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THE CRISES OF CHRISTIANITY AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

*As oppositions of contraries lend beauty to language,
so the beauty of the course of the world is achieved
by the opposition of contraries, arranged as it were by an*

Christianity is at a crisis. This does not mean that she is decreasing numerically. Over 570,000,000² persons avow themselves Christians. Neither does it mean that she is calling in her outposts. Every considerable country is being occupied by the missionaries of the cross. Nor yet does it mean that at home she is losing interest in social progress. As never before sociology is her study and philanthropy her passion.

What is meant is that while developing her philanthropy, she is detaching it from the church and even from Christ. A constantly growing number of Christians are advocating and are themselves supporting "welfare work" which is intentionally and often ostentatiously non-religious. What could be more suggestive, more alarming? The bouquet of roses is both beautiful and fragrant. In a day or two, however, its perfume will have gone and its beauty will have departed. It must be so with flowers that have been picked from the living bush. Can it be otherwise with social or charitable movements which have separated themselves from Christ, even if they have not in terms repudiated him? At best they are but flowers that have been picked.

Again, the crisis of Christianity appears in this, that while her missionaries are multiplying, their gospel, it would seem, here and there, little by little, is being depleted and emasculated. Such is the warning that has been coming to us

¹ *City of God*, I. xi. c. 18.

NOTES AND NOTICES

THE DICTIONARY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH, VOL. II

This concluding volume of Dr. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*¹ is the product of the labors of about a hundred scholars. Five of these are from the Continent, and a dozen are Americans. The material contributed by the Continental scholars is not large in amount nor of the first importance. P. Battifol write on Polycarp; E. von Dobschütz on Philo; H. Jordan on Writing; O. E. Moe on Moses; A. von Schlatter on Paraclete. The American writers are C. A. Beckwith, S. J. Case, J. A. Faulkner, W. M. Groton, K. Kohler (who, although a Jew, has been intrusted, among others, with so intimately Christian a subject as Shepherd), A. T. Robertson, G. L. Robinson, T. G. Soares, G. Vos, B. B. Warfield, and A. C. Zenos. Of these the largest contributions have been made by the late Professor Groton of the Episcopal Divinity School, Philadelphia, and Professor Case of the University of Chicago. Professor Groton writes the long (13 pages) and valuable article on "Mystery, Mysteries," which will serve admirably as a succinct introduction to the study of this obscure subject. Besides some shorter articles (Seed, Theudas, Tribute) Professor Case writes the long articles (17 pages in combination) on "Peter" and the "Epistles of Peter." The even longer article on "Paul," (21 pages) is written by Professor James Stalker, an old hand at the subject. Articles on such topics legitimately occupy large space in a Dictionary of the Apostolic Church. When we say Peter and Paul we almost say Apostolic Church—as the narrative of the Book of Acts may suggest to us. There are other long articles in the volume, however, the scope of which passes so far beyond the Apostolic Church as to set the reader to wondering as to the principle on which they have been admitted. There is for example, Professor James Moffatt's article on "War." It is an altogether admirable treatise on the attitude of the early

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church to war. It quickly, however, gets beyond anything that can be called the Apostolic Church and does not stop till it reaches Augustine. And there is Principal Thomas Lewis' excellent article on Persecution. It finds no stopping place short of the Reformation.

