

revelation of God. 'God is love'—that is His character. But that is more than His character, it is Himself. It is His revelation. When we see God we see love. And when we see love we see God. 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'

'My Lord and my God'—it is the last word we need; but we need it all. 'My Lord' will not do. We may call Him Lord, Lord, and yet do not the things which He says. 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, . . . and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.' 'Lord' gives right; but 'God' gives power.

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## Evangelicalism.

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### I. ITS STANDPOINT AND ITS POWER.

THE English use of the name 'evangelical' is much narrower than the German. In Germany it is commonly used as the antithesis of Catholic, and as a positive synonym for Protestant. It is claimed with equal assurance by theologians who uphold a rigorous Lutheran orthodoxy; by others who resolve the Christian doctrines into a few philosophical tenets; and by yet others who see little in Protestantism save a duty of criticism and of deference to the religious spirit of the age. The classification into theological schools comes later. At this stage all can be described as evangelical in that, on the one hand, they reject the Roman theory of salvation, and that, on the other, they base their hopes of salvation—with whatever variety of thinking in theological detail—on some conception of the mercy of God in Christ. And for the usage which thus identifies Evangelical with Protestant there is much to be said. It meets the want, often keenly felt, of a term which will bring clearly out that Protestantism is not a mere 'dissidence of dissent,' but that it has a positive message, which can be detached from its criticism of the Catholic system. It also serves to make clear the fact that Protestant theology is not, as is often alleged, a welter of doctrinal chaos, but that there is a deeper unity which underlies the antagonisms of the leading schools. In Great Britain the name 'evangelical' has long ceased to be the common property of Protestants, and has been set apart to designate one of the party-divisions of the Protestant Church. In accordance with our

want, the party-names have been popular and memorable, rather than expressive formulas for the precise fundamental distinctions. In the Eighteenth Century the Evangelical was contrasted in Scotland with the Moderate,—the implication being that the one was thoroughly in earnest, the other only half-hearted, in the publication of his message; while the antithesis of principle was rather between the preacher of saving faith and (if such existed) the mere moralist. In the Nineteenth Century parties were popularly distinguished, especially in England, as High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church. This classification has the merit of using a single and important principle of division, namely, the attitude of different schools towards ecclesiastical authority in matters of faith and worship, but it leaves it quite undetermined what is the difference of Low and Broad. It seems to suggest, what would often be quite unjust, that the Broad Churchman is one whose beliefs have been so beaten out, and have in consequence become so thin that he discounts the authority of the Bible as well as of the Church, and is properly to be labelled as a rationalist. Again, when evangelical is used as synonymous with Low Church, there is some reason to complain of a private appropriation of public property. Apart from the fact that many a 'Broad Churchman' honestly claims to be evangelical, it is probable that the evangelical aspects, and the evangelical doctrines of Christianity, are at present proclaimed in the 'High Church' pulpits of England and Scotland with a clearness and a fervour which it might be difficult to match in the

average 'evangelical' pulpit. But while, for these reasons, a protest may be made against the perfect felicity, or even the justice, of the use of the common title of evangelical as a party name, it is clear that the religious school that claims it is one which, by reason of its definite and distinctive attitude towards the great fundamental questions of Christian theology, must be regarded as an independent, and even classic, manifestation of the life of the Protestant Church. What the test questions are, by which the standpoint of a Church or school stands revealed, may now be briefly indicated.

In catechizing a religious movement as to its peculiar principles, the first question must be, 'What tribunal do you accept as authoritative in matters of faith?' Here the genuine antagonism is between Reason and Revelation, but when this point has been settled, we have not travelled far in the differentiation at least of British sects and theologies. The distinction crops up at the later stage, when we ask how we make use of Revelation. Do we depend on the Bible to speak for itself, or do we depend on the Church to interpret the Bible? If the Bible is our authority, do we accept it as a whole, or do we distinguish some paramount authority within the Bible, *e.g.* the teaching of Christ? The second cardinal question is, 'What do we take to be the essence or fundamental content of Christianity?' Various conceptions have ruled at different times, but doubtless the most radical antithesis is represented by those who see in it only a sublime code of morality, and those who discover in it the provision of a divine salvation which has been gratuitously provided for sinful and mortal man. When it is heartily accepted as a salvation, a further division emerges, according as the most characteristic feature is conceived to be a divinely revealed philosophy, or a gospel of justification, or the grace-dispensing institution of the Church. The third searching query is, 'What is the ideal of the Christian life to which we adhere?' Is its characteristic note renunciation of the world or victory over the world?

