

FAITH IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

IN considering first the Second Part of the *Report on Doctrine in the Church of England*,¹ we have deliberately postponed consideration of those sections which have aroused most discussion and which would seem to indicate trends and tendencies very different from those in the section on *The Church and Sacraments*. Before trying to form an estimate of the significance of the whole from the standpoint of those concerned with the fidelity of the Christian witness and with the prospects of Christian unity, we may, without attempting a full analysis, draw attention to some salient points raised in these other sections.

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The first of the three main divisions of the Report covers *The Doctrines of God and of Redemption*. Herein the doctrine of the Triune God is confined within a page and a half, not of dogmatic or theological exposition, but of pure history of dogma. The question *What do we mean by the word "God"?* is answered exclusively in terms of purely natural theology without reference to Revelation; but it is found subsequently that the "Biblical conception [of the 'Living God'] is greatly to be preferred," for purely pragmatic reasons, to "the leading conceptions entertained by Greek philosophers and Indian sages."

Though the Report fully recognises that the New Testament clearly teaches that "the Son of Man came upon earth as the Conqueror of demons and as the Deliverer of all them that were 'under the tyranny of the devil'; and that there are angels . . .", nevertheless "the Commission desires to record its conviction that it is legitimate for a Christian either to suspend judgment on the point, or alternatively to interpret the language, whether of Scripture or of the Church's liturgy, in a purely symbolical sense." The significance of this toleration will be realised when it is remembered that, even on the assumption of the most rigor-

¹ See BLACKFRIARS, March 1938. (Corrigendum: The word *clergymen* on p. 163, line 28, should read *churchmen*.)

ous results of Synoptic criticism by the application of *Formgeschichte*, the coming of the transcendent Kingdom of God with His hosts of angels, and the conquest of Satan and his evil spirits, is the very core of the Gospel preached by our Lord.²

The Chairman's Introduction forewarns us that "the occasions of controversy within the Church of England . . . are not the same as those which cause most concern to Continental theologians." We are not therefore "startled to find so little said about the Fall; about Freedom, Election and Predestination; about Justification by Faith . . ." nor are we "filled with astonishment at the brevity of the treatment of Divine Grace." But the vagueness of the little that is said on these fundamental matters can hardly be less than disappointing.

Grace is disposed of in a page and a quarter. The Commission's views regarding the supernaturality of Grace may be indicated by the fact that the word *Supernatural* is set in inverted commas, and that the very conception of the Supernatural is considered to be important for no more definite reason than "as witnessing to the distinctiveness of the Christian ideal and to the necessity of obtaining grace through Christ for the attainment of this ideal." When it is seen that by grace is understood something which "is always prior to every good inclination of the human soul, both to that 'natural' goodness which persists despite the corruption of human nature through sin, and to that 'supernatural' goodness or sanctification which results from the work of the

² cf. Rudolf Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* (Lutterworth Press, 1958). In saying this we do not intend to imply endorsement of the assumptions, methods and findings of *Formgeschichte*, but simply to indicate that, even if the most advanced conclusions of criticism be assumed, the Commission permits complete open-mindedness regarding the most indisputably authentic utterances and works of Christ. Dr. Otto's observations on pp. 375-6 of this work seem relevant: "for the theologian the charisma, together with the pneuma, as an anticipation of the eschatological order is an essential element of a community which is intended to be a church of the Nazarene. That this church has lost its charisma, that men look back to it as a thing of past times, that men make it and the inbreaking kingdom belonging to it trivial by allegories, does not show that this church is now on a higher level, but is a sign of its decay."

Holy Spirit in and through the Church," the degree of departure from traditional teaching—both Catholic and Protestant—becomes evident. It is good to find, in the Chairman's Introduction, so formal a repudiation of the English tendency towards Pelagianism ("of all heresies spiritually the most pernicious"); but this telescoping of grace into nature, in some respects reminiscent of some theories of Baius, will be found scarcely less spiritually pernicious if judged in the light of Catholic tradition, both Eastern and Western, or by the standards of Protestant orthodoxy.

