

# Contemporary Commentary

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BY THE REV. F. J. TAYLOR, M.A.

## THE EIRENIC VOCATION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

IT has long been recognised by Christians of other traditions that the Church of England from its history and constitution possesses a unique opportunity of serving the cause of Christian reunion. A tenacious hold upon its heritage in the Church of the ages, together with its experience of reformation and acceptance of the supreme authority of Scripture, enables it to enter into fruitful conversation with churches both of the Catholic or Orthodox traditions and the non-episcopal churches of the Reformation. Such conversations which in recent years have been undertaken with Old Catholics and the Rumanian Orthodox Church at the same time as approaches were being made to the evangelical churches of Scotland, Finland, Latvia and Estonia, go as far as it is possible to go without compromising Anglican insistence on the supremacy of Scripture or the necessity of an Episcopal ministry. It might be supposed that this development was one of the fruits of the ecumenical consciousness which has been so significant a feature of the Christian history of the last fifty years. But in a recent lecture on the foundation of Albrecht Stumpff, of whom it has been said that he was "an ambassador of the Church in Germany to the Church in England and an interpreter of the Church of England to the Church in Germany", Professor Norman Sykes has drawn attention to an important but little known episode in the record of Anglican relations with continental Protestants.

The lecture *Daniel Ernst Jablonski and the Church of England*<sup>1</sup> discloses the serious proposals which were considered in the first few years of the eighteenth century by sovereigns, statesmen and ecclesiastics from Prussia, Hanover and England, directed towards an organic union between the Reformed Church of Prussia and the Lutheran Church of Hanover. The Church of England was invited to act as mediator and to become a third party in the proposed union. The person most active in these negotiations was Daniel Ernst Jablonski, who in the present age would undoubtedly have been regarded as a personal embodiment of ecumenicity. Educated in a school where Lutheran and Reformed lived peaceably together, he became first an ordained minister of the Reformed Church and then in 1699 a bishop of the Moravian Brethren. He was quick to insist to some of his correspondents that Moravian bishops possessed the reality of consecration and that the title of Superintendent had been employed on some occasions only because of "the popish associations of the word bishop". For nearly half a century he served as court preacher to successive Prussian kings but kept in close touch with Lutheran circles. As a young student in Oxford, Jablonski had gained an acquaintance with the Church of England—which previously he had

<sup>1</sup> S.P.C.K., 2/-.

been taught to view with hostility—and formed lasting friendships with such men as William Wake and William Beveridge, who in later years were to occupy influential posts in the church. His early opinions of the doctrine, order and worship of the Church of England were replaced by a growing conviction of its orthodoxy and apostolic practice, “so that of all the reformed churches it seemed to him the nearest to the pattern of the primitive church, as well as being the ornament of the Reformation and the staunchest bulwark against Rome”. After his return to Germany in 1683 he maintained a considerable correspondence with friends in England, to one of whom he wrote in 1697 that the Church of England “almost alone so departed from the Church of Rome as not to depart from the Universal Church”. The successive negotiations in which Jablonski was involved failed to inaugurate that Christian union which was the grand passion of his life. The complicated political relationships of the three countries concerned and the larger affairs of State deprived the scheme of that support of statesmen “without which in that century no ecclesiastical project could hope for success”.

Several features of this long forgotten history are worthy of further comment. Jablonski showed himself aware of the extent to which certain words and titles attract to themselves an emotional content which prove a hindrance in ecumenical discussion. He proposed that the names Lutheran and Reformed, which had too often been used as battle cries, should be dropped and the common designation Evangelical be used in opposition to that of Rome, which relies most on tradition. In another direction Jablonski was not so shrewd in his understanding of the situation, for he clearly underestimated the extent of the differences between Lutheran and Reformed. If political obstacles hindered the effective participation of statesmen in the project, the opposition of rigid theologians should have been met with more careful arguments. What is interesting to observe is that the Anglican promoters of the scheme were high churchmen and Tories. The names which appear in the narrative are not those of Sancroft, Compton or Burnet, who were low church whigs and known to favour relations with foreign churches in general, but of Archbishop Sharp, Bishop Robinson and Dr. Smalridge. Even the notorious Atterbury, self-constituted defender of the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation, was willing to give favourable consideration to the matter.