It is the policy of this Dictionary to interpret the phrase "Apostolic Church" purely temporally. It means to it merely the Church of the first century. It is an incidental good result of this bad point of view that besides articles on the New Testament books we get admirable articles on what we may perhaps still speak of as Sub-Apostolic writings, and indeed on Jewish writings dating from a time somewhere about the Apostolic age. We have not only articles on Polycarp (P. Batiffol)—poor Papias is left out—and the Odes of Solomon (A. Mingana), but also articles on Philo (E. von Dobschütz), Sirach and Wisdom (D. S. Margoliouth), the Psalms of Solomon (G. B. Gray) and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (A. L. Davies), and Sibylline Oracles (James Moffatt). It may no doubt be said that a knowledge of these writings is important, both as regards their language and their thought, for a complete understanding of the Apostolic age. Such a plea would be much more valid for the Jewish writings antedating the Apostolic times than for the sub-apostolic writings. There is really no good reason for including sub-apostolic writings in a Dictionary of the Apostolic Church. The gulf between the two groups of writings is as wide as that which divides any two groups of writings, contiguous in time, known to history. If we needed any proof of that, it would be supported by the result of attempting to smelt the two groups together in this Dictionary. For, if the excellence of the articles on the several sub-apostolic books tends to lead us to condone their intrusion into the Dictionary, the case is far different with the habit of tacking on to article after article on Apostolic teaching on this or that subject, a paragraph on the teaching of the sub-apostolic writers on it also. If this begins by being amusing, it ends by becoming wearisome. There is no section of the history of doctrine less exhilarating than that which deals with the sub-apostolic fathers. It was a true saying of a great man long ago that they would be better named sub-

apostolic babies. No matter how close they stand to one another in time, the Apostolic and the sub-apostolic writers cannot be compressed into the same category. The attempt to do so is a blunder.

Underlying the attempt to wash out the boundary line which separates between the Apostolic and sub-apostolic writings, and the consequent habit of speaking of the latter as "first century writers outside the New Testament," a low view of the inspiration and authority of the New Testament writings is usually discoverable, and in general a chariness with respect to the immediately supernatural in the origins of Christianity. Of course one would not require to look long before he found something of this sort among the hundred or so writers who have coöperated in the preparation of this volume. On the whole, however, even those whose personal views leave little place for an authoritative Scripture or for direct supernaturalism appear to have sought to write objectively. Professor A. R. Gordon, of McGill University, who writes the good article on "Scripture," seems to doubt whether the Christian can take the Old Testament, in its own sense, as authoritative to him, but he nevertheless tells us frankly that "the high Jewish theory of the inspiration of Scripture is fully accepted in the New Testament," where the words of Moses, David, Isaiah and the other prophets are "attributed directly to God" and are looked upon as the final norm alike of faith and of conduct. In the article "Miracles" by Bishop Maclean, we meet on the other hand with an attempt to explain miracles away, which was rather unexpected in this quarter. Many of the "miracles" recorded in the New Testament, we are told, are clearly not miracles in the strict sense; many which seemed miracles to those who witnessed them we can now see were not really miracles; many more, the natural mode of working which, that even we may not yet see, no doubt those who come after us will see. Perhaps "the theory of 'relative miracles' propounded by Schleiermacher" may commend itself to us. "This theory substitutes for a contravention of nature a miraculous knowledge. Certain persons had a greater hold upon the secrets of nature than their contemporaries." "But," it is added, "this was by a divine interposition"; and is not the

essential thing, as Dr. Sanday says, "the divine act?" What is troubling Bishop Maclean is the conception of nature as an absolutely closed system, in which everything that occurs must be the product of its own intrinsic forces operating normally; no intrusion from without is possible, or, at least, can be admitted to have ever occurred. Doubtless God made it; but having made it, He never afterwards has interfered with its mechanical working, for any purpose whatever. Whatever occurs is "natural." Of course Bishop Maclean seizes hold of that remark of Augustine's—which has frequently before been as gravely misused as he misuses it—that a "portent" happens not against nature but against "known nature." On the repeated occasions when he made this remark Augustine was not reducing our conception of miracles to merely "natural" events but elevating and enlarging our conception of "nature." There is a "nature" he says, above the nature spread out for our observation, the "nature," to wit, of the Divine Decree: for everything that God wills becomes by that act a natural thing to occur although it does not occur by means of the "natural" forces: it cannot be said to be "unnatural" though it be "supernatural," for the constitutive fact of all nature is the will of God. It is enough to dispose of Bishop Maclean's theory of "relative miracles" to ask what is the difference, on its basis, between a miracle and a trick, between the miracles of Moses before Pharaoh, say, and those of the Egyptian magicians? Despite his reduction of miracles to tricks, we observe, Bishop Maclean is concerned to show that the Apostolic age was marked by abounding miracles, while the post-apostolic age lacked them.

