

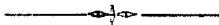
godly order of the first Book (understood in the sense in which its ambiguous language was defended by Cranmer), and for liturgical reasons might even desire to have some parts of it restored—if only there were no danger of doctrinal change—may very well be asked to pause and consider well the present position before they consent to give support to a proposal which, though it may commend itself as a conciliatory, charitable, and comprehensive compromise, would apparently tend to alter the doctrinal position of the Church of England on a most important point.

I cannot but think, and I venture humbly to express the opinion, that the serious effects which must be expected to follow on such a change of doctrine are very imperfectly apprehended by those esteemed and estimable men who are disposed to set down all opposition to such a proposal as due to the narrow-minded prejudices of an uninstructed, intolerant and bigoted ultra-Protestantism.

I believe it will be found that the first Book never gave real satisfaction to any party. For the short time it was in use (speaking generally) it was regarded by men of the "Old Learning" with disgust, of men of the "New Learning," by some with suspicion, by some few with distress.

And there are not wanting signs that now also it would fail to give satisfaction to those who regard themselves as the "Catholic" party in the Church, while in the opposite camp it is easy to see that its allowance would be followed by something more like a thunderstorm than an April shower, the atmosphere being already charged with what may be called an electricity of indignation, an indignation which those who have learned to thank God for the English Reformation (however they may deplore some of its manifestations, and however they may desire to follow after things which make for peace) can hardly pronounce to be unrighteous, or unnatural, or altogether uncalled for.

N. DIMOCK.



ART. II.—MESSAGES FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

II.—*Hebrews iii.*

LAST month we sought to find a message, "godly and wholesome, and necessary for these times," in the opening paragraphs in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We come now to interrogate our oracle again, and we open the third chapter as we do so.

Here again we find the Epistle full, first, of "Jesus Christ Himself." He is "the Apostle and the High Priest of our profession" (verse 1)—the "confession," that is, of us who confess His Name as His disciples. We are expressly called here to do what the first two chapters implied that we must do—to "consider Him" (verse 1), to bend upon His person, character, and work the attention of the whole heart and mind. We are pointed to His holy fidelity to His mission (verse 2) in words which equally remind us of His subordination to the Father's will and of His absolute authority as the Father's perfect Representative. We are reminded (verse 3) of that magnificent other side of His position, that He acts and administers in "the house of God" not as a servant, but as "His own SON (verse 6) that serveth Him." Nay, such is He that the "house" in which He does His filial service is a building which He Himself has reared (verse 3); He is its Architect and its Constructor in a sense in which none could be who is not Divine. Yes, He is no less than God (verse 4); God Filial, God so conditioned that He is also the faithful Sent-One of the Father, but none the less GOD. We saw Him already in chapter i. (verse 10) placed before us in His majesty as the Architect of the material Universe, to whom the starry skies are but His robe, to be put on and put off in season. Here He is the doer of a yet more wonderful achievement; He is the Builder of the Church of the Faithful. For the "house" which He thus built is nothing else than "we" (verse 6), who by faith have entered into the structure of the "living stones" (see 1 Pet. ii. 5), and who, by "the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope," abide in it.

Thus the blessed Lord is before us here again, filling our sphere of thought and contemplation. It is here, just as it is in the Epistle to the Colossians. There, as here, errors and confusions in the Church are in view—a subtle theosophy and also a retrograde ceremonialism, probably both amalgamating into one dangerous total. And St. Paul's method of defence for his converts there—what is it? Above all, it is the presentation of Jesus Christ, in the glories of His Person and His Work. He places HIM in the very front of thought, first as the Head, Founder, and Corner-stone of the Universe; then as the Head, Redeemer, and Life of the Church. With HIM so seen he meets the dreamy thinker and the ceremonial devotee; Christ is the ultimate and only rest, alike for thought and for the soul.