In the detailed proposals which were canvassed Jablonski fastened upon those essential elements in the Anglican approach to other churches which are features of more recent discussions. The reader is made conscious of a certain continuity in Anglican relationships with other churches, despite the inevitable shift in emphasis at different periods. Jablonski and Archbishop Wake both perceived that agreement in doctrine must relate to the fundamentals of faith and that no church could rightly seek to impose on another its own particular confessional standards, however useful they might have been to itself. The resolutions of both English Convocations in accepting inter-communion with the Old Catholics in 1932 explicitly asserted that this does “not require from either communion the acceptance of all

doctrinal opinions, sacramental devotion or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith".<sup>1</sup> Beyond this area of agreement, divergences are both necessary and desirable, but all who are concerned with Christian reunion must keep unceasing watch on the inveterate tendency of the ecclesiastical mind to incorporate what may well be lawful opinions into the very substance of the faith. Probably few Anglicans to-day would be as ready as Jablonski was to make the Book of Common Prayer the basis of liturgical fellowship between uniting churches, although it is apparent that if unity is to have any reality there will need to be agreement on the form and matter of sacramental ordinances and some degree of approximation to common standards of worship. It is not yet clear how much uniformity is necessary in the worship of a 'united' church. It may be that in a few years the Church of South India will have a good deal of experience in this part of its life to share with other churches. Jablonski not only observed the vigour and firmness of the Anglican hold upon episcopacy but was himself firmly convinced of its truth and importance. For organic union, the implied readiness on the part of continental Protestants to receive again that episcopacy which under the stress of necessity they had lost in the 16th century, had to be met by an equal readiness on the part of the Church of England to accept responsibility for providing a church which desired to remedy its lack, with the historic episcopate. If the perusal of this pamphlet encourages the Anglican in his conviction of the unique vocation of his church it must also, in the words of Professor Sykes, leave him with "a just sense of the responsibilities and obligations therewith laid upon his church, and move him to humble prayer" that it may be made worthy to fulfil its divine calling.

### THE CHRISTIAN SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK

**I**NFORMED observers of the contemporary scene have for some time been aware of how wide and deep a gulf separates the mass of industrial workers from the life of the church in their midst. There are few signs in the post war period that this gulf is being narrowed, although the absence of open hostility and the continuance of a careless benevolence at least in this country may induce a dangerous mood of complacency amongst churchmen. Christian men and women who themselves are unconscious of any close link between the faith they profess and the things they have to do in the course of their daily work must not be surprised if there is on the part of many others a rooted disbelief that the church has anything to offer which bears upon the way in which life must be lived in the pressures and conflicts of political and industrial life. The World Council of Churches has done well to choose the meaning of work as one of four main subjects to which the member churches are to be invited to give careful study during the next few years. Work is for most men one of the central realities of their existence, and to concentrate attention on the meaning of work in modern society may go far towards bridging the gulf between

<sup>1</sup> *Documents on Christian Unity*, ed. G. K. A. Bell. Third Series, 1948, p. 62

“ Christian teaching as it is commonly understood and the realities of daily experience ”.

Some preliminary work in this field was undertaken in 1949, and Dr. J. H. Oldham has embodied in a pregnant essay entitled *Work in Modern Society*<sup>1</sup> the preliminary conclusions reached by a competent group of industrialists, sociologists and theologians. Any reader of this document will be impressed by its profound grasp alike of Christian insight and industrial realities, as well as the clarity of the writing. No more useful or profitable task could be undertaken by frontier groups all over the country in coming months than the disciplined study of the questions raised by this essay. Where no such groups exist, local Christian leadership worthy of the name should seize the opportunity afforded by this document to open up fruitful conversations with industrial workers and managers, of whom so few are at present convinced of the relevance of the Gospel to the realities of life as they know them. But let no one suppose that this will be an easy task. A perusal of what Dr. Oldham has written will make the Christian aware, perhaps for the first time, of the likely range of such discussions and of the complexity of the issues. An attempt to follow some of the proposals will necessitate a revolution in our conventional ecclesiastical assumptions and procedures.

The church has for a long time been failing in its pastoral duty to its own members, as also to thousands of those who stand apart from its fellowship, in not giving that relevant guidance for daily work which is needed. Christians must interest themselves in the questions which confront men in their daily experience and so seek to help them to make their decisions as Christian men. Those who exercise responsibility in politics, industry or commerce need the illumination of theological insight and the support of Christian fellowship, but neither theologians nor parochial clergy can give this guidance if they work in isolation. They are withdrawn from first hand experience of the perplexities and pressures of life in secular society, so that their work has to be brought into touch with the living experience of those who must wrestle in their daily work with the social and economic realities of modern society. To rely on the proclamation of principles formulated apart from this experience is to fail in the pastoral task of giving concrete reality to the meaning of Christian discipleship.