The party or division of the Protestant Church to which in Britain the name 'evangelical' has been appropriated, was marked in past times by a very definite and consistent attitude towards these test questions of theology. First, as regards the seat of authority, its testimony was definite and unwaver-

ing. The Bible, the inspired Word of God, was heartily and unreservedly accepted as the source and norm, indeed, the only rule, of our knowledge concerning God and divine things, and also as an infallible teacher in regard to every province upon which light might fall from its inspired page. As touching the contents of the Christian religion, the evangelical school professed a blameless orthodoxy in regard to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ which had been elaborated in the Catholic Creeds; but its cardinal interest lay in the Augustinian tenets of sin and grace. For it the cardinal doctrines of the gospel comprised what Matthew Henry calls the three R's of religion—the Ruin in which we are involved by descent from Adam as subject to an imputed guilt and an inherited corruption of nature, and as expecting the manifestation of divine wrath in everlasting punishment; the Redemption accomplished through the death of Christ in our room, whereby He made propitiation for our sins, while by His active obedience He procured for us a righteousness which is imputed to us on the ground of faith; and lastly, the Regeneration, issuing in sanctification, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in those who are enabled to rest by faith upon the saving ground of Christ's finished work. The conception of the Christian life cherished by Evangelicalism, while subject to some variation in different countries, also exhibited common fundamental features. The chief difference obtained as to the extent to which the Christian might interest himself in the tasks of culture, and especially in the problems of the political and civic sphere; and in this connexion British Evangelicalism, inheriting as it did something of the spirit of the Puritan and the Covenanter, on the whole escaped the reproach of quietism and obscurantism which has attached to other developments of the same religious type. But in spite of minor variations, the evangelical ideal of character and life has been identified by the two prominent notes of rigorism and spirituality. Negatively it was rigorously unworldly—avoiding the pursuits, but especially the recreations, in which the distinction between the Christian and the worldling tended to be obliterated, or in which the Christian was in serious danger of compromising himself, and imbibing the insidious spirit of the world. Positively it sought spirituality—the development of those graces of the soul which blossom out toward God, and which may be called

the peculiar manifestation of the life of the Holy Ghost.

By Evangelicalism, as a historical school, we here understand the re-embodiment of these principles which took place during the Eighteenth Century in the form of a spiritual upheaval of international compass. Heralded in Germany by the rise of Pietism, it convulsed and permeated England in the Wesleyan Revival, and indeed made itself felt in every branch of the Protestant Church. In no country, perhaps, was its influence more deeply and lastingly felt than Scotland, where the evangelical faith reasserted itself, partly as a renewal of the most powerful strain of its historical religion, partly as the effect of English influences.

Theseceding Churches of the Eighteenth Century drained away much of the evangelical life of the Church of Scotland; but notwithstanding these repeated losses, the evangelicals continued to grow in numbers and influence, until in the early decades of the Nineteenth they had become, under the leadership of Thomson, Chalmers, and Candlish, the dominant party in the courts and pulpits of the Church. This period we may describe as the golden age of Scottish Evangelicalism. The people welcomed its message as the music of heaven. The great cities hung on the lips of its notable preachers, and their rich men hastened to lay at their feet the money required for their schemes of Church extension and philanthropy. The learned world paid it homage, and society even took it up and made it fashionable. The next noteworthy event was the Disruption, in which a large section of ministers and members, representing the main current of evangelical life, was diverted into the new and rapidly expanding communion of the Free Church. But in spite of this desertion, the law of evangelical recrudescence soon made itself to be again felt within the pale of the Establishment. Recent religious history had left upon her mind the impression that evangelical preaching had proved itself the power of God upon heart and conscience, as no other type of teaching could do, while, on the other hand, the fact was patent to the constitutional mind, which at least respected statutes and legal obligations even when it was not very cordially religious, that the Westminster Confession, to which preachers were bound by the subscription of their name, enshrined as its kernel the doctrines of sin and grace. At all events, Evangelicalism was soon again strongly represented, both in