Perhaps the best way to obtain a fair conception of the quality of a book like this is to take some one general subject and observe how it is treated in its several parts by the various writers to which they have been committed. We choose the broad subject of Salvation for this purpose. There is a general article on "Salvation, Save, Saviour," by Principal Darwell Stone, of Pusey House, Oxford. It seems to be a fair example of what such an article should not be. It consists in the main of statistics of no great significance, and an analysis of Dr. Stone's own doctrine of salvation supported item by item by

proof texts bent to its service. It is certainly only a crotchet which denies that "save" in James v. 15 refers to bodily healing. On the other hand Professor A. T. Robertson of the Louisville Baptist Seminary gives us in the article "Mediation, Mediator" a refreshingly clear, straightforward and instructive account of the Apostolic teaching on the saving work of Christ. The skillful grammarian is always in evidence and the exact meaning of the sacred writings is sought and brought out with very telling effect.

A group of articles bearing on the expiatory work of Christ,—"Ransom," "Sacrifice," "Propitiation," "Reconciliation," has been committed to Professor Frederic Platt of the Wesleyan College at Birmingham. The short article on "Ransom" covers the ground fairly well, and reaches the eminently just conclusion expressed at the end, that by the employment of this term it is implied that "life in the highest sense" has been lost by man, and he "has no means of buying it back"; but "Christ has laid down his life as a price or means of redemption by which the forfeited possession was restored." The article on "Sacrifice" is much longer and more thorough, but is marred by its presupposition of the modern critical view of the composition of the Old Testament and the development of Old Testament religion, and by its estimating the whole Biblical material from this point of sight. A certain continuity in the development of the notion of sacrifice from the most primitive conceptions to that of developed Christianity is assumed. It is even supposed (p. 431) that traces of all the main theories of primitive sacrifice which have been broached by speculators may be discovered in the New Testament; and the necessity of choosing between them in our search for the original significance of sacrifice is avoided by the suggestion that all of them may have been held in those primitive ages the influence of which was still felt by the men of the New Testament. It is more reasonably declared, however, (p. 431) that "the one constant element in primitive sacrifice persisting to Apostolic times, that modern research, both anthropological and psychological, seems to warrant, is that sacrifice appears to have pleased the object of worship and secured the favor of deity—i.e. it was 'propitiatory' in the broad-

est sense." It is recognized that, at the time the Levitical system was formed, the "piacular or expiatory sacrifice" had become prominent. "It was the expiatory type that constituted the daily sacrifices—the continual burnt-offering—up to Apostolic times; it was regarded as most perfectly embodying, through its vicarious character, the sacrificial idea" (p. 402). That having been said, there seems no reason for the hesitation regarding the conception attributed to sacrifices in later Judaism, at least so far as the Judaism contemporary with the Apostles is concerned. It is allowed that Christ referred to His death as sacrificial; that "at a very early period," that is, in the Apostolic age, the death of Christ was regarded as expiatory; and that "this sacrificial interpretation of His death is imbedded in subsequent types of Apostolic teaching"—that Peter sharply asserts the vicarious nature of the sufferings of Christ, Paul "clearly regards the death of Christ as substitutionary," and the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistles of John make use of the same conception. Nevertheless there is some haggling over the question whether the Apostolic Church is to be said to have regarded Jesus' death as sacrificial or only to have employed sacrificial language illustratively of His death. We gain an impression that if the Scriptures were more definitely authoritative to Professor Platt his conclusions would possess a more decided character. The just decisiveness with which A. B. Bruce's suggestion is repelled (p. 434b), that Paul's ideas of Christ's sacrifice were colored more by the analogy of Greek and Roman human sacrifices than by that of the Levitical system, is the more welcome that more hospitality seems to be shown to this suggestion in the article on "Propitiation" (p. 283a). That article suffers from diffuseness and from an attempt to draw nice distinctions of somewhat doubtful validity. It insists, for example, that "the classical and pagan use of the Greek 'term must not be carried over into the New Testament', with a vigor which can scarcely fail to seem excessive, when it emerges that "although such phrases as 'propitiating God' or God 'being propitiated' are foreign to Apostolic teaching, the Pauline view relates the propitiation to God as recipient" (p. 282a). To give any plausibility to the distinction, such exaggerated language requires to

