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Jean A. Smallbone

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'St. Paul and Protestantism': its Place in the Development
of Matthew Arnold's Thought.

Abstract.

The integrity of Matthew Arnold's thought is emphasised, and it is suggested that his work should be regarded as a whole, instead of being separated into unrelated sections. Evidence is given to shew that Arnold was not conscious of any cleavage in his work ; that all his work was literary in tone and intention; and that there is a close connection between his poetry and his prose. The first of the so-called 'theological' works, St. Paul and Protestantism, is given special attention throughout the study.

The prose works preceding St. Paul and Protestantism are considered in chronological sequence, leading up to Culture and Anarchy, which is discussed in detail, shewing how Arnold's theories of criticism and culture lead naturally to his religious ideas.

Various factors in the development of St. Paul and Protestantism are examined, and it is found that Arnold regarded this work as a continuation of Culture and Anarchy. The contemporary reception of

Culture and Anarchy is analysed, and its effect on Arnold is indicated.

It is claimed that Arnold's treatment of St. Paul was literary rather than theological, and his method is criticised from a literary point of view. Some aspects of Victorian religious thought are considered in connection with Arnold's approach to theology, which, it is suggested, was always that of a layman.

Finally, the reception of St. Paul and Protestantism is studied, and the effect of this on Arnold is considered in relation to some of his later prose.

"ST. PAUL AND PROTESTANTISM":
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Preface

The following study is an attempt to evaluate Matthew Arnold's St. Paul and Protestantism as a literary work and an integral part of his whole achievement in letters. My work on this subject has convinced me that St. Paul and Protestantism can be understood only if it is regarded as an essay in the literary criticism of the New Testament rather than a theological treatise; and I have also emphasised its close connection with Culture and Anarchy, which grows clearer when both works are studied together.

As far as theological controversy is concerned I have adopted Arnold's view that the literary critic should keep aloof from it. Nevertheless, as I can hardly hope to have remained strictly impartial, it is perhaps best to state my own position, which is that of an orthodox Christian and Free Churchman. Matthew Arnold's attitude to Christian doctrine and to Nonconformist principles is far removed from my own; but my appreciation of his critical method, and my delight in his handling of all things literary, have provided the sympathy without which this thesis could not have been attempted.

I. THE INTEGRITY OF MATTHEW ARNOLD'S WORK

(i)

The study of Matthew Arnold has long been hindered by a too rigid division of his work into poetry, literary criticism, and social or religious criticism, his later prose often being labelled "theological" and dismissed without that consideration as literature which Arnold would have claimed for it. The usual classification, though convenient, is apt to obscure the fact that his work is an integrated whole.

It was perhaps easier for Arnold's contemporaries to regard his work as a whole than it was for the generation who followed them. As an example of this, there is an article by William Binns, 'Matthew Arnold as a Religious Teacher', which appeared in the Theological Review in 1878, in it we find this judgment:

'Mr. Arnold's poetry.....furnishes the key to all his literary activity, and especially to his more recent activity in religious controversy'.⁽¹⁾

With the passing of the religious and political situations which were the immediate occasion of Arnold's later prose work, most of this work began to be dismissed as 'the theological prose', and regretted as an unfortunate diversion of his energy. Thus George Saintsbury in a study of criticism during the later Nineteenth Century, can dispose of this Cinderella phase

(1) Theological Review Jan. 1878. p.96

in these words:

'Fortunately the scenes and subjects of Mr. Arnold's catastrophes or blunders - theology, politics, what may be called the general lighter morals of the nation - do not here at all concern us'.⁽¹⁾

Saintsbury handles these 'theological' books with the same distaste in his full-length study of Arnold. Heading the chapter "In the Wilderness", he says that, after the close of the Oxford professorship in 1867,

"Social, political, and religious matters tempted him away from literature; and for a matter of ten years it can hardly be said that he had anything to do with her except to take her name in vain in the title of by far his worst, as it was by far his most popular, volume'.⁽²⁾

What Saintsbury calls 'this unfortunate twist'⁽³⁾ and 'these unfortunate books'⁽⁴⁾ began with the closing Oxford lecture, which, he says was 'the First Blast of the Trumpet', though 'a rather gentle and insinuating one'.⁽⁵⁾ This critic cannot forgive Arnold for following his own interests and letting his work develop naturally; having dealt with the offending books, he seems to sigh with relief: 'Most fortunately', he says

'Arnold was allowed another ten years and more wherein to escape from the wilderness which yielded these Dead Sea fruits, and to till his proper garden once more'.⁽⁶⁾

(1) George Saintsbury, "The Later Nineteenth Century" (1907) p. 159. Saintsbury goes on to speak of Arnold's 'proper activity', by which he means the purely literary criticism (P. 159)

(2) George Saintsbury Matthew Arnold (1899) p. 126

(3) Ibid, p. 126

(4) Ibid, p. 142

(5) Ibid, p. 127

(6) Ibid, p. 142

The last decade has happily changed this attitude and brought a new appreciation of Arnold's work as a whole, for which we are indebted to critics like M. Louis Bonnerot, Mr. Lionel Trilling, and Professor E. K. Brown. Another critic, Professor H. F. Lowry, in the Introduction to his edition of Arnold's letters to Clough, provides an instance of the more recent view.

'Of all the solemn discussions I know', he writes, 'there is none more dull than the debate whether Arnold is greater in poetry than in prose. The real truth is that his efforts in the two fields are inseparable'.⁽¹⁾

Yet even Professor Lowry appears to make this claim with the purely literary criticism chiefly in mind, for he merely glances at the 'prosaic noon-days of his pamphleteering', at the 'Burials Bill and the Dissenting funerals'.