In its treatment of *Sin*, the Commission has thought fit to go considerably beyond its terms of reference. In admitting and elaborating the very necessary distinction between material and formal sin it is confessedly intent, not to expound what commonly *is* taught in the Church of England, but what is *not* but *should be*.³ Here the plain Catholic catechism teaching on the subject is simply expounded. But when it comes to expounding, a few pages further on, the distinction between mortal and venial sin, the relevance of the former distinction seems to have been overlooked. For it is now declared that "The traditional distinction of certain particular offences as in their own nature mortal from certain others as in their own nature venial cannot be upheld." (p. 65.) No reasons are given for this except those arising from the subjective circumstances of a sinful act in the concrete; i.e., precisely presupposing a confusion of material and formal sin.

The section dealing with *Original Sin* is perhaps the most unsatisfactory in the whole book. It appears to take no account of the data of Revelation on the subject. We need be in no ironical mood to perceive the pathos in the solemn pronouncement that "We are agreed in asserting that man,

³ "Here we have gone into greater detail, because it seemed to us that there is great confusion of thought on the subject, especially as regards the distinction marked technically by the terms Formal Sin and Material Sin, and because greater precision of thought than is common among either clergy or instructed laity is needed, if the increasing practice of spiritual consultation and direction is to be fruitful."—Chairman's Introduction, p. 11.

as known to history, both now and throughout the ages, has been under the influence of a bias towards evil." That, however, seems about as far as agreement could be reached, except for the tacit unanimous assumption that the doctrine of original sin is no more than a human attempt to account for this purely empirical phenomenon. Indeed, "the general conception of original sin was in the first instance suggested by this fact of experience," and the Scriptures might as well never have been written for any revelation on the subject the Commission cares to seek in them. An additional Note *On Historical Forms of the Doctrine of Man's Universal Sinfulness and Original Sin* sets the Greek Fathers—surely unduly simplified?—into direct contradiction to the teaching of St. Augustine; no account has been taken of the great work of Scheeben and others showing how the teaching of the Eastern and Western Fathers on grace and sin, precisely because differing greatly in their viewpoint, are in fact mutually complementary and explanatory. The thin conclusion—how far removed from the passionate faith and conviction of St. Paul!—is finally reached that, "Man is *by nature*⁴ capable of communion with God, and only through such communion can he become what he was created to be. 'Original Sin' stands for the fact that at a time apparently prior to any responsible act of choice man is lacking in this communion, and if left to his own resources and to the influence of his natural environment cannot attain to his destiny as a child of God." To such pathetic triviality is the deep mystery of the Fall of man reduced if we seek to expound it, not on the basis of acceptance of God's revelation of His will in His dealings with man, but on the grounds of a philosophy and history which seek no aid from faith . . . ⁵

⁴ Italics ours. It is true, indeed, that many of the Greek Fathers speak of Adam's grace and communion with God before the Fall as "natural"; but it seems clear that they understand this, not as opposed to what the Latins came to call *supernatural*, but in the sense of *native*, as opposed to *acquired* or *added*. On this, and on the whole development of the Catholic theology of grace and nature and original sin, see A. Verrielle, *Le surnaturel en nous et le péché originel*. It is high time for an English edition of this profound and constructive, but eminently readable, book.

The treatment of *Christology* brings the Commission back from the "Continental" field, in which it is plainly so ill at ease, on to more familiar ground, and, incidentally, into closer conformity with Catholic teaching. The statement of *Christological Doctrine*, notwithstanding one or two passages which might be open to criticism, quite justly claims to be soundly Chalcedonian. The question of the "limitations" (it is not clear whether or not these are to be understood as positive "errors") in Our Lord's human knowledge is raised and dismissed in a short non-committal paragraph. It might be thought that this matter had been sufficiently a matter of controversy among Anglicans to deserve fuller treatment.

