

ARCHBISHOP LAUD AND THE SCOTTISH CHURCH

The following is an extract from the sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. Cooper at the reopening of the historic Church of St. John, Established Presbyterian, Perth, on Archbishop Laud and his connection with the Scottish Church: "He was inclined to regret, as he read the accounts of the recent celebration on Tower Hill of 250th anniversary of the beheading—he would say the martyrdom—of Archbishop Laud, that that brave Englishman had not confined his exertions to his own Church. He saved the Church of England, but he ruined by his meddling the Church of Scotland. But for the unconstitutional invasion of that Church's liberties in 1637 by Laud and his royal master, who was also to die a martyr, all the Reformed in Scotland might have been one Church to-day, with a fair service and reasonable observances, and a form of Church government combining the advantages of Presbytery with Episcopacy."

REVIEWS.

MAGAZINES.—*Scribner's* for May contains a unique feature in magazine fiction—the first part of the only serial story that Mrs. Humphry Ward has ever contributed to a magazine. It is entitled "The Story of Bessie Costrell," and is a most realistic and dramatic study of life among the very poor class of English farm labourers. This novelle will run through the May, June and July issues. It has this difference from Mrs. Ward's longer novels, that there are almost no passages of sociological or philosophical discussion, the purely human side of the tale moving rapidly and with great dramatic intensity to its closing scenes.

The Expository Times has its usual variety of papers on subjects of interest to the Christian teacher and preacher. Indeed, there is hardly a page without interest. Besides the continuation of Rothe's Exposition of I. St. John, and of Dr. Stalker's excellent "Parables of Zechariah," etc., we have some interesting remarks on the interpretation of St. Matthew xvi. 18, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church." It is suggested—not for the first time—that these words are an interpretation; but we agree with the editor that such a way of cutting the knot is far from satisfactory. If we take the words as they stand and expound them in the light of early Christian history, they present no difficulty, and give no support whatever to the Roman claims.

THE HARMONY OF EVANGELICALISM WITH CATHOLIC TRUTH.

BY THE REV. V. S. S. COLES.

(Concluded from last week.)

He tells us that he was often surprised to find the same persons presenting themselves again and again at the penitent bench.

When he questioned these persons he found that the recurrence was not due to any doubt of the previous conversion, but because they needed something to revive their faith and sustain them in holiness. This is a striking instance of the oft-repeated testimony of the Christian instinct to the fitness of the great sacrament of feeding and refreshment. The associations of place and time, the gentle but powerful accretions of habit, the need of fellowship and of objective blessing, the very demand of the senses to be sanctified in virtue of their union with God Incarnate—all these draw the heart towards the altar and the sanctuary, to priestly ministrations and pastoral guidance.

Nor is there any necessary conflict between the doctrine of peace through justifying faith and the Divine provision of absolution in the Church. Absolution is not a charm, but the rational sentence of a divinely-appointed judge upon the reality of faith and penitence. By its very nature as the medicine, and not the food, of the soul, the plank after shipwreck, the means whereby the King's banished may be restored to Him, it pre-supposes a cause and source of forgiveness prior to and more necessary than itself. Only to the penitent is the offer of absolution addressed, and to the penitent, when he feels the inadequacy, not of the Divine gift of forgiveness, but of his own correspondence with it.

It is surely not too much to say that each of the three great divisions of Catholic Christendom exhibit evidence to-day of the Divine power of that sacramental life by which their children are quickened.

The world-wide faith of the Roman Communion, the perseverance of the Oriental Christians under centuries of Mohammedan tyranny, the revival extended now in all parts of the world, of the sacramental system of the Anglican Communion—all these three alike and each checking by its own testimony an isolated claim by any to the Catholic name, witness to the legitimacy and spiritual power of the attraction which is so manifestly felt by those external to the organic Church, and nowhere more evidently than in this country at the present moment.

No one can deny the attraction. But is there not a counteracting force, or else why is it that all who are of God are not yet of us? In reply, I would venture to suggest to your consideration a development of the movement of 1833, which is perhaps as yet too recent and immature to be properly surveyed and judged. When we look back over the last thirty or forty years; when we read the history of the Oxford Movement and the lives of its great and saintly leaders; when we look around and see what is the attitude of those who inherit the far-reaching sympathies, the deep principles, the venerable mysteries, for which they contended, are we not conscious of a certain change, not free indeed from the dangers which wait on all progress, but most hopeful and encouraging in its main features, which has come over the party of revival? It began amongst scholars and the cultured classes; it has won its way to the sympathy of the people and the life of the poor. It began with theories which it found hard, in spite of their truth, to put into practice; it has passed into practical work which only needs to be checked by true theories; it began by being select and exclusive, it tends to run risks by its many-sidedness; it was the ally of one political party, it is now in peril of division from its links to rival parties.

But how, it may be asked, has such a development been possible? How can the party of orthodoxy and exclusiveness dare to be comprehensive?

Our reply—our confident and glad reply—must be, "Because we are learning to distinguish between degrees of authority, between what is primary and what is secondary in matters of faith." We are coming to realize that our faith in Christ, in the Father whom He reveals, and the Spirit whom He sends, is primary and essential, while our faith in all further truths accepted on His authority is secondary and relative.

If I am not mistaken, many different lines of thought lead us to this conclusion.

1. Is it not the result of an honest attempt to bring home Catholic teaching, on Anglican lines, to the poor?

Those clergy who accepted the teaching of the Oxford Movement did so because they came to be sure that it represented the teaching of the Church, according to the Vincentian rule.

