

byterians will be found who, like the late Dr Norman Macleod, perceive that such a position is untenable one, and are willing to adopt some modification of their position, and re-consider the question of the best mode of resistance to the attacks of utter unbelief.—*Scottish Guardian*.

### THE BLACK AND WHITE THEORY OF HISTORY.

AN English Lord Chancellor, who held the seals for a long period, was reproached for delay in his judgments. Very possibly he was too hesitating; but it is also possible that his critics were often unreasonable. "Men talk," he is reported to have said, "as if the cases that come before me are simply black and white; I find that most of them are grey."

What Lord Eldon said of suits in Chancery holds good, to a large extent, in history. Nevertheless, the black and white theory possesses a charm of its own, and appeals with much force to some classes of minds; and this not merely as a view, which may here and there be justifiable, but as one which is capable of universal application.

When and where do we expect to find this theory prevalent? We should say with the young rather than with maturer minds, and in the country rather than in towns.

Many years have passed since a little girl, who had commenced a juvenile study of English history, requested our assistance in the task of arranging the pieces of a puzzle, consisting of portraits of the sovereigns from William I. to Queen Victoria. As the head of each successive monarch was fitted into its place this query was proposed to us—"Was he good or was he bad?" The notion of a mixed character had not yet dawned upon the mind of our youthful companion. Macaulay had an inclination towards this style of historical composition. His taste for it waxed fainter as he grew older, though it occasionally displayed itself even in his later years. But from the first a desire to be fair now and then interfered with it. Thus, in his very youthful essay upon Milton, the struggle between Charles I. and the Parliament is described as "the great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes." Considering the Manichean doctrine from which this image is derived represented Oromasdes (or, more correctly, Ahura-Mazda) as the beneficent power which is the source of all good and Ahriman as an equally powerful Satan, this comparison certainly implies an unmistakably black and white view of the period. Accordingly, we expect to find the supporters of the one cause depicted simply as angels, and their opponents as the reverse of angels. But to his credit, be it remembered, the essay proceeds very differently. The adherents of Arimanes were, it appears, not quite demons. "Our royalist countrymen were not heartless, dashing courtiers; they were indeed misled, but by no base or selfish motive. . . . They possessed in a far greater degree than their adversaries those qualities which are the grace of private life. . . . With many of the vices of the Round Table, they had also many of its virtues—courtesy, generosity, veracity, tenderness, and respect for women. They had far more both of profound and of polite learning than the Puritans. Their manners were more engaging, their tempers more amiable, their tastes more elegant, and their households more cheerful."

[There must be in our own day a vast number of loyal subjects, who conscientiously believe that complete success on the part of the Cavaliers would have been a real misfortune for the country. Some of the ideas maintained by royalists were of comparatively recent date. Even Thucydides declares that in Greece limited sovereignties were more ancient than absolute ones. Blackstone says that all the Gothic monarchies were originally limited. The notion of indefeasible hereditary right was unknown to the great English lawyers, such as Bracton and Fortescue. Nor had it been sanctioned by theologians. It does not appear in the works of the Fathers; it is simply contradicted by the Schoolmen, and by many local councils, more especially by Spanish ones. It is virtually condemned in the great work of Hooker. We must come down to the age of the Caroline divines in England, of Bossuet and his contemporaries in France, if we desire to find countenance for such a doctrine on the part of the clergy.]

Nor is it possible, we fear, to acquit either the King or his consort, Henrietta Maria, from the dissimulation. This fault is, says a candid and judicial writer, "the one great blot on the character of Charles I."

Now just as in the large cities Mr. Buckle's attack upon Scotland was met with serious replies, while writers in country papers simply declaimed, so we must expect to find it now. Ideal portraiture may be recognised as such in London or Edinburgh: they will long be regarded as perfectly truthful in Wales or in rural districts of England or Scotland. This is no new phenomenon. Christianity itself had to suffer

from it. By the time of the emperor Theodosius the religion of the Cross, thoroughly established and potent in the capital and the large cities, had still to cope with the difficulty of penetrating the rustic mind; and the name for a countryman (*paganus*) became the customary appellation for a heathen.