Upon this follow the now celebrated subsections treating of *The Virgin Birth* and of *The Resurrection*. It is not explained whether, under the former heading, the Virgin Birth properly so called (*virgo in partu*) or the virginal Conception (*virgo ante partum*) is under discussion, but subsequent comments have taken it for granted that the latter, and far more fundamental,⁶ doctrine is understood. Whether or not the Virgin Birth is a fact revealed on the authority of God, and to be accepted on that authority, is not so much as discussed. Hence, since "belief in it as an historical fact cannot be independent of the historical evidence, although in this case the subject is one on which the historical evidence by itself cannot be other than inconclusive," the Commission confines itself to considering the pragmatic value of believing, or alternatively not believing, in it. This, inevitably, is found equally inconclusive, and

⁵ It need not be denied that Catholic theologians have, in the past, too often attempted to account for the *transmission* of original sin in purely rational terms without reference to the revealed economy of salvation. But they have always understood that the doctrine of original sin in itself is (and can only be) a revealed truth; a subject which theology, grounded on and guided by faith, can alone deal with. Cf. A. Verrielle, *op.cit.*

⁶ More fundamental if only because its denial is a direct and explicit repudiation of the teaching of Scripture and Creeds; the former does not appear to have received explicit formulation in Tradition till considerably later. For a brief statement of the whole subject, Fr. C. C. Martindale's pamphlet, *The Virgin Birth* (Catholic Truth Society, 2d.) may be warmly recommended.

Anglicans appear to be found left to believe in or not to believe in it accordingly as they find it most "valuable."⁷ The Commission is, however, at pains to declare that it is unanimous in the full acceptance of "our Lord's Incarnation, which is the central truth of the Christian faith." The insinuation of one or two Catholic critics that doubt or denial of the Virgin Birth logically involves doubt or denial of the Incarnation is unreasonable. There is no inherent impossibility in an Incarnation unaccompanied by a Virgin Birth.⁸

The Resurrection of Our Lord is approached from the similar standpoint of "value" and fittingness. Notwithstanding newspaper insinuations to the contrary, the Commission emphatically asserts the Resurrection as "the central fact of human history." But the treatment of the subject is extremely involved, and must leave considerable doubt in the reader's mind as to what is to be understood by "the Resurrection." Considerable difficulty is confessed in the examination of the "historic evidence," but it is considered that this very fact "implies that there is an underlying mystery to be explained." The New Testament narratives attest "in the first instance," not the Resurrection itself, but "the unanimous faith or conviction of the earliest Christians that Jesus was risen and alive from the dead." Does the Commission share that faith and conviction? This is not easy to discover. On the one hand, it is "of opinion that it ought to be affirmed that Jesus was veritably alive and victorious; that He showed Himself, alive from the dead, to the disciples; and that the fact of His

⁷ Those of the Commission "who hold that a full belief in the historical Incarnation is more consistent with the supposition that Our Lord's birth took place under the normal conditions of human generation," need perhaps to be reminded that Catholic theology has always been at considerable pains to safeguard the truth that—in the words of Ratzmann whose reply to the *peritissimi physiologi* of his time seems still relevant—Our Lord's birth was a true *nasci* and not an *erumpi*. (cf. Seeberg, *Domengesch.* III. p. 71 sqq.) Any interpretation of the Virgin Birth which would destroy the reality of Our Lady's true motherhood would of course be heretical. Cf. St. Thomas's principle: "Ex parte matris, nativitas illa fuit naturalis; sed ex parte operationis Spiritus Sancti fuit miraculosa; unde beata Virgo est vera et naturalis mater Christi." (*Summa*, III. xxxv, 4 ad 2.)

