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underlie not only the whole narrative of the creation, but the whole Pentateuch; and the Pentateuchal idea of God colours all the rest of the Old Testament. Canon Rawlinson, in his "Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament," has, moreover, shown that the writer or writers of Genesis and Exodus display a very minute familiarity with the customs of Egypt. The infallibility to which modern critics pretend has, it is true, enabled them to assert *ex cathedra* that the correctness of the descriptions might easily have been attained by a casual sojourner in Egypt. But, with submission, it is generally found that minute exactness is not usually attained by the casual sojourner, who is extremely apt to betray his ignorance in some unexpected way. Such exactness can only be reached by those who are familiar with the details by virtue of long and close acquaintance. I cannot enlarge any more on this subject. But I believe I have said enough to show that the phenomena presented by the early chapters of Genesis suggest more naturally the idea that they emanated from a great creative mind, well stored with the best traditions of Babylonia and Egypt alike, and evolving from them by infinite diligence and deep thought the religious system which even yet commands the admiration of the world, than the theory of an extraordinary, haphazard, inexplicable concoction of post-exilic times, which the critics have been pleased to recommend to us as a substitute for it. If it be said that I have left inspiration out of the account, I reply that inspiration is a question altogether outside the limits I have proposed to myself in these papers. But lest I should be misunderstood, I would explain that I conceive of inspiration, not as superseding the use of gifts, natural or acquired, but as providing its possessor with a guidance from above which teaches him how best to employ them.

ERRATUM.—In my last paper in THE CHURCHMAN for December, p. 129, l. 13, for "Barlaham" read Barlaam.

J. J. LIAS.

ART. IV.—OXFORD AND RELIGION IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE University took an active part in the religious controversies of the seventeenth century, and whatever may be thought of the truths or errors put forward in these disputes, at least they were accompanied by a genuine zeal for religion. With the period which commenced at the Restoration the

religious earnestness of the country sunk rapidly from its height, till about 1715 to 1730 it reached probably its lowest point. It is not that good men were wanting in the country, whether in the English Church or the Nonconformist Churches. Ken and Sancroft in the one, Baxter and Bunyan in the other, are merely examples of a numerous class. There was much real piety and devotion in the country; but no doubt there was a great reaction from the overstrung enthusiasm of the period of the Puritan predominance. As will often happen, the attempt to force men at large into a religious attitude, which did not correspond with their real feelings, produced an intense reaction. And, indeed, it must be confessed that, though every right-minded Christian will do honour to the depth and sincerity of the Puritan movement inside and outside of the Church of England, yet the period of the Puritan predominance was a period of political despotism, though one of the finest in intention which has been seen in the world, and also of social tyranny in religious matters. The truth is, that the attempt to set up the visible kingdom of God in the world, which was the essence of the Puritanical conception of society, had ended, as the similar attempts in mediæval times had done, in producing a feeling of oppression in the minds of the people at large. What wonder is it, then, that the reaction was violent and far-reaching? Mankind cannot be coerced into saintliness by any political or social machinery; the utmost that this can do is to furnish the surroundings which may further and help on true religion and high morality.

Whether and how far the reaction penetrated into all classes of society is doubtful. The strength of Puritanism had lain neither in the working classes nor in the society of the court, but in the middle classes in the towns and the country, and it is very difficult to find out to what extent these shared in the general relaxation of morality. The accounts which we have of the matter are representative rather of special classes than of the whole of society. But this much is no doubt true, that the religious enthusiasm of the country declined after the Restoration.

The unhappy attempt on the side of the momentarily predominant parties in Church and State to drive out Puritanism and to suppress Nonconformity did something to maintain a real religious enthusiasm among the Nonconformists; but with the epoch of toleration which commences with the revolution, and the removal of this pressure, the Christian Church as a whole passed into a period of settled complacency and self-satisfaction which, though not without its compensations, contrasted somewhat unfavourably with the zeal and enthusiasm of the preceding periods.

We must not, however, undervalue the religion even of the

early eighteenth century. It has been the natural error of many of the historians of the great Evangelical revival to draw the period immediately preceding in colours which are too dark. If men had lost in intensity, they had gained something in light—it is not in all respects an evil change—from the somewhat harsh theology of the Puritans and the exaggerated Churchmanship of the school of Laud, to the Cambridge Platonists, and to such men as Tillotson. The religious sentiment of men like Addison and Sterne may not be of the most profound, but it is not wholly unreal.

We must also remember that at the beginning of the eighteenth century were formed the first of those societies which in England did so much to express and to promote the religious sentiment of the country. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was founded in 1698, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1701, and these represented the anxiety of the religious-minded part of English society to provide for the religious education of the people and the spiritual care of English colonists, and are the first English expressions of that missionary spirit which has always marked the Christian Church when it has been in a healthy condition.