These thoughts have been suggested to us by the donation from a friend living near the Scottish border, of a cutting from some local newspaper. It contains a description of the Covenanting army, of May, A.D. 1689, as, under the command of Leslie, it encamped around Duns Law. The sketch, which is from the pen of a Free Church Minister, is not destitute of enthusiasm or of gracefulness. The good points of the Covenanters—and far be it from us to deny their many noble qualities—are briefly and effectively set forth; and the general drift of the article (transferred from the columns of the *Free Church Record*) seems to us to lie in the direction of the black and white view of the whole transaction as between them and their opponents. It implies, if we mistake not, that it were well for Scotland to be Covenanting still. If this be its object, we are compelled to say, that though originally published in a town, the article must surely be intended for country use and consumption. It may pass muster in the region watered by the Whitadder; it will not find cultured hearers in great capitals. Let us glance—we can do no more—at one or two of its details.

"He [Charles] as usual shuffled in his negotiations, but was at last compelled to grant to the Covenanters their reasonable demands."

That Charles was too often a dissimulator we have already admitted; but was Leslie, who is depicted as stainless, perfectly unscathed in this respect? It is charged against him, that when he accepted at his sovereign's hand the title of Earl of Leven, he made a solemn promise never more to bear arms against the king; but that when in 1643 he again accepted the command of a hostile army, he pleaded that his promise carried with it the implied reservation of all cases in which liberty or religion might be at stake. Now this is just the kind of reservation with which Pascal charges his enemies the Jesuits. We believe that Mr. Palgrave is quite in the right on this head both in the prose and the verse of his "Visions of England." Of untruth on the part of Charles he writes that his antagonist's conduct disentitles them from pleading it against him; and of his spouse he sings—

'As a bird by the fowlers o'ernetted, she shuffles and changes her ground;  
All wiles lawful in war and the foe unscrupulous round.'

With Hallam, Macaulay, and the Duke of Argyll, with the Presbyterians of 1649, we still denounce the execution of Charles I. as a great crime. The reaction caused by it led to the prostration of the national liberties at the feet of Charles II.

And then "their reasonable demands." We have not space to copy out that article of the Covenant which requires the extirpation of all Popery and Prelacy throughout the entire realm; nor to dwell on those burnings of gentleman's houses which (says Aytoun) if published would remove all surprise at the severe retribution taken. But we conclude with some remarks from a writer who has done the fullest justice to all the nobler elements of the Covenanting cause—

"Cargill, Cameron, Renwick, and their followers, entertained not a doubt that it was God's will that all in these lands, from the king to the peasant, should be made subject to the Covenants. Who can believe so now? If the course of Divine Providence, as traceable as the history of the last two hundred years, affords any indication of the Divine will, that was not the Divine will. To have forced these Covenants on the nation at the Revolution, or at any period since the Revolution, could manifestly have only led to wrongs and cruelties as great as those against which the Covenanters protested and struggled."

The restoration of St. Giles's Church in Edinburgh is a form of protest against one element of Puritanism; its abhorrence of art and of music being wedded to divine worship. The above declaration is another form of protest against belief in the Covenants in the seventeenth century. It was well, to our thinking, that it should have been uttered in St. Giles's by the Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh University, the Rev. Dr. Flint. We commend it to the notice of Presbyterians in the Merse and in other rural districts.—*Scottish Guardian*.

### LAY HELPERS.

AN article on the work of the London Diocesan Lay Helpers' Association in the current number of the *Church Quarterly Review* contains so many points of interest that we propose to devote more space to putting them before our readers than could be allotted in a general notice of the serial.