⁸ Cf. C. C. Martindale, *op. cit.* pp. 9, 10.

rising, however explained (and it involves probably an element beyond our explaining), is to be understood to have been an event as real and concrete as the crucifixion itself (which it reversed) and an act of God, wholly unique in human history." Moreover, "the teaching of the New Testament about the 'Risen Body' expresses the belief that through Our Lord's Resurrection the sovereignty of God has been vindicated in the material creation and not outside or apart from it." But on the other hand a minority of the Commission is inclined to the belief that "the connexion made in the New Testament between the emptiness of a tomb and the appearances of the Risen Lord belongs rather to the sphere of religious symbolism than to that of historic fact." One must ask of what the empty tomb is a symbol if it is not also the *result* of a fact, and of what value is the admitted "significance" of the Resurrection if it be not precisely the significance of a *fact*. There is a contrast between this treatment of the Resurrection and that of the Atonement which follows, where it is firmly recognised, on the contrary, that "the preaching of the Cross is the proclamation of a fact far richer than any theory of the Atonement."⁹

Lack of space prevents our attempting any detailed analysis of the final section of the Report dealing with *Eschatology*. It should be recognised that this section squarely faces issues sadly neglected in too many of our theological treatises *De Novissimis* as well as in our popular preaching. Although some of the conclusions reached, or recognised as tolerable, are plainly incompatible with defined Catholic teaching, the section at least indicates many problems which require attention in this neglected branch of theology. It is worth noting that the Protestant rejection of Purgatory is presented as logically associated with the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, and that "a doctrine of life hereafter which (whether or not the *word* Purgatory be used or the element of purification be

⁹ We regret the carelessness with which in the previous study (p. 173) we attributed "misunderstandings" to this section on the Atonement. The "fear of anthropomorphic interpretations of satisfaction and placation" does not, in fact, occur in this section which, so far as it goes, provides a good if incomplete exposition of Catholic doctrine.

emphasised) is at least conceived in terms of development and growth" is left optional for Anglicans.

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We cannot, however, estimate the significance of the Report and of the trends for the future that it indicates by checking arithmetically its degrees of compatibility and incompatibility with particular doctrines of the Catholic faith. The critical question must be for us, not *what* does the Church of England believe or disbelieve, but *why* does it believe or disbelieve, and what does it understand by belief? In a word, the question must be asked, does the Report indicate a surrender to Modernism? The fullest and most accurate statement of the Catholic creed is valueless if another meaning is given to the word *Credo* than that of the New Testament and of the Catholic Church to-day. The critical issue raised by Modernism is not, as Tyrrell saw, and as Barth sees,¹⁰ the acceptance or non-acceptance of particular doctrines, but the whole conception of faith as "obedience" to the Gospel of God.

What is the authority and the motive for the beliefs, the convictions, the "feelings," the certainties, even for the uncertainties expressed in the Report? We do not ask merely, what is its proximate norm of belief or *regula fidei*. We are not merely resuscitating the issue of external authority; the crucial issue now is the divine and transcendental sanction itself as the motive for the acceptance of *any* doctrinal authority.

On this fundamental issue the Report is distressingly reticent. The *Prolegomena: The Sources and Authority of Christian Doctrine* acknowledge indeed that "The Christian Religion is founded upon a specific revelation of God in history," and assert that "the Bible is the inspired record

¹⁰ So Tyrrell: "What I feel is that their [the orthodox theologians'] instinct of hostility is right, though their reasons are wrong; but the cleft is even deeper than they dream. It is not, as they suppose, about this or that article of the creed that we differ; we accept it all; but it is the word *credo*; the sense of 'true' as applied to dogma; the whole value of revelation that is at stake." (Letter to von Hügel, 30.9.1904) Barth, from the opposite point of view, recognises the same thing. (See especially his *Der Begriff der Kirche* in *Die Theologie und die Kirche*, Vol. II. pp. 24 sqq., and numerous passages in his *Dogmatik*.)

