

## ART. III.—FOUR GREAT PREBENDARIES OF SALISBURY.

## No. 1.—RICHARD HOOKER.

A RECENT commemoration of the founders, benefactors, and worthies of the Cathedral-church of Salisbury, meant to be annual, may possibly have wider significance than was originally intended. The preservation of the historic unity of a great institution is, in these restless days, highly desirable. In a remarkable sermon, preached by the Bishop of Salisbury, upon this occasion, while complete justice was meted out to the mingled character of the pre-Reformation work of the Cathedral, special and loving care was bestowed on the peculiar position occupied by Bishop Jewell, "apologist of the Church of England, a patron of poor scholars, and an unwearied preacher of the Word of God." In the list of worthies, Jewell stands between Dean Colet, of St. Paul's, and Richard Hooker, for some time sub-dean and prebendary of Netheravon. Not far from Hooker, and occupant of the same stall, stands the name of John Pearson, whose treatise on the Creed is a more lasting memorial than the high offices of Master of Trinity and Bishop of Chester. A little lower down we come upon the name of Isaac Barrow, and the eighteenth century adds the great name of Joseph Butler to the list of divines who enjoyed preferment through the bounty of Osmund and other noble donors of lands to the great Cathedral of Sarum. There are many other notable names in this remarkable list. Douglas, the friend of Johnson and Burke, and the author of the well-known book on "Miracles," should perhaps have had a place among the more recent Bishops. Every year adds something to our knowledge of the past histories of our cathedrals; and although there is much that needs apology in the waste of revenues—the nepotism, and the unfair predominance of family interest in the disposition of patronage—it is pleasant to note how men of ability have been from time to time selected by Bishops for prebends, which certainly, in the cases of these four illustrious men, must have afforded some relief to the *res angusta*, and enabled minds of no ordinary type to ponder securely the great truths they loved so well.

The present occupant of the See of Salisbury included the first book of Hooker's "Polity" in a list of works recommended to those who were willing to engage in a systematic study of religious reading; and we are not unnaturally reminded of that noble sonnet which will long preserve Walton's "Book of Lives," and recall to many a reader the name and fame of Hooker, dear to the poet Wordsworth as well as to the divine:

There are no colours in the fairest sky  
So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen  
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,  
Dropped from an angel's wing. With moistened eye  
We read of faith and purest charity  
In statesman, priest, and humble citizen :  
Oh, could we copy their mild virtues, then  
What joy to live, what blessedness to die !

The church and parsonage of Bemerton, endeared by the memory of George Herbert, are constantly visited by strangers; but very few have ever seen the small retired valley where East Boscombe nestles under the chalk-hills, not far from the track of the Roman road, from Old Sarum to Silchester. Here, from 1591 to 1595, Hooker was rector. Archbishop Whitgift presented him, during the vacancy of the see, when Bishop Piers was advanced from Sarum to York. Whitgift also made him Prebendary of Netheravon, and sub-dean. "When we think of the works left behind them by those who thus obtained stalls from time to time in the Cathedral of Sarum," says the late Canon Rich Jones in his volume of "Diocesan History," "we can hardly help regretting that wholesale confiscation of the prebends which was deemed necessary some forty years ago." It is, however, some satisfaction to think of the four great worthies we have selected from the Sarum list, and those may be pardoned who still indulge a hope that the restoration of some, at least, of the revenues of our great foundations may still be employed in the encouragement of research and patient study.

Walton's "Life of Hooker" is within everybody's reach. The interest of his early life lies in his connection with Jewell. There has been some controversy as to the actual place of his birth. Gauden, on the authority of Dr. Vilvain, declares that he was born in Exeter about the year 1553. His college days were happy. Meekness and modesty were the notable characteristics of his student life. There is a completeness about the account of his gradual progress in knowledge. His dangerous illness and his mother's prayers recall Izaak Walton to the thought of St. Augustine and Monica. The interview with Jewell, so often mentioned, ending with the "God bless you, good Richard," must often have come back into memory in the days when Hooker was fighting the battle of the Reformed Church of England with the same intrepidity, and a greater share, it may be said, of loving strength than the great apologist. The brief story of Hooker's relation to his pupils, Sandys and Cranmer, makes us long to know more of the daily conversation and habits of a man who could inspire his pupils with such love for study and devotion to their master. A man who is a hero to his pupils is a hero indeed. Servants are

admirable judges of a master's strength or weakness, and Hooker's pupils seem to have had the real reverential trust in their master's power which has been so potent an auxiliary to the efforts of great teachers.

We must pass over the strange and unexplained passage of Hooker's marriage. There can be no doubt that the wife who brought him, according to Walton, "the continual dropping" of trial and temper, must have been a sore hindrance to the quiet exercise of contemplation. There is humour in the description of poor Hooker, found by his old pupils tending sheep, and sent to rock the cradle; and there is pathos also in the meek reply of the good man, when his old friends dared to express their sorrow that his wife was not a more comfortable companion: "If saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed for me, but labour (as, indeed, I do daily) to submit mine to His will, and possess my soul in patience and peace." Although the marriage may not have been altogether a congenial one, it ought not to be forgotten that Hooker made his wife one of his executors; and certainly the tendency of Walton to draw somewhat ideal pictures, and his exaltation of Hooker's "simplicity at the expense of his good sense and good feeling"—as the Dean of St. Paul's remarks—"provokes suspicion."