Still, when we have made all necessary qualifications, it remains true that during the first quarter of the eighteenth century the religious life of the country was not very active. The state of Oxford during this time seems to have been much the same as that of the rest of England. I find no reason to suppose that religion had died out in Oxford; there is little evidence of this. But it seems probable that religion was rather correct than active. The University was evidently genuinely alarmed when the progress of Deism made itself felt among its members, and the ordinary rough and unwise means were used for suppressing it. But it cannot be said with any truth that the religious revival of Wesley in its early stages and that of the Evangelicals met with any very serious or determined opposition in the University. There was not, for instance, anything like the organized opposition which was shown between 1830 and 1840 in the University to the Tractarian movement. Wesley himself was allowed to preach before the University from time to time, and the college authorities at Lincoln, where he was Fellow, made no attempt to withdraw his pupils from him, as was done by the Provost of Oriel to Newman. Still it remains true that though religion in the University may have been sincere and correct, there was but little fire and conviction about it.

With the Wesleys and the Oxford Methodists and Evan-

gelicals began a movement which soon spread over England, and of which we in the present day still feel the effects; for the religious earnestness and zeal which first found its expression in Methodism and the Evangelicals has gradually penetrated through the whole body of the Church, and expresses itself now, not only among their direct successors, but also among those who would not always have sympathized with its early representatives.

But it was not from Oxford that the first impulse came. There can be no doubt that it was Law's "Serious Call" which first roused the somewhat enervated religion of the period of Queen Anne and George I. to a fuller and more active life. And William Law was from Cambridge, having been a Fellow of Emmanuel until, as a non-juror, he was compelled to give up his office. He first became famous through his letters against Bishop Hoadley, and showed himself a brilliant though narrow-minded controversialist of what we should now call the High Church school. But his great work, the "Serious Call," is one of the religious books which belong to all Christians. It is to the influence of Law's work that must be traced the first revival of religion in the University of Oxford. John Wesley, with his brother Charles and a small number of companions, set themselves to attempt to live the Christian life with more zeal and earnestness than had hitherto been found with them. The somewhat formal mode in which they at first conceived of the Christian life earned them the name of Methodists, but the system of religion of Wesley and his companions in their earliest days is very well known, and hardly needs any large amount of description; they divided their time carefully between prayer and good works. It has not always been remembered that this did not lead Wesley to neglect his regular duties as a tutor of his college, and as being charged with the mental as well as spiritual education of his pupils. Wesley was far from regarding, at least during this period of his life, his educational work as being something profane and unnecessary. Indeed, he gave up parochial work at the request of the Rector of Lincoln to take up regular tutorial duties, and seems to have felt that in his position in Oxford he was able to exercise a no less real religious influence than he could at that time do in a parish.

The exact number of men who were directly influenced by Wesley and his friends was not very large, but it is sometimes forgotten how many of the great names of the Methodist movement and of the Evangelical school of the last century belong to Oxford; not only the Wesleys and Whitefield, but also Hervey, and Romaine, and many others came from that University.

To what extent the Wesleyan and Evangelical influence penetrated through the whole University is, of course, a difficult thing to determine. Nothing is easier, as we have lately seen, than to make general statements without any special knowledge as to religion in the University; nothing is more difficult than to state these things accurately and clearly. The centre of the Evangelical movement in England is to be found at the close of the century in Cambridge with Simeon, but by that time it was a force whose influence extended over the whole country. We may say that in Oxford the Evangelical revival first took its origin, and that there it first developed that doctrine of the intimate personal relation between God and the soul of man which, having been from the first the doctrine of Christian men, had been sometimes obscured and overlaid by other ideas, and which have now happily passed into the belief of all sections of the Christian Church in the country.

A. J. CARLYLE.



ART. V.—THE NEED OF EVANGELICAL LITERATURE OF THE HIGHEST ORDER.

IF the Need of Evangelical Literature of the Highest Order, at present existing in the Church of England, could be handled by a writer of first-rate literary ability, instead of a busy town rector with but little reading-time, it might be placed before an audience with the charm that always accompanies the utterances of a master endowed with full and accurate knowledge. Then it would be more likely to arouse an answering enthusiasm which would never rest until the need were provided for. In default of such an introducer, an everyday man must speak, for if evangelical religion is not to perish out of the Church, it must be enshrined in literature worthy to hold its own, varying in form and expression with the tone of its own generation, while ever presenting, in undiluted strength and purity, the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the task I have undertaken I have fortified myself by consulting several of our leading men in this field, and other thoughtful friends, whose assistance I now once for all acknowledge with gratitude.

What literature do we want, and how may it be supplied?

It must be literature of the highest order; that is to say, it must possess learning, power and clearness of reasoning, and beauty of style. In this way alone will it command attention and conviction from the best class of minds, which, above all others, are those we should seek to influence. It follows that