The Reformation struggled to repudiate the idea of a double standard of religion and morals by making vocation a universal term applicable to all states of life and all kinds of work. It also sought to define the meaning of the priestly calling of the church in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. But the sons of the Reformation have only too frequently allowed these great truths to be confined within the narrow limits of ecclesiastical concepts. As Dr. Oldham remarks, “ Protestant thought has remained wavering and uncertain in its attitude to the secular life ”, with the result that the work in which the great majority of men and women are employed has commonly been regarded as religiously neutral. Yet missionary service, the ordained ministry, education, medicine, and social service are only possible callings because they can be carried on the backs of those

<sup>1</sup> S.C.M. Press, pp. 64, 3/6.

engaged in the basic work of producing food, fuel, clothing and shelter. It is in the sphere of daily work and its meaning that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers comes alive and the ministry of the laity is seen to be of decisive import for the church and the world. Nothing can exceed in importance the proper development of non-clerical ministries if the church is to fulfil its duty to modern society.

One of the dangers which accompanies a conviction that the Gospel embodies that divine word which the world must hear and receive if it is to be saved, is to lead Christians to suppose that they can lay down Christian principles and demand that they be applied to society. The implication of much Christian teaching in political and economic topics is the exploitation, for ecclesiastical ends, of the confusion and perplexities of modern society. The truth is that the church must learn to be a listening church in a new way. What is the significance for Christian faith of the "great adventure in which mankind is attempting through science and technics to control and shape its destiny"? Is the capacity of man to discover the hidden forces of the world and to transform his environment merely the demoniacal assertion of human pride or the proper use of a God-given endowment? Christian thinkers must take account of the creative possibilities and resources with which the achievements of man in recent centuries have shown him to be endowed. It can be no true part of Christian teaching deliberately to belittle man and his responsibility before God. But only a listening church can hear the Word of God which is being articulated in the context of modern society.

### THE GOD THAT FAILED

**F**EW recent documents dealing with Communism demand as careful a scrutiny by Christians as a volume of essays published under the title *The God That Failed*.<sup>1</sup> Six distinguished writers and journalists who at some moment between the October Revolution of 1917 and the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939 had been converted to Communism and subsequently had recanted, were asked "by an act of imaginative self-analysis" to recreate the past and write an account of the circumstances in which the conversion had occurred with its subsequent meaning. Each essay describes in autobiographical form a journey into Communism and a return from it. It is not the purpose of the book to swell the flood of anti-communist propaganda, nor will Christians be able easily to use what is printed here as material for an offensive against the communist challenge which still confronts the church. Richard Crossman in his introduction suggests that, as persons of unusual sensitivity, the authors "had a heightened perception of the spirit of the age and felt more acutely than others, both its frustrations and hopes". But none of these intelligent, bewildered men who chose Communism after tortured struggles of conscience and then later were driven through further agonising struggles of conscience to repudiate their choice, has turned to Christianity.

They have all confessed that the God for whom they had decided

<sup>1</sup> With a preface by R. H. S. Crossman (*Hamish Hamilton*, pp. 272, 12/6).

betrayed them in the end. Silone was haunted by the laughter that echoed round the Kremlin when an English communist protested, "But that would be a lie". Wright was flung out of a May Day procession by communists whose struggle he sought to share, but whose party line subservience he could not accept. Gide, Fischer and Spender found the promised Utopia a place which surpassed in relentless cruelty the disorder of western society to which it was opposed. Like Koestler in his prison, they discovered such an inner contradiction in Communism that the very things in which they had believed so passionately and which moved them to seek after it were being betrayed in practice. The artist and the scientist found that they no longer enjoyed unfettered liberty to seek after the truth and express it. Their gifts and work alike were prostituted to the service of the party. Koestler describes in some detail the technique of conditioning and the habit of using a distinctive vocabulary embodied in slogans which inhibited free creature thought. "Two hours of this dialectical tomtom and you didn't know whether you were a boy or a girl and were ready to believe either as soon as the rejected alternative appeared in inverted commas. You were also ready to believe that . . . socialist and capitalist countries (a) could live peacefully side by side and (b) could not live peacefully side by side : and that when Engels had written that Socialism in one country was impossible, he had meant the exact opposite."