With Hooker's appointment to the Mastership of the Temple, a great change was made in his life. It was an age of controversy. The predominance of Calvin's authority over a certain class of minds was complete. The leaders of the Puritan party were men of great ability. The quarrel, in spite of the great authority of Hallam, was no vulgar or ignoble one. Hooker, who had begun, as we know from a great passage in his Preface, by a real acknowledgment of Calvin's power, soon made his own way into a freer province, and what began in a personal controversy ended in a resolution to compose a work which should effectually establish and vindicate the position of the English Church and the laws on which all Church polity depended.

Whitgift enabled Hooker to exchange his position at the Temple for the rectory of Boscombe, where the room which claims to be the study where the first four books of Hooker's great work were written is still shown, though it is fair to say architects express doubts as to the validity of the tradition. The volume containing the first four books of Hooker's work was not published till 1593 or 1594. In the following year Hooker was presented by the Crown to the living of Bishopsbourne, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Like many great authors, Hooker has been more praised than

read. Yet it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of his position in the history of English thought. In the first place, he was master of a grand style. His writings stand with the essays of Bacon and the poetry of Spenser among the great productions of the close of Elizabeth's reign. His knowledge of his own language was varied and spirited. He is certainly foremost in the ranks of those who gave theology and philosophy a real place in English literature; but the greatest of all praises, that of being an almost unique controversialist in temper and tone, is even a higher distinction to the humble-minded parish priest than to have gained a great place among the great writers of a great age.

It has been well said that Hooker knew how to build as well as to destroy. Bishop Barry, in his clear and complete portrait of Hooker's theological position in "Masters in English Theology," has shown this characteristic of Hooker with great force. The occasional character of the book, arising as it did out of the controversy with Travers, is entirely forgotten as the reader passes into the higher sphere, where Hooker pursues his great argument. Nothing has ever been so happily said, with regard to Hooker's fundamental position, than what Dean Church calls "his doctrine, so pertinaciously urged, and always implied, of the concurrence and co-operation, each in its due place, of all possible means of knowledge for man's direction."

The limits of this article forbid us to attempt any formal analysis of the great argument of Hooker. Keble is, perhaps, somewhat too sweeping in his assertion that there is not in Hooker a single instance of unfair citation of the words of his foes. In the fifth book there is, certainly, one passage of which Cartwright might justly have complained, but upon the whole few men have ever escaped from a contest with cleaner hands. Principal Tulloch, an ardent admirer of Hooker, in an article in the *North British Review*, which brought the venerable Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrew's into friendly controversy with him many years ago, dwells especially on Hooker's delightful freedom from asperity, and the elevation of his tone as a partisan. In his treatment of Scripture Hooker shows a marvellous moderation. The progressive order of revelation seems to have been deep in his mind. The knowledge of God is with him no simple process. Reason and conscience have their due recognition. The natural law of the heart, and the supernatural law of Scripture, he asserts are in real harmony. The transitory and the permanent, so often confused in the writings of eminent divines, are clearly, in Hooker's scheme, defined and determined. Although to some he may seem to assign a complete supremacy to reason, he always guards himself by a deep and absolute reverence for facts. "The general and perpetual voice

of men is as the sentence of God Himself;" and this striking aphorism lies at the root of all his expositions of law and conscience. The theory of government expounded by Hooker has hardly ever received full justice at the hands of political theorists. Locke, although an ardent admirer and disciple of Hooker, exaggerated his systematic view of civil government, and Hooker has been made answerable for the undue representation his theories receive in Locke's treatise on "Civil Government." The theory of the relation of Church and State adopted by Hooker has been modified by the changes of English political history and the advance of toleration. Nowhere, however, does the epithet "judicious" seem so entirely appropriate as in the passages of Hooker's great work where the aspects of Church and Commonwealth are distinguished and appreciated. A divine who provides a Church and a State with an intelligible theory is of course liable to be misinterpreted by the zealots and extremists who espouse different sides in great controversies. Students who desire to form correct ideas as to the just and temperate view which Hooker took of the episcopate will find ample material for thought and reflection in the crucial passages where Hooker vindicates the peculiar position of the Reformed Church of England.

There is a theological college at Salisbury, and its students may sometimes, perhaps, be led, in the course of their rambles, to the quiet village where Hooker drew out the chief lines of his great argument; and it may console some who have to look forward to days of quiet or hours of toil, to remember how the great spirit, prisoned in a weakly and insignificant frame, was contented with the moderate pleasures and humble duties of a country pastor's life. The supremacy of virtue and noble thoughts of the soul, as well as an almost passionate devotion to the merits and character of the Master he loved so well, are certainly among the enduring features of the Rector of Boscombe and Sub-dean of Sarum.

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