be used as this: "The idea of directly appeasing one who is angry with a personal resentment against the offender—is foreign to biblical usage,"—which is of course true, but concerns less the usage of the word than the conception of the deity. The attempt to distinguish between the usages of Paul, "the Johannine writer," and the author of Hebrews is equally futile. The fact is that the usage of words of this stem in the New Testament is too meagre to supply a basis for such speculations. It does not make a pleasant impression when, after we have been told that the verb "propitiate" is construed in classical Greek regularly with the accusative of the person propitiated, it is added, "this construction is never used by the Apostolic writers." This can hardly be a significant fact when the verb occurs only twice in the New Testament. In the Septuagint it occurs in the banned construction and that with God as its object (Zech. vii. 2). Certainly the God of Christians is a different kind of person from the gods of the heathen, but we can never so "ethicize" the conception of propitiation as to rid it of the implication that it removes obstacles in Him (and not merely in us) to His favorable regard of us. That Professor Platt does not himself think that we can, we learn with more distinctness from the article on "Reconciliation." In it (p. 301b), he even uses such language as this: "God's anger is real; it is not simply official as the hostility of a law-giver in the presence of a law-breaker; it is personal, but not a fitful personal resentment . . ." He goes on to tell us, it is true, in quite modern fashion, that it is but the seamy side of love,— "love's crowning sign, not its contradiction,"—but this appears to be merely the repetition of a conventional mode of speaking and scarcely represents any very clear thought. We are glad to say that Professor Platt very decidedly represents the fundamental reconciliation wrought by the blood of Christ to have been the reconciliation of God. He feels bound to insist, however, strenuously and at length, that the transaction is mutual. This is not so plain as far as the direct Scriptural representations as to our Lord's "reconciling work" are concerned. If any are inclined to adduce the passive imperative of 2 Cor. v. 20 in this connection, they may profitably consult the passive imperative of Eph. v. 18. Professor Platt miscon-

strues the "in Christ" of 2 Cor. v. 19 after the fashion now so common, and founds some pretty theologizing on his misconstruction.

A large number of the elements that enter into the conception of Salvation come in for discussion in Professor James Moffatt's long and brilliant article on "Righteousness," chiefly of course from the point of view of Paul's teaching. Professor Moffatt touches nothing which he does not illuminate, and everyone will be his debtor for this searching and stimulating discussion. There are naturally some things he says, with which we should be compelled to take issue. We are thankful to be able to say, however, that with the larger part of the discussion we are heartily in agreement, and that we find many important truths enunciated in it in unwontedly sharp and telling language. This is the way in which at the opening of the section on the "technical Pauline use of the term God's righteousness" (p. 376) he sums up the content of the several passages which deal with that notion: "What is common to all is the presupposition, that this righteousness, this state of acceptance with God, this right relationship between the righteous God and sinful man, is brought about by God. It is not the goal of a laborious quest of man for God. The initiative is with Him. That is what the genitive signifies." We will not deny ourselves the pleasure of quoting further one or two crisply phrased truths. "Because the Christian is sure of final acquittal, he is to live up to it. Or to put it in an antithesis: he is not to be saved because he is good, he is to be good because he is justified" (p. 380b). "To be justified by faith was God's gift. But it was more than a gift; it was a vocation, a career—*Aufgabe* as well as *Gabe*" (p. 392a). Every reader of this article will find himself instructed.

We have already with Prof. Moffatt's article passed over from articles dealing with the procuring of salvation to those in which its application is expounded. At the head of these stands the late Professor T. Nichol's (of Aberdeen) excellent article on "Predestination." He is perhaps unduly exercised over the antimony between predestination and free will, and repeats the banal comment, now widely current, on the change in voice in Rom. ix. 22, and in his short article on