Yet those who at any point had been deeply committed to Communism will never really escape from it. Its appeal to them had lain in the fact that it had offered nothing and demanded everything, including the surrender of spiritual and intellectual freedom. The ex-communist will always live his life within its dialectic. As Silone says, "To have been in the Communist party leaves a mark on the character which lasts all one's life : . . . the final struggle will be between the Communists and the ex-Communists". This means that there was inevitably a note of sadness about the break with Communism for these men. They broke with it because they could do no other, but they were aware of loss as well as gain. Silone remarks, "The day I left the Communist party was a very sad one for me, it was a day of deep mourning. . . ." For Wright the real sacrifice was made when he left the party. "I knew in my heart that I should never be able to write that way again . . . should never again express such passionate hope, should never again make so total a commitment of faith."

Three comments may be allowed on these profoundly moving spiritual autobiographies. First, has the Christian Church taken that part in the total struggle of Western man that it ought to have done? Has it stirred the conscience of even a small proportion of its members to struggle and to suffer for the bewildered, lost man of the twentieth century industrial world? The intellectual, says Crossman, though he had abandoned orthodox Christianity, felt the pricking of its moral demands more acutely than many church-going neighbours. Did these men, who have displayed their spiritual history to the readers of this book, come nearer to Christian duty in the West between the two world wars than the accredited Christian leaders? Secondly, has

the total demand of Christian discipleship been articulated as clearly and relevantly as it should have been, or has it been too closely linked with the service and preservation of Christian institutions which can never rightly claim a total loyalty? Is this total demand on the human spirit, which both Christianity and Communism must make, compatible with intellectual and artistic freedom? Or is something like the totalitarianism of medieval Catholicism the only alternative in the long run, to the intellectual and spiritual anarchy of nineteenth century liberalism? Intellectual freedom as understood in the West is clearly not compatible with Communism. Has the Christian Church the creative word to speak at this point? Thirdly, these essays illustrate the vivid awareness of world community which the Communist possesses. "I remember," says Koestler, "writing a sincere and eloquent election leaflet which proved why events in Shanghai were more important to the German working class than events in Berlin." The Communist rarely forgets the world background of his struggle and witness, but the Christian Church finds it very difficult to rouse its ordinary members to a realisation of their common membership of Christ and the world-wide obligation that rests upon them as a consequence. The Church must learn from Communism as well as strive to overcome it with weapons which are not carnal.

#### AN ESSAY IN CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE

**T**HE island of Ceylon forms a natural territorial unit in which the visible oneness of the church could be a reality. The familiar difficulties experienced by minority Christian groups struggling in a pagan environment marked by a great natural cohesiveness of the peoples, to obey their evangelistic duty, provided the impulse towards church union. The experience and example of the separated Christians who were uniting in the Church of South India quickened the will to come together in open fellowship in Ceylon. In 1940 the Ceylon synod of the Methodist Church invited the other constituent churches of the National Christian Council of Ceylon (Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregationalist) to explore the possibility of opening negotiations for church union. The invitation was accepted and a negotiating committee set up. Interim reports were issued to the churches concerned, both to keep them informed and to elicit their criticisms of the proposals. In July, 1949, the complete scheme of union was presented to the churches for consideration and decision. There are, as might be anticipated, close links with the scheme which was formulated in South India, but also some distinctive features. The document<sup>1</sup> merits the most careful examination, since what is for the Christian good of Ceylon cannot be without value for the church in England.

The purpose of the union is stated to be the furtherance of the realization of God's will as revealed by our Lord—"That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me". The united church will be continuous with the church of yesterday (legal instruments will be drawn to give administrative expression to

<sup>1</sup> *Scheme of Church Union in Ceylon*, U.S.C.L. (India). Lutterworth Press (London), 2/8.

this truth) and a true part of the One, Holy, Catholic Apostolic Church, yet giving effective expression in its worship and work to the genius of the country. The negotiations have been inspired by the hope that the discipline of living together which is involved in any true union will release such power as to compel attention to the witness of union. "Sanctified in truth, that they all may be one, that the world may believe." The united church will endeavour to maintain fellowship with all those branches of the church with which in their separation the uniting groups enjoyed fellowship. It is hoped that the necessary organization of a constitution will never be allowed to dominate or restrict the real life of the church or be used as a barrier against "the fuller truth and richer life to be attained in a wider fellowship". Indeed, much of the detailed structure of the constitution can only be drawn up by the united church.