of God's self-revelation to man and of man's response to that revelation." But it is added ominously that this "is not for us a dogma imposed as a result of some theory of the composition of the books, but *a conclusion drawn from the character of their contents and the spiritual insight displayed in them.*" (italics ours.) However acceptable, therefore, the subsequent assurances that "God speaks to men through the Bible, which may therefore be rightly called 'the Word of God,' " and that "the Bible is unique as being the inspired record of a unique revelation," we can be far from sure that the grounds for these assertions are other than specifically immanentist and Modernist. This misgiving is increased by countless passages throughout the Report in which the historical documents as such are presented, at least implicitly, as ultimate criteria and motives for particular beliefs and disbeliefs, or in which assertions are made for no given reason than their intrinsic fittingness or psychological value. That faith is a God-given and supernatural adhesion to God, the First Truth, involving (to use the fine language of Kierkegaard) a "contemporaneous discipleship," the Report gives us no hint. Doubtless the Commission would repudiate the fully developed and systematised Modernism expounded and condemned in the Encyclical *Pascendi*, and many of the extravagances of the Modernists of that time. But it is by no means clear that the Report does not in fact presuppose some analogous conception of faith and revelation, however imperfectly elaborated or only dimly apprehended. Does the Commission accept the traditional and Catholic, itself revealed, conceptions of faith and revelation? Does it understand, for instance, that historical documents, even though they be acknowledged to be in some way "inspired," are not the grounds and motives of our beliefs, but only the channels whereby the content of faith is mediated to us? What does it understand by its recurrent appeal to "experience"? Such questions must be suggested by almost every page, and the answer to them must be known if we are to form any definitive judgment upon the Report as a whole. In short, are the assertions it makes made because "flesh and blood" have revealed them—

whether that be understood of reason, experience or historical evidence—or on the grounds of the revelation of the “Father in heaven”? (cf. Mt. xvi, 17).

In his Introduction, the Archbishop of York in his capacity of Chairman of the Committee observes: “In our own sphere, that of Theology, the work of such writers as Karl Barth in Europe and Reinhold Niebuhr in America has set many problems in a new perspective. It has not been our task to comment on these variations in the intellectual atmosphere.” Yet the challenge represented by Barth cannot be so lightly dismissed, for it is, for all its errors and one-sidedness, a challenge to the whole development of thought in the “Reformed Churches” subsequent to the first Reformers, to the whole process of the degradation of the idea of faith and of theology, of which the Report too often represents the Nemesis.¹¹ “Barthianism” is not just one aroma more or less to blend into a comprehensive “atmosphere”; its stern dogmatism and summons resist any such treatment. It is a recall to the “decision” of faith which is the very negation of dilettante eclecticism and the liberal principle of toleration supposed by the Report. There is considerable justice in the comment recently made by a Scottish Barthian:

“The great truth to which Anglo-Saxon thought of the type we have been discussing fails to do justice is the *scandal*, the *offence* of Christianity; and the great debt we owe to the Continental intransigent transcendentalists is that they bear unmovable witness to that *scandal—ne evacuetur sit crux*. (Whether or no their witness be one-sided is quite a different question. It is too easy to criticize a theologian for being one-sided in order to avoid facing that one side of the truth for which he stands) . . . The essential fact, so often misrepresented by natural theology, is that it is not Christianity which must stand at the bar of human thought, but human thought that must stand at the bar of Christianity. Advocacy of Christianity is an advocacy for the prosecution, not for the defence! Then the theologian should proceed to a positive evangelism—a proclamation of the Truth as

¹¹ The story of that development is brilliantly sketched by Barth's disciple, Emil Brunner, in the early chapters of his *Philosophy of Religion from the Standpoint of Protestant Theology*. (Nicholson and Watson.)

it is in Jesus. And upon *that* basis, he may then proceed to a constructive interpretation of nature . . . "12