"Reprobation" he unhappily even enlarges on this matter. This comment only illustrates the straits in which those find themselves who would fain discover some hint in Scripture of a fundamental distinction in the nature of the Divine decree as it concerns the several classes of men. The article as a whole, however, is both well conceived and well worked out, and even with respect to the antinomy mentioned the right note is struck. "While St. Paul affirms the doctrine of absolute predestination to life, he asserts no less clearly the truth of human responsibility." That is the truth, accurately expressed. Professor W. F. Lofthouse, of the Wesleyan College, Birmingham, the author of the good article on the Freedom of the Will in the first volume of this Dictionary, writes here an article on the "Will" in the Apostolical writings which we find interesting rather than satisfactory. We shall not be easily persuaded to look on faith as "unswerving attention" (whatever may be the psychological effects which may be shown to result from sustained attention) rather than confident entrusting of ourselves to Christ. "If the attention is concentrated" on Jesus conceived as the Son of God, says Professor Lofthouse, expounding the notion of faith in 1 John, "the universe of evil around him is powerless to harm the Christian." We demur to this representation of the nature and working of faith even with reference to the teaching of 1 John, and much more with reference to its presentation in the New Testament at large. Professor Lofthouse is much occupied with the relation of God's will to man's in the processes of salvation. He sums up the matter very fairly. Man's will, he says, "acts properly only when it is roused and directed by Divine grace. The necessity for its exercise will never be superseded; but the more it is exercised under Divine control, the more it becomes God's will in man, and the more it becomes man's own will, acting at last in complete freedom" (p. 680b). But he is disturbed about the initial act of salvation. "Man's will appears to be called for," he says, "by such passages as 2 Cor. v. 20, 'Be ye reconciled to God', but against them Rom. ix. 18 may be quoted . . ." If we are to be saved by grace, he argues, we are also to be saved through faith; and if the one might lead us to suppose we are to be merely passive in salvation, the lat-

ter "shows that this is very far from being the case." We must mind, however, our prepositions—"by" and "through" convey the notification of different and not inconsistent relations; and with respect to passivity and activity, we must distinguish times—a famous old formula speaks accurately, regarding the initiation of salvation, of man being "altogether passive therein until—." We have already pointed out how easily the passive imperative in 2 Cor. v. 20 is misunderstood. We are not exhorted there to lay aside our enmity to God, and even less to secure from God the laying aside of His enmity to us. The means by which God is reconciled to men is not their faith but the blood of Christ. We need not wonder that we find it difficult to express the passive imperative with accurate simplicity in translation. A phrase like this (Eph. v. 18): "Be ye filled in the Spirit," requires paraphrasing. Professor Loft-house writes also the article on "Repentance." It is a distinctly disappointing article. It is written under the influence of preconceptions which the Biblical statements, conceived as they are only as references to the subject by early preachers, have no power to dispel. The rich literature on the subject is almost entirely passed by in the appended Literature.

According to Professor D. S. Adam of Melbourne, who writes on "Union with God," salvation consists essentially in the complete expression of the Divine Logos in man, who, as made in the image of God, furnishes "a form of being capable of expressing the Divine Logos in fulness of measure," and by his sin only conditioning the nature "of the task which the perfect Son of man and Son of God, when He appeared on earth, had to undertake." He is very careful not to commit the Apostolic writers to the doctrine of the Trinity, and is equally careful to commit them to such doctrines as the institution of "a certain metaphysical union between man and God by virtue of creation"; the necessity of the incarnation independently of sin; and the redemption of man through the union of the Logos with him in the incarnation. We are in a different atmosphere in Professor T. G. Soares' (of Chicago University) article on "Regeneration." He seeks to throw the New Testament doctrine up against a background supplied by Jewish Apocalypticism and the heathen mystery religions. But he is very much