In this Epistle, as in that, we have the same phenomenon, deeply suggestive and seasonable for our life to-day. In both cases, not only for individuals, but for a church, was there mental and spiritual trouble. Alike in Phrygian Colossæ and

wherever "the Hebrews" lived, there was an invasion of church-difficulties and confusion. A certain affinity in detail links the two cases together. Colossian Christians and "Hebrew" Christians, under widely different circumstances, and no doubt in very different tones, persuasive in one case, threatening in the other, were pressed to *retrograde* from the sublime simplicity and fulness of the truth. Their danger was what I may venture to call a certain medievalism. Not Mosaism, not Prophetism, but Judaism, the successor and distortion of the ancient revelations, invited or commanded their adhesion, or, in the case of "the Hebrews," their return, as to the one true faith and fold. There were great differences in detail. At Colossæ it does not seem that the "medievalists" professed to deny Christianity; rather, they professed to teach the Judaistic version of it as the right sort. Among "the Hebrews" anti-Christianity was using every effort to allure or to alarm the disciples back to open Rabbinism, "doing despite to the Son of God." But both streams of tendency went in the same general direction so far, that they put into the utmost prominence aspects of religion full of a traditional ceremonialism, and of ideas of human achievement, rather than of spiritual reliance in things of the soul.

How significant it is that in both cases we have the danger met thus—by the presentation of the Incarnate Redeemer Himself, in His personal and official glory, to the directest possible view of every disciple, "nothing between"! The Epistles have much to say on deep general principles. But all this they say in vital connection with Jesus Christ; and about HIM they say most of all. He is the supreme Antidote. He, "considered," considered *fully*, is not so much the clue out of the labyrinth as the great point of view from which the mind and the soul can look down upon it and see how tortuous, and also how limited, it is.

But the message of our chapter is not yet fully heard. It has spoken to us of Christ Jesus, and of the "consideration" of Him to which we are called. In its close it speaks to us of faith: "Take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (verse 12). "To whom swear He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (verses 18, 19).

That is to say, our "consideration" of Jesus Christ must not be all our action towards Him, if we would be sure, and safe, and strong. It must be but the preliminary to a "heart of faith." That is to say, again, we must personally and practically take Him at His word, and rely upon Him, committing our souls and our all to Him, to Him directly, to Him

solely. We must, in this reliance, use Him evermore as our Prophet, Priest, and King. We must venture upon His promises just as Israel ought to have ventured upon the promises of Him who had redeemed them, though He *tried* their power to do so by the terrors of the wilderness and by the giants of Canaan.

Thus to rely is faith; faith is personal confidence in the Lord in His promise. And such faith is not only, as it is, the empty hand which receives Divine blessings in detail. It is the empty arms which clasp always that comprehensive blessing, the presence of "the living God" in Christ, and which so make sure of a secret of peace, of rest, of decision, of strength, of deep-sighted and tranquil thought upon "things which differ," which is of infinite importance in a time of confusion and debate in the Christian Church.

So, for our safety and for our usefulness, let us first afresh "consider Him." And then let us afresh "take heed" that with "a good heart of faith" we draw to and abide in union with the "considered" Christ, close to the living God.

H. C. G. MOULE.



ART. III.—TO WHAT EXTENT HAS CHRISTIANITY INFLUENCED LIBERAL JEWS?—I.

TWO great movements are abroad in the Jewish world to-day—"Zionism" and "Reformation," the one the very antithesis to the other. The one is a conservative force, reverting to the original conception of Judaism, and endeavouring to renew its youth; the other is altogether of a liberal and rationalizing tendency. The one is *constructive*, seeking to build on the old foundations, and to repair the desolations of many generations; the other is *destructive*, and would reduce Judaism to a mere religious persuasion. Zionism aims at re-creating the old Jewish nationality, and establishing a Jewish Church and State in Palestine; neo-Judaism seeks to destroy the possibility of such a contingency. Zionists are Jews first—Jews racially and religiously—and, in a very secondary sense, members of the various nations amongst whom they dwell. Neo-Jews, on the contrary, are first Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, or Americans, as the case may be, and Jews only by profession of religion, the distinctive features of which they are whittling away to a vanishing-point, by liberalizing creed, services, and customs.

The *raison d'être* of each of these remarkable movements is