numbers and influence, within the Established Church, and for some time back it has gained more and more assured recognition as at least its official type of doctrine and piety. And while it thus possessed its special symbols and organs in the signally prosperous dissenting Churches, and registered a further triumph in the re-leavening of the Establishment, Evangelicalism has recently received from without two impulses, which have, to some extent, reinforced its confidence in itself and in the power of its message. The first proceeded from the mission of two American evangelists, who in the 'seventies awakened multitudes out of the life of nature to the life of the Spirit, and raised up enthusiastic recruits, of whom many continue to this day, to labour in church, or hall, or at the street corner, for the salvation of souls. The second is the movement associated with Keswick, which furnishes the striking spectacle—striking at a time when most people use their liberty to become 'half-day hearers,' and there is a clamour for the shortening of sermons to the irreducible minimum—the spectacle of hundreds, and even thousands, sitting out for hours and days together a succession of addresses upon the higher life, which start from the old familiar basis of the redemptive work of Christ for us, and the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us, and operate, in frank defiance of modern biblical criticism, with the assurance of the infallibility, in all its parts, of the written Word of God.

The history of the evangelical movement in Scotland has unquestionably been, at least down to recent times, a story of abounding vitality and of signal achievement. While in England during the latter half of the century evangelicalism was eclipsed, and even terrorized, by the High Church party, in Scotland it held its place as the most distinctive and influential religious force of the century. In explanation of this historical fact we can point to various causes, some of a temporary and accidental kind, others deeply rooted in the nature of things. Among the subsidiary causes of the ascendancy of Evangelicalism in the earlier period was the circumstance that it was represented by a group of preachers and theologians, who by virtue of their talents and accomplishments, their eloquence, and their weight of character, profoundly impressed the imagination, and warmly engaged the affection and admiration of the contemporary world. At one

period, also, it gave added momentum to the movement that the evangelical party was the champion, in the ecclesiastical sphere, of the principle of popular government so dear to the Scottish heart. But while these factors go some way to explain the hold of evangelicalism upon Scotland during the century, there are other and deeper lying causes which must be recognized in any just appreciation of the history.

1. The first reason which may be given for the deep evangelical colouring of the religious life of Scotland, is that Evangelicalism is really a religion. As the result of recent work in the history and philosophy of religion, one thing which has become clear is that nothing will be accepted as a religion which has not in a real sense the character of a great deliverance or a salvation. Every religion which has deeply struck root upon the earth, and won the allegiance and the confidence of millions, has proceeded on the recognition that there are dire evils by which man is menaced, that there is a sovereign good to which he may aspire, and that by conforming to its conditions he may escape the evils and secure the good. Within the pale of Christianity there are two systems which conspicuously undertake this essential practical function of providing a salvation. One is Roman Catholicism: the menacing evils are Hell and Purgatory, the deliverance from the torments of Hell and the mitigation of the pains of Purgatory are promised to those who make due use of the treasures of grace, which have their custodian and administrator in the divine institution of the Church. Another is the evangelical system which, premising that man is by nature in a position of spiritual distress, which slopes downward to everlasting ruin, holds out the promise of reconciliation to God and of eternal life on the sole condition of a living faith in the once crucified and now risen Lord. In some types of professedly Christian teaching, on the other hand, it is not made very clear that the average human being is menaced by any particular danger beyond his chance of the calamities incident to our condition, while such help as is proffered consists of little more than a volume of good advice and consolatory platitudes which, in St. Paul's phrase, are quite unable 'to make alive.' To put it briefly, nothing can be a success as a religion which does not attempt the business of a religion. It is therefore not wonderful that a

religious people should have turned away from conceptions of Christianity which saw in it little more than a moral ideal, to the evangelical conception, which offered a redemption from a doom of bondage and death into the glorious liberty, and the enduring inheritance, of the children of God.

2. The evangelical school, moreover, puts in the forefront of its message the most distinctive and essential feature of the Christian religion. In modern times there has been much discussion, often from a quite detached standpoint, of the nature or essence of the Christian religion; and there has come to be very general agreement that nothing is more vital in Christianity than what may be called the evangelical note and the mediatorial note. The evangelical, reduced to its simplest expression, is to the effect that the deliverance vouchsafed in Christianity is offered, not by way of payment for merit or work done, but on terms of pure grace, or by way of the spontaneous favour of God. The mediatorial note is to the effect that, in some real deep sense, we are dependent for the blessings of a graciously initiated and bestowed salvation upon the work of Christ, and our personal relationship to Him. And if it be the case that Evangelicalism, as is evident, correctly apprehended what we may call the genius of the revelation of God in Christ, it cannot be surprising if it evoked from the heart of the multitude a corroborative testimony of the Holy Ghost to its essential truth.