afraid of sacramentalistic and magical conceptions slipping in; and labors so hard to "ethicize" the notion as to go far towards desupernaturalizing it. He gets the cart before the horse in his interpretation of such passages as 1 John v. 1, iv. 7, ii. 29, in which, in John's meaning, the begetting from God is not the effect but the cause of faith, love, righteousness. The reader is confused by a repeated odd use of the word "status" as if it expressed nature rather than relation. An appearance is created as if Professor Soares' conception of regeneration vibrated between that of justification and that more commonly connected with the term regeneration, and as if he may perhaps wish to wipe out this distinction. The article on "Sanctification" (as also that on "Saints") is written by Mr. Robert H. Strachan, Minister of the Presbyterian Church at Cambridge. Sanctify, sanctification are to him terms of relation, not of condition, much less of process. Holy really means sacred, and to sanctify means to make sacred, and sanctification the state of having been made sacred. As this is a thing God does, it is done absolutely and all at once. "Our moral progress is not a growth into holiness out of a state of comparative unholiness. That would be to negative the Christian gospel. Rather it is a growth *in* holiness. The act that makes us holy is done once and for all." In itself, therefore, sanctification has nothing to do with ethical conduct. It means merely that we belong to God. But as the God we belong to is an ethical Being, belonging to Him involves ethical conduct on our part. Sanctification thus necessitates ethical conduct and this conduct may be progressively ethical. The standard of this ethical conduct, is not, however, "statutory" law, but the Christ within us. The ethics of the saints is autonomous; precisely what they are as saints is freemen in Christ Jesus. "All legal statutes are out of place in the Christian life." Even the teaching and example of Christ are subject to our critical scrutiny. "This is dangerous doctrine," says Mr. Strachan himself. But he comforts himself by adding: "All great doctrines are dangerous." At another point he quotes Paul's declaration that the law is good and holy and righteous. This, he says, however, illustrates only one side of Paul's teaching; it has reference only to those whose walk as saints has only begun—to babes in Christ. "Obe-

dience to law is good for those to whom God says only 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not' . . . For the Christian, for 'those who are sanctified,' the 'law' of sin and death is done away altogether, and obedience to the law of God is merged in a higher and nobler loyalty to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and above all in a sense of supreme indebtedness." It is true, of course, that the Christian has a more constraining motive to "conformity with God" than even the commands of God's holy law; and it is true also, of course, that the recreating Spirit is by His recreation of him writing the law of God on his heart, so that he becomes more and more a law to himself: but the law of God must remain ever his standard, and the words of Christ must be always valid, that not one jot or one tittle of it shall pass away until all of them are accomplished. It would be harsh to speak of Mr. Strachan's teaching as antinomian—but that way antinomianism lies.

The article "Perfect, Perfection" by Principal J. G. Tasker of the Wesleyan College, Birmingham, confines itself to tracing the usage of the words in the New Testament. This it does very interestingly. The article on "Perseverance" by Mr. A. S. Martin of Aberdeen on the other hand enters fully into the subject and gives it a treatment which is excellent in conception and eloquent in presentation. The paragraph near the beginning on the antinomy of preservation and perseverance,—or, as Mr. Martin phrases it, of the religious and the moral aspects of the matter—is especially finely worked out. "The more dependent the spiritual sense," he says, "the more intense the moral independence." It is a good saying when we are told later that to the religious man, "any attempt to claim for man ability or sufficiency," "must appear as nothing less than 'religious illiteracy'." And it is an equally good saying when we are told that the Christian *agonistes* is "slack in no element of its manifold nature" but throws all that he has and is into the good fight. There is a little wavering at the end as to the relation of God and man in the work. God has the initiative in salvation. But "He waits on the start of our effort." This, it appears, is because "our effort is the beginning of His gift, the first stirring of 'the grace that is in us' from Him and which can become ours in no other way." "And so," it is

added, "after the start, throughout the whole of our moral growth, every new stirring in us is of our effort *and* of His gift and increase (Phil. ii. 12). We are never from first to last simply quietistic receivers of something infused." The statement is not free from ambiguity and does not carry its broad meaning with certainty. But it awakens a fear that its spiritual affiliation may be with Erasmus, rather than with Luther—and Paul. Every saving work of God actifies the soul, but no saving work of God waits on the soul's activities.

We shall not follow the treatment of the elements of salvation into the eschatological field. There are important articles on topics which fall in this region, which invite remark—articles for example on "Resurrection," "Parousia," "Paradise," "New Jerusalem." We have already occupied, however, as much space as is at our disposal. And perhaps enough has already been said to convey a fair conception of the character of the discussions which fill the volume.

Princeton.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.