The first thing which the writer points out it is the all but total absence of reference to lay work, or even to lay share in the Church at all, from the literature

of the early Tractarian era. The one notion which occupied the minds of the leaders fifty years ago was the revival of the idea of the three-fold Apostolic ministry as the one essential of a true Church, and the most they could think of with regard to the laity was that here and there a layman, if he were very good indeed, might become a clergyman. In truth, as is pointed out, the laity of that day were not so friendly to the Church as to induce the reforming clergy to associate them in any attempt to revive the Church, which they seemed more inclined to mutilate, if not to destroy.

The writer is, we think, a little in error in the date he assigns to the beginning of a better mind in this respect, which he puts as late as 1863. For the English Church Union, in which the laity have had from the first a larger share than the clergy, was organised on its present footing in 1862, and was even then a reconstruction of earlier associations rather than a wholly new body: while the Guild of St. Alban, which is so definitely lay that a clergyman can hold only a secondary position in its ranks, and which undertakes many kinds of ecclesiastical work, has been in existence ever since 1846, not to speak of local confraternities, guilds, district visitor societies, and the like, scattered over many scores, if not hundreds, of parishes long before 1863.

But if the question is narrowed to the institution of a diocesan organization, recognized and commissioned by episcopal authority, as distinguished from purely voluntary associations and from parochial ones, then it is doubtless true that the body named at the head of this article was the first in the field. The system on which it is framed is this: the Bishop is *ex officio* President, and appoints the committee, in about equal numbers of clergy and laity, every year. The diocese is mapped out into districts which appear to be identical with the rural deaneries, in each of which there is a District Secretary as manager, and the incumbent of every parish is asked to appoint a parochial correspondent to represent him in all matters connected with the Association. The qualification for membership is the being a communicant in the Church of England, and qualified to give lay help in parish work. Candidates must be recommended to the Bishop, either by the incumbent of the parish where a worker is desired, or by any two actual members. No money qualification is exacted, and no pay is given; all expenses being met from the Bishop of London's Fund, supplemented by collections and private donations. The members are distributed over all ranks of society, from the labourer to the nobleman.

Within this body there is a smaller one, consisting of the Readers, who have grown in London alone from eleven in 1869 to about two hundred in the present year, while five hundred more are found in the remaining dioceses. And there is also a special class within the Readers themselves, bearing the title of "Mission Readers," who are empowered to conduct mission services, and who must first pass an examination before a board appointed by the Bishop. The writer suggests, as a less cumbersome plan, that a yearly examination should be held, open to all Readers at their discretion, passing which should make the successful candidates Mission Readers *ipso facto*. He thinks, and we are inclined to agree with him, that this scheme would attract men of higher position and attainments, and would give more status and stability to the office, which might be fenced with a few simple regulations, chiefly that of never exercising it in any parish save with the incumbent's assent.

We are told something of the opportunities afforded by Keble College, Oxford, and Selwyn College, Cambridge, to lay helpers for instruction and spiritual retirement, and of the courses of lectures at St. Paul's with the yearly "Quiet Day;" and the manner in which the movement has spread may be judged by the numbers on the roll, which according to the last report, were 3,669.

So much for the system. We will now turn to some of the considerations which the writer lays before his readers as suggested thereby.

First, he remarks that whereas the clergy are compelled to be controversial, and to direct much attention to the points which divide the several communions, contrariwise, the lay tendency is to neglect such matters, and to dwell rather on points of contact, so that the probable result of bringing the two classes closely together in the same work is that the clergy will be more drawn to the things that make for peace (and, he might have added, the laity will learn more of definite doctrine), so that there will be a force making for the abatement of divisions whether inside the Church or outside it.

Next, it is plain that the existing machinery of the Church is totally inadequate to deal with the masses of urban heathenism, especially in view of the rapid growth of population. And it is of little or no use to set a solitary lay agent to evangelise a district of several thousands. What is wanted is to bring a whole body to bear with concentrated effort on districts of manageable size, and that not spasmodically, but by continuous effort.