3. Again, the ascendancy of evangelicalism during the period under review was further promoted by observation of the effects produced by the evangelical message. In the first place, it routed the unbelief of the Eighteenth Century. This was the age of the production of classic vindications, based on the analogy of nature or the testimony of eye-witnesses, of the divine origin of Christianity; but it is safe to say that the conservation and revival of Christian faith was due, not to the dialectics of Butler and Paley, but to the revival of spiritual life which followed upon the rediscovery and republication of the central message of the gospel. Evangelical religion, again, was to prove the chief spring of missionary enterprise. Foreign missions, if they derive some support from all sections of the Church, are the darling project of the evangelical section, while within the lesser sphere of the congregation by far the largest proportion of energetic and enthusi-

astic church-workers profess their attachment to the specifically evangelical creed. The money-test gives practically the same result: while Christian liberality is capable of being evoked by many motives of greater or less religious value, its amount is on the whole proportionate to the evangelical zeal of the Church or congregation. Finally, not to multiply evidence, evangelicalism was seen to be, or to operate with a force, which was able to mould a definite, strong, and elevated type of character. It is a type of character, indeed, upon which criticisms have been passed, and no doubt with some justification; but in any case it is a

creation which stands high above the level of what is produced by the natural influences of education and custom, and which in its best examples easily stands comparison—in respect especially of earnestness and energy—with the best of other types of Christian character. And in view of this manifold evidence of the presence in evangelicalism of inspiring, energizing, and moulding power, we discover additional reason why it should have widely won the allegiance of a practical people that knows a force when it sees it, and that appreciates a real force in a world so full of mere noises and shams.

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## Saint Augustine and his Age.

*Saint Augustine and his Age.* By Joseph M'Cabe.  
Duckworth. 6s. net.

THERE is sometimes significance in a book beyond itself. In this book there is such significance, significance beyond its size, its interest, or its worth. It belongs to a movement, and that movement deserves recognition; it also demands attention.

The title promises well. After a few pages, however, one begins to wonder if the 'Saint' printed in full splendour is serious. Mr. M'Cabe has no habit of calling people 'saints.' He cynically refers to Jerome as a 'saintly cynic'; and he publicly separates himself from the company of theologians and 'ecclesiastical' persons of all kinds, including those who give or receive the name of 'Saint.' 'Gibbon,' he says, in a footnote to page 384, 'Gibbon has said that the real difference between Augustine and Calvin was invisible even to a theological microscope. He should have said *except* to a theological microscope. I was once the happy possessor of such an instrument, and I perceived the difference.' In an earlier note he speaks of 'reputable theologians and journalists' as *these people*; and he takes great delight in handling humorously that blessed word 'ecclesiastical.' So the title promises one thing, and we receive another. The title promises a book by one of these ecclesiastical people; the book is written by one who has left

Christianity behind him and wonders that 'reputable theologians and journalists' should count it 'a grave offence against propriety and honour for a man to turn and rend the institution or sect he has just quitted.'

If Mr. M'Cabe has quitted Christianity, why does he write a book on 'Saint Augustine and his Age'? Because he believes that St. Augustine can be detached from Christianity. The Christian Church has claimed St. Augustine as a great glory and ornament. Mr. M'Cabe says that he was a good pagan spoiled. The one blunder of his life was his conversion—Mr. M'Cabe would call it a crime rather than a blunder. Before his conversion Augustine was a thinker from whom civilization had much to expect. After his conversion he became fettered in thought and shifty in principle. Mr. M'Cabe has a genuine admiration for Augustine; it grows upon him as he goes; and he does not grudge the homage that belongs to intellectual and moral greatness. But he hates Christianity; and ever the 'saint's' gain is his Church's loss.

It is not surprising that in pursuing such a task Mr. M'Cabe should sometimes be a little inconsistent. On one page he calls it 'a popular impression' that in the fourth century Christianity's serious rival was the ancient Roman religion.