

## Editorial

THE notable article by the Archdeacon of Sheffield which follows this Editorial sets the keynote to the theme of the present issue. The article had its origin in a paper read at the annual conference of the Evangelical Fellowship of Theological Literature, held at Cambridge during the early part of July, which took as its subject the doctrine of the Atonement. The purpose of Archdeacon Harrison's paper was to set forth the biblical basis of the Atonement, with a view to preparing the way for the later consideration of the doctrine in relation to contemporary thought. It is hoped shortly to reprint this article in pamphlet form. If the paper is somewhat longer than the general run of articles in THE CHURCHMAN, its inclusion is certainly justified by the quality of the writing and as providing a really valuable exposition of New Testament teaching.

Another of the E.F.T.L. conference papers, that by the Rev. A. J. Drewett, Educational Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, is also included in this issue. The brief article (necessarily anonymous) by a C.M.S. missionary who has lately returned from China is in the nature of an appendix to Mr. Drewett's paper and illustrates his thesis in reference to Chinese Communism. The Rev. Douglas Webster, Tutor of the London College of Divinity, surveys James Denney's great classic on the Atonement, *The Death of Christ*, which has recently been made available again by the Tyndale Press.

As an article outside the main theme of this issue, the Rev. P. E. Hughes, Tutor of the Bible Churchmen's College, Bristol, provides a study of the doctrine of the State in Holy Scripture. This article is the substance of a paper read at this year's Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen.

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A book of more than usual interest to Evangelical churchmen is G. C. B. Davies's study entitled *The Early Cornish Evangelicals, 1735-1760*.<sup>1</sup> It is in effect a study of Samuel Walker of Truro, with reference also to certain other pioneers of Evangelicalism in Cornwall. In an age when pastoral zeal in the Church of England was at a low ebb and most parishes were wretchedly neglected, Walker stood out as a shining example of a devoted parish priest whose one aim was the religious welfare of the people committed to his care. He himself reached the spiritual turning point of his life a year after his arrival at Truro (1746). This came about as a result of his friendship with George Conon, headmaster of Truro Grammar School, whom Walker described later as "verily the first person I had met with truly possessed of the mind of Christ". The result was a complete transformation of his ministry, and particularly of his preaching. He who before had been little more than the gay and popular leader of the social life of the town now became a fervent evangelist, with a mighty

<sup>1</sup> S.P.C.K., 16/6.

Gospel upon his lips. A deep spiritual revival swept over Truro and the church was crowded. So deserted were the streets during the hours of divine service that it was commonly remarked "you might fire a cannon down every street of Truro in church time, without a chance of killing a single human being".

Within a short time Walker was able to report that 800 or more had inquired of him the way of salvation. Those who gave some proof of their faith were formed into religious societies, not unlike the Methodist societies; yet there were significant differences. There was no extempore prayer, but the weekly meetings opened with a short Office, derived almost entirely from the Prayer Book; and none but Walker himself officiated at these gatherings. "It hath been our singular blessing," he wrote, "that we have had no disputes amongst us, which, under God, we ascribe to the nature of our constitution, which is *that no one is to be talking there but myself*. That private persons should be speaking in a large company, we had observed from the Methodists, to be so great a temptation to conceit (and the next step to that is always envy, strife in the heart, and contention), that we dared not venture upon it."

Perhaps the most interesting and valuable chapters of the book are those which give an account of Walker's correspondence with John Wesley. It is clear that some time before the followers of Wesley ultimately separated from the Church of England there were already important points of difference between the Methodists and the Anglican Evangelicals, of whom Walker was so notable a representative. There was, for example, the question of the lay preachers—"a tender point", as Walker admitted in a letter to Wesley, and a point which touched immediately upon the relations of Methodism to the Church. Walker approached the situation from the point of view not of expediency but of lawfulness, insisting—to Wesley's surprise—that "the essence of the Church of England, considered as such, consists in her orders and laws, rather than in her doctrine and worship". There was also the problem created by Wesley's practice of "preaching abroad" without regard for parish boundaries. Walker was a firm believer in the parochial system, and in his own ministry at Truro exemplified how successfully the system could work. Between him and a man who regarded the whole world as his parish there was necessarily a clash of opinions.

The later chapters of the book describe Walker's pastoral activities, his theology, his friends, and his closing years. We must be grateful to Mr. Davies for a study which cannot but serve as at once an inspiration and a challenge to the Evangelical pastor of to-day.

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