Two points call for some further discussion. The presence of representatives of the Baptist tradition among the negotiators is reflected in the tension about baptism which is recognized in the details of the scheme. Both infant baptism and adult baptism are to be permissible, as well as any of the three traditional modes of administering the rite. Provision is made for a service of dedication of infants for those parents who do not desire them to be baptised in infancy, and any minister who has scruples about infant baptism may invite some other minister of the united church to perform the rite. This permission, together with the statement that "they that are baptised receive the new birth, forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit", reveal the tension which already exists, and although on paper the suggestions have a certain air of unreality, it may be that experience of living together on the part of those who have divergent convictions on this point can resolve the tension.

The negotiating churches accept the historic episcopate in a constitutional form as part of the basis of union, and as in South India no minister or member of the church will be required to assent to any particular interpretation of episcopacy. The administrative and disciplinary powers of the bishops are strictly limited in that they cannot act apart from the constitutional organs of the church. In the event of disagreement in questions of faith or order, neither a diocesan council nor the synod of the whole church may take a final vote before a majority in each house sitting separately (bishops, presbyters and deacons, lay members) has accepted the proposition. This provision appears to accept the possibility that one house may effectively block all change and prevent the church from fulfilling its declared intention to grow in grace and in fellowship. Unlike the Church of South India, the Church of Ceylon proposes to unify the ministry at the inauguration of the union by a commissioning service. The professed object of this commissioning is to extend into every part of the united church the ministerial authority of those who served in the separated communions and so to join together the several inheritances of grace and authority which had been hitherto possessed by the ministries concerned. It is further stated that to "avoid all unnecessary scruples, the use of this rite does not imply a denial of the reality of any commission or ordination previously received". But scruples are not so easily resolved as



this and the proposed wording reads very like a re-ordination. The mutual bestowal of authority to minister in communities where previously there was no such authority may be a necessary thing to do, but it must be drawn in terms which do not deny that the ministry fulfilled in separation, though defective, was nevertheless a ministry owned of God.

### RETHINKING REVIVAL

**T**HE careful historical study by Dr. Edwin Orr<sup>1</sup> of the series of revival movements which began about 1859 and persisted for some years, has not only filled a gap in the serious study of Evangelical history, but raises certain queries in the mind of the considering reader. The desire for revival is widespread if not deep at the present time, and frequently receives expression in Evangelical circles, so that some examination of the sources, the progress and results of a major revival movement is not without point. Historians have commented on the extraordinary religious character of England in the middle of the second half of the nineteenth century—a condition of affairs quite unparalleled in the religious history of Britain, either before or since. Dr. Orr displays the distinctively spiritual factors in this development, but there are questions which are not answered about the part played in it by the assumptions of society and the economic order. Although the book is an historical study, it is nevertheless written with an eye on the present and assumes that revival is a necessary, good and fruitful episode in the life of the church, much to be desired at the present moment. The challenge with which the reader is left is in the pertinent question, Has the day of Revival passed? The author does not pose the question whether revival, at any rate in the form described in this book, is so desirable that churches should order their activities and programmes to prepare for it.

There is widespread agreement that revival is a spiritual event, accomplished by the Spirit of God rather than by human organization or preparation. But if such a conclusion is taken seriously, those who look for revival should realise that any genuine spiritual movement on a wide scale is hardly likely to conform to the pattern of earlier revivals. Yet there is a persistent tendency to give to the word revival a content similar to what is described historically in this book. "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." The sovereign freedom of the Spirit suggests that there is bound to be something unpredictable about His activity. A close study of the evidence afforded by Dr. Orr shows that the spiritual vitality of the 1859 revival was so varied in its appearance and results that men were aware of being impelled into new and unforeseen situations where there was no precedent to follow.

The history of the Christian Church can be regarded as the record of the constant ebb and flow of a spiritual tide, or—to vary the metaphor—of alternating periods of decay and revival. Most revival movements have in some measure embodied strong protests against the

<sup>1</sup> *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain* (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 17/6).