No Catholic could wish—nor need fear—that the Church of England should “go Barthian.” The basic principles of the Continental Reformation—the extrinsicism of grace and the irremediable corruption of human nature—which vitiate the content of Barth’s neo-Calvinist theology have never permeated the Anglican Communion, and the Report itself is witness that there is little likelihood of their doing so now.¹³ Its marked “sacramentalist” tendencies indicate a trend in the very opposite direction. Yet in calling the “Reformed Churches” to examine the very grounds, motives and nature of their belief, in challenging the validity of a “natural” theology or philosophy of religion as substitutes for a divine Theology which springs from and is checked at every stage by faith, Barth has not merely put problems in an optional “new perspective”; he has insisted that they cannot without betrayal of the Gospel be considered from any but the theocentric one which faith alone can impart.

Will the leaders of the Church of England face this issue? The Archbishop of York, in his Introduction, already indicates a dissatisfaction which gives reason for hope:

“If the security of the nineteenth century, already shattered in Europe, finally crumbles away in our country, we shall be pressed more and more towards a theology of Redemption. In this we shall be coming closer to the New Testament. We have been learning again how impotent man is to save himself, how deep and pervasive is that corruption which theologians call Original Sin . . .

“If we began our work again to-day, its perspectives would be different. But it is not our function to pioneer. We may call the thinkers and teachers of the Church of England to renewed devotion of their labour to the themes of Redemption, Justification and Conversion. It is there that, in my judgment at least, our need lies now and will lie in the future. To put the matter in another way: theology in the half-century that ended with

¹² *The Great Misunderstanding*, by Denzil G. M. Patrick, *Student World*, No. II, 1937, p. 134

¹³ E.g. “The God of Redemption is not other than the God of Creation” (p. 79); “Through Our Lord’s Resurrection the sovereignty of God has been vindicated in the material creation and not outside or apart from it.” (p. 85.) On this aspect of the Report, cf. the Editorial in the March issue of *The Industrial Christian Fellowship Review*.

the war was such as is prompted by and promotes a ministry mainly pastoral; we need and must work out for our own time a theology such as is prompted by and promotes a ministry at least as much evangelistic as pastoral." (p. 17.)

Such considerations, above all a reawakened sense of the need for an "evangelistic" ministry which will present the Gospel as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," can only reveal the insufficiency and falsity of a theology which is an *intellectus quaerens fidem* instead of *fides quaerens intellectum*. Theological liberalism and dilettantism could flourish indeed in the false security of pre-War confidence in human progress and in the atmosphere of the post-War anthropocentric optimism which issued in the League of Nations. It is an atmosphere which is rapidly passing in England, and which has long since passed on the Continent of Europe. With its passing, and with the growing sense of insecurity and distrust of unredeemed human nature consequent upon it, the vital truths of Christianity will inevitably be seen in a perspective which is new only in the sense that it involves a return to the old. This must mean, not merely the exchange of one viewpoint for another, but the substitution of a true and theocentric one for a false and anthropocentric one. Before we allow ourselves to bewail the "modernistic" tendencies of the Report as a final step on the path to unabashed rationalism, we should be wise to recognise, as the Archbishop of York implicitly does, that it is an interim report which in many respects already an anachronism. It would seem over-hasty to proclaim that in it, as one critic has expressed it, Anglicanism is "self-portrayed." In the authentic tradition of *pietas anglicana*—by which we here understand not the filial piety of Anglicans towards Anglicanism but the characteristic filial piety of Anglicans towards God—there is something deeper and stronger than any ephemeral compromises with the liberal atmosphere of the pre-War period; something, moreover, which is likely to outlive them. That piety is a firmly Christocentric piety, expressed not only in the traditional worship and devotion of Anglicans, but given a firm dogmatic basis by the great Anglican divines and

devotional writers who have done most to mould Anglican thought and feeling. We do not believe that this precious inheritance from the past will be readily forgotten and relinquished, and under the pressure of the new problems of the present and the future, it may well be found that the "modernistic" leanings in the Report represent no more than the low water mark of a tide which is already on the turn.