Then came the reasoning of Dr. Pusey's Eirenicon, going to prove that the Tridentine decrees are capable of an interpretation which, if adopted by Roman authorities, would not conflict with the Anglican formularies. This position is far from being identical with another which has since gained ground amongst us, that the doctrinal, as distinct from the disciplinary, decrees of the Council of Trent are, in virtue of a supposed acceptance by the Eastern Church, of oecumenical obligation, and binding upon us. Such a theory, ignoring as it does the whole Reformed Episcopate, would hardly have received any welcome, had it not offered so tempting a basis for teaching. We have desired to hand on our convictions to the poor, and not being able to make clear to them the historical grounds on which we or our teachers have received them, we have sought for an authority which should give a basis of teaching as definite and applicable as that used by Roman Catholics.

To some of us it has come with sense of great relief to see that our difference from Rome is not only in certain details, but in the broad principle that we rest our faith primarily on the witness of our Lord Himself, and only secondarily on the Church, whereas the undoubted faith of Roman Catholics in the person of our Lord seems to come to them as only one among many dogmas of the Church.

If we were asked, where, then, does our primary faith in Christ arise, and does it merely depend upon our private use of Scripture?—we reply that our faith in Christ is a Divine gift, and that we are strengthened and assisted in the reception of it by the facts of our own nature and of the history of our race, by our use of the Scriptures as literary evidence and of the Church as a fact of history, though we do not come to know the Bible or the Church as the subjects of a Divine inspiration until we are led to that knowledge by our belief in Christ.

A right faith, then, is always a faith in the Person

of Christ, and in all that this connotes for him who believes. While the primary faith in Christ will be the same in all, the secondary faith which accepts all that is covered by His authority will vary in different individual cases.

I will not say that this view of faith gives us quite as definite and ready a method of teaching as the Roman theory, but it gives us one which is true to facts, to the leading of God's providence, and to that foundation other than which can no man lay.

But it is not only the exigencies of pastoral work which leads us to the truth—the distinctive place of the doctrine of the Incarnation—which emerged when in the second stage of the English Reformation those who had preserved Episcopacy began to think out what their position really implied.

I may be allowed to quote, in this connection, some memorable words of Dean Church. He is explaining how Bishop Andrewes and his friends founded the theological position of the Reformed Church of England.

"Something," he says, "was wanted broader, more intelligible, and more refined than the Puritan mode of presenting the ideas of justification and God's predestinating and electing grace. . . . The higher spirits of the time wanted to breathe more freely, and in a higher air. They found that they wanted in the language, the ideas, the tone and temper of the best early Christian literature. That turned their thoughts from words to a Person. It raised them from the disputes of local cliques to the ideas which have made the universal Church. It recalled them from arguments that revolved round a certain number of traditional formulae about justification, free-will, and faith, to the overwhelming revelation of the Word Incarnate, and the result of it on the moral standard and behaviour of real and living men. It led them from a theology which ended in cross-grained and perverse conscientiousness to a theology which ended in adoration, self-sacrifice, and blessing, and in the awe and joy of welcoming the Presence of the Eternal Beauty, the Eternal Sanctity, and the Eternal Love, the Sacrifice and Reconciliation of the World."

Thus indirectly the question has been answered as to what is lacking in the fulness of Catholic development, by finding it in need of more definite primary reference to the Person of our Incarnate Lord, and it was to the same need that we were led when we sought to criticise the position of the Evangelical movement.

What both need should be the source of union between them, and the hope of union will not be less when we remember that the need points to Him whose supreme work is to make both one—the Mediator and Author of Unity. High Churchmen may well remember the words of Mr. Keble (Letter clix. p. 212):—

"I have long had an opinion that, in respect to the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, we are bound to be especially careful how we make doctrinal statements in such sense as to charge dissentients with heresy; for this reason, that while the great Truths of the Creeds have been settled, even as to the wording connected with them, by true Ecumenical Councils (in which statement I include the Doctrine of Baptism as connected with the Pelagian controversy), it has so happened in the Providence of God, that the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist has never been subject to similar enactments until the eleventh or twelfth century, after the separation of east and west. Well, therefore, may each person or each portion of the Church, for himself or itself, form strong opinions, and express them strongly, as God shall guide them, on the several points involved in the doctrine; but to impose them as Articles of Faith, making those heretics who demur to them, they are not as I conceive, competent, except the point be such an one as can be shown to have been unequivocally received by the whole Church from the beginning, such (e.g.) as the Inspiration of Holy Scripture."

Low Churchmen should not forget that the great Lord Shaftesbury declared that he would rather send his children to a Roman Catholic than to a merely secular school.

The Incarnation is our real bond of union. What is happening at this time in the Established Church, may remind us that belief in the Incarnation, when it is free to grow and expand, will not remain barren of sacramental teaching; we, who by our formularies are tied to a definitely sacramental, and yet a definitely reformed position, appealing against Rome and against Geneva, to history, Scripture, and reason, will surely find our wisdom and our happiness in drawing closer to each other, on the basis of the doctrine of which St. John could say that every spirit which confesseth it is of God.

The Bishop of Durham, in an able address to the clergy and laity of his diocese, says he is strongly in favour of introducing lay representation into all Church bodies, whether parochial, rural deanery, diocesan or central. The hope of the Church of England in the future, he thinks, lies in the proper utilization of lay help.