church life of the day and so manifested a certain independence of traditional ecclesiastical procedure. Early monasticism for a long time bore the aspect of a movement apart from the ordered life of the church and openly critical of it. Methodism, though at the first an attempt to restore life to the dry bones of Anglican liturgy, doctrine and parochial machinery, yet found itself obliged to fashion new organs for the operation of the spiritual forces that had been released. In the years that followed 1859 new spiritual ventures were devised to give appropriate expression to the new spiritual impulse. Some of the characteristic organizations of this period could not be contained within the bounds of a church but acquired an independent and supra-denominational character. But this very character carried more of the marks of the social and economic assumptions of the later nineteenth century than was realised at the time, until in 1950 such groups have the aspect of survivals from another age. One thing seems quite clear. No mere archaism will meet the needs of a disillusioned and frightened world. Revival in the twentieth century, if it is truly of God, will not be a form of mass emotion but a fresh creative episode in the history of the people of God. It is hardly likely to fit into existing assumptions and organizations and, as in the past, will bring almost intolerable tensions into the life of the church. A genuine spiritual movement of this order will inaugurate such a revolution in current assumptions and methods as to secure its rejection by many godly people. Yet only so can it come to grips with the real perplexities and fears of this age.

### A NEW ECUMENICAL TASK

THE study of ecclesiastical history in any of its various phases will speedily direct the investigator to an awareness of the importance of preaching in the life of the Church. The Pauline word, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe", points both to the creative importance of proclamation in the formative period of Church history and also to the seeming impotence of the spoken word as an instrument for the accomplishment of significant developments in history. The difficulty of the preacher's task in the modern world is acutely felt by those who carry that particular burden, while the tendency to belittle the importance of the sermon which is widespread in more than one denomination is frequently only a pitiable attempt at rationalisation of this difficulty. The task is determined both by the message of the act of God in Christ, entrusted to the preacher, to be rediscovered and re-thought through the Bible and by the presupposition and conditions of life experienced by his hearers. In the Donellan Lectures<sup>1</sup> delivered in Dublin in 1949, the new primate of Sweden, Archbishop Brilioth, has emphasised the fact that not only is unlimited diligence required for the proper fulfilment of this "tremendous task" but also that "there is need for the sharing of experience between the churches. Here is an ecumenical task which has not yet been properly considered." He comments on the lack of systematic investigation into many of the problems which surround the

<sup>1</sup> *Landmarks in the History of Preaching* (S.P.C.K., 2/6).

act of preaching in different Christian traditions, and adds, "We should like to know how far the different denominations have evolved homiletical types of their own." Only an ecumenical study could elucidate these problems and help the Church to see the intimate connection between a distinctive understanding of the Gospel embodied in a particular Church tradition and conceptions of the significance of preaching.

Archbishop Brilioth in these lectures makes a valuable contribution towards the beginning of such an investigation by considering the heritage of the Christian past. Preaching may be classified in two main ways. First, missionary preaching, which lacks a liturgical setting and can assume nothing of biblical knowledge or Christian tradition. Under this head may be included the instructive and hortatory discourses addressed to catechumens or the newly baptised. Secondly, "it is a feature peculiar to biblical religion to give to the spoken word a place in the worship of the religious community as one of its essential elements." It is not always possible to keep distinct these two sets of conditions—preaching to "them that are without," to explain to them the Christian message and convince them of its truth and importance—and preaching in the Church. The latter is defined by Brilioth, from the sermon preached by the Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16ff), as liturgical—itself a mode of worship; expository—expounding the truth of scripture; and prophetic—making the scriptural text a living word in the actual situation. In the ancient Church this threefold character of a Christian sermon was hardly preserved when the pagan tradition of oratory invaded the sanctuary. John Chrysostom, with his exquisite rhetorical craftsmanship illustrates the tension between the biblical and the classical traditions in Christian speech, for many of those who flocked to hear him went for aesthetic amusement rather than for edification. Augustine, who was the first to write a homiletical handbook, does manifest a real balance between the three essential elements of the sermon, but after his time the growth of liturgical worship narrowed the place accorded to the sermon, and the prophetic element was largely displaced by a practical moralizing tendency.

Evangelical Christians have often exaggerated the decline of preaching in the Middle Ages. Recent scholarship has demonstrated the very great care which was devoted to the mastery of the right technique, and the mass of surviving material testifies to a great deal of popular preaching which, particularly in the epoch of the Crusades and in fourteenth century England, had considerable political and social importance. But the divorce between liturgy and preaching was almost complete, since the frequent preaching of the friars and other revivalists was rarely delivered at the Sunday Mass. With Luther the sermon regained its place in the centre of the liturgy, although the elements of exposition and prophecy were more prominent in his sermons. In England, Latimer revived the medieval use of anecdotes and stories, while Andrewes used the medieval homiletic structure and showed considerable ingenuity in his elaborate divisions of the text. Late Lutherans both in Germany and Sweden attempted

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