in numbers, by its vigorous enthusiasm and splendid organization, while the others have been disunited, and, until recently, not over-vigorous. The sacerdotal movement has forfeited the sympathy of the common-sense layman; it has hardened the differences between Church and Nonconformity, and it is certainly largely responsible for the present attack upon the Establishment and Endowments of the Church. Thousands of people have ceased to worship in the Church of England owing to the increase of Romanizing customs. They do not join the Nonconformists in any large numbers; they become the indifferent masses.

The Evangelicals have suffered most from the modern critical tendency, and have often been thought of as the last defenders of a lost cause. But balance is being recovered, though “the new Evangelicalism” is not the same as the old. It is frankly critical; it has gained a more spiritual theory of inspiration; it is more interested in social life; it refuses to use the old phrases; sometimes it looks suspiciously at the old organizations. Many young men will only call themselves Evangelicals with a qualification. Those who aim at more reverence in the services of public worship call themselves Central; others, in sympathy with critical thought call themselves Broad Evangelicals; some of us prefer to call ourselves Liberal Evangelicals, as showing our sympathy with Liberal thought without the haziness which we often attribute to Liberal Churchmen or Modernists. This groping after a new name shows the tendency of thought. The old phraseology is avoided, because it has so often been used as if religion were a mechanical “scheme of salvation” into which somehow we had

to fit ourselves. Religious phrases have often become a mere jingle, with little spiritual depth. Now the critical tendency has deepened the inward, personal grasp. Our religion must be that of experience, a moral and spiritual devotion which makes the whole of our life and work a ceaseless prayer. Religion becomes more mystical, more pervading, more all-embracing, though sometimes less articulate. And as religion deepens, it is less satisfied with external phraseology; words become more symbolic and indicative of truth, rather than fully expressing it. The Creeds become more personal, as their truths are grasped as spiritual facts. The Church becomes less an ecclesiastical polity, and more the dwelling of the Spirit. Hence the difference between the invisible and the visible Church; hence the desire to make the visible Church as comprehensive and expressive of the invisible Church as possible.

It is here, then, on this doctrine of the spiritual nature of the Church that we can unite, and as we do so, we shall aim at a Church that will be truly an expression of the national Christianity. Its Prayer-Book will be revised so as to be more adapted to present-day needs. The mediæval idea of hide-bound uniformity will be cast aside. Spiritual religion is not to be bound with "red tape." We shall aim at Christian re-union, not so much by absorption, as by comprehension. We shall cease to be reckoned as the ally of any political party, but, gaining sympathy with growing social ideas, shall show the applicability of our faith to all human needs. In short, we shall seek once again to establish in the hearts of English people a true Church of England, expressive of all that is best in our English religious life.

If the Dean of St. Paul's can help us to form a Liberal-Evangelical alliance which can do this, he may be assured of a very large measure of support from the younger clergy, and we shall have hope for the old Church of England yet.

A. J. HUMPHREYS.