We may derive further comfort from the fact that Modernism is largely unpreachable (and that fact is its most striking self-refutation). The devout Anglican will continue to imbibe his beliefs through the dogmatic channels of his Prayer Book worship, through the singing of his traditional dogma-charged hymns, heeding little the perplexities and doubts of the theologians. The development and encouragement of sacramental teaching, and still more the inculcation of fundamental Christian dogma through the wider and more treasured use of sacramental symbolism, may be calculated to spread a more definitely Catholicising ethos and spirituality among practising Anglicans, who will largely remain impervious to heterodox speculations of academic divines on more remote if fundamental matters. It may well be, and the reflection is consoling, that the progressive Part II of the Report, that on *The Church and Sacraments*, will prove to be of far more *practical* import to the future of Anglicanism than the retrogressive and "modernistic" tendencies of the other parts. Monsieur Gabriel Marcel had reason when, at a recent assembly of *L'Amitié*, he questioned the legitimacy of regarding the questions of Church and Sacraments, from the standpoint of Christian disunity, as purely "secondary." "He said that he was much struck by the fact that it was precisely these so-called 'secondary' questions which were the most supremely 'existential' and which directly concern the make-up of the mystical Body as a concrete reality, and which precisely implicate the individual Christian as a member of that Body."¹⁴ The fact

¹⁴ *Œcumenica*, Jan. 1938, p. 738. M. Gabriel Marcel is a Catholic exponent of an "existential philosophy" of Kierkegaardian inspiration. His meaning in the above quotation is therefore that it is precisely the doctrines of the Church and Sacraments that most immediately and profoundly affect our personal existence and outlook.

that we cannot regard the sacraments administered in the Church of England (save Baptism and Matrimony) as *ex opere operato* efficacious instruments of grace need not damp any consolations we may derive from this reflection. For it is precisely in their psychological and "experiential" effectiveness as *signs* of Christ's redeeming work in our midst that sacramental practice inculcates an ethos and manner of living which is distinctively "Catholic" in type.¹⁵

Yet, though we need not be entirely pessimistic regarding the possible effects of the Report and regarding the permanence of the phase in Anglican history which it represents considered purely from the standpoint of the devout practising Anglican, we cannot but deplore its inevitable repercussions on the world at large. To the average man it can have little significance except that "the leaders of Christian thought" are themselves engaged in repudiating, explaining away or allegorising their own creeds. He is, inevitably, less impressed by the Report's affirmations of Christian doctrine than by its repudiation, or open-mindedness, with regard to what he knows to be the indisputable teaching of the Scriptures and Creeds regarding miracles, devils, the Virgin Birth and the rest. His instinct in this is sound: if the clergy themselves can so far surrender to rationalism, why should *he* look to them for any supernatural message of salvation?¹⁶ The Report may indeed forward its aim of settling domestic controversies among Anglican churchmen; but less than little is to be expected of it as a proclamation of commendation of the Gospel of salvation. As a concomitant to a "Recall to Religion" it is a sorry document. A Recall to Religion must be, before all things, a Recall to Faith. VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

¹⁵ This point is too often overlooked by Anglo-Catholics who claim to base their acceptance of the validity of their sacraments on their personal "sacramental experience." The validity of a sacrament necessarily transcends "experience"—to assert otherwise would be indeed to "overthrow the nature of a sacrament"—whereas the symbolism of the *signum*, and its co-relative "experience" may be independent of the reality of the effects signified.

¹⁶ Cf. *The Sunday Pictorial*: "Decent men and women want religious guidance in these dark days of doubt and insecurity. They need a Voice to obey. A Leader to follow. And the miserable retort to their prayer is a spate of specious contradictions, a Modern Bible of Bunk which asserts that even the original Book must now be swallowed with a pinch of salt."