In view of this neglect, there seems to be room for greater emphasis on the so-called 'theological' works, particularly the first of them, St. Paul and Protestantism. An attempt will be made to show that this 'criticism of a great and misunderstood author'⁽²⁾ is closely connected with Arnold's central work and was regarded by him as an extension of Culture and Anarchy.⁽³⁾

(1) The Letters of Matthew Arnold to A. H. Clough Edited
H.F.Lowry (1932) p.36

(2) St. Paul p. 75

(3) v. below, pp.52-3.

It is, perhaps, pertinent to consider how far, if at all, Arnold was conscious of a cleavage in his work.

An attempt will therefore be made to shew that his approach to every matter was predominantly literary, and that the subjects of his later prose are inherent in his earliest writings. The development of his interest in religious thought will be taken as an example.

We know that Arnold felt or foresaw a failing of his poetic power. One proof of this is to be found in a letter written in 1858 to his sister, Mrs. William Forster. At the age of thirty-five, Arnold is concerned about his slender poetic output, and gives a quick succession of reasons for the slenderness:

'If the opinion of the general public about my powers were the same as that of the leading literary men', he writes, '.....' should gain the stimulus necessary to enable me to produce my best'.⁽¹⁾

Then he thinks of his hampered existence; it was not easy for him to combine his best poetical work with the routine of school inspecting, and several complaints in his Letters, particularly in this decade, suggest that he sometimes found his profession irksome. To approach perfection, he continues in this letter, requires a 'tearing of oneself to pieces', and this in turn needs a life devoted to poetry.

(1) Letters, edited J.W.E.Russell, I, p.83

'It is not so light a matter', he adds, 'when you have other grave claims on your powers, to submit voluntarily to the exhaustion of the best poetical production in a time like this'.⁽¹⁾

His poetical power finds, indeed, little stimulus in his age; one remembers his estimates of Gray, or of the poet in his own Bacchanalia whom 'the new age' fails to stir.

Three years later, Arnold writes to his mother,

'I must finish off for the present my critical writings between this and forty, and give the next ten years earnestly to poetry'.⁽²⁾

He adds, 'It is my last chance', and he fears lest he should 'dry up and become prosaic altogether'. Again, after another eighteen months, he writes to his mother, 'After the summer I mean to lie fallow again, or to busy myself with poetry alone;⁽³⁾ and again, 'I hope to do some poetry and to ripen'.⁽⁴⁾ These hints in the letters are the more valuable, because Arnold intended them to be read only by his family and intimate friends. There are scattered indications in his poetry also, the most striking being the stanza beginning 'Though the Muse be gone away'⁽⁵⁾ which he placed in the front of his 1867 volume of verse; but caution is needed here, lest the language of poetry be treated as a statement in prose.

(1) Letters, I. p.84

(2) Aug.15, 1861. Ibid I. p.165

(3) Feb. 4, 1863. Ibid I. p.212

(4) Nov.19, 1863, Ibid I. p.241

(5) Poems, p.393

In spite of these apparent misgivings, Arnold would surely have been amazed at the suggestion that he was 'abandoning' poetry for prose, or literature for politics and theology. He always thought of himself as a man of letters, and this fact provides the clue to the unifying element in his work. He writes scornfully to Clough of 'the theological mind' which he regards as 'a suffutation existing in a man from the beginning, colouring his whole being, and being him in short'.⁽¹⁾ Again he writes to Clough in 1853, 'Stick to literature — it is the great comforter after all',⁽²⁾ and, once his interpretation of the sphere and function of literature is understood, it is evident that he did 'stick to literature' all his life.

'Whoever seriously occupies himself with literature will soon perceive its vital connection with other agencies'.⁽³⁾

These words, written in 1879, provide a comment on his advice to Clough nearly thirty years earlier. He is a servant of literature still, but 'literature is a part of civilization; it is not the whole', and there obstacles preventing literature from having its fullest effect. Civilization, 'the humanisation of man in society',⁽⁴⁾ is the goal, and literature stands or falls with other vital influences. It is along these lines that Arnold would have justified what some have regarded as unwarranted

(1) Letters to Clough, p.115.

(2) Ibid, p.135

(3) Mixed Essays, pp.v-vi. The whole of this Preface is important for Arnold's idea of literature

(4) Ibid, p.vi

excursions into other fields; he entered these fields as a man of letters fighting in the cause of literature, and so his work, if one may apply to the whole the words which he uses of a part, 'touches a variety of subjects, and yet...has a unity of tendency'.⁽¹⁾

Support for this view occurs throughout Arnold's work. There is the letter to his mother in which he discusses his reaction to hostile reviews; the annoyance they cause him is short-lived, and his spirits soon recover; but

'to be able to feel thus, one must not have committed oneself on subjects for which one has no vocation, but must be on ground where one feels at home and secure'.⁽²⁾

He regarded all his controversy as lying within the field of literature; he writes in another letter that when he has finished

'An article on Middle-Class Education and one on Academics' he intends 'to devote (himself) really to what is positive and happy, not negative and contentious, in literature'.⁽³⁾

His work, he thinks, may have been negative when it should have been positive; but he was consciously dealing with literature. Literature helps towards the 'treatment of politics with one's thought, or with one's imagination, or with one's soul'.⁽⁴⁾

Ibid

- (1) Letters-I. p. 71
- (2) July 30, 1861. Letters p. 161
- (3) Feb. 19, 1862. Pbid, I. pp. 183-4
- (4) Ibid I. p. 249

An even clearer statement appears in a letter to M.E. Grant Duff, in which Arnold admits to 'a temptation to treat political, or religious, or social matters, directly'; but his literary sense reclaims him, for 'after yielding

'to such a temptation I always feel myself recoiling again, and disposed to touch them only so far as they can be touched through poetry'.⁽¹⁾

The fullest public statement of his attitude is probably the closing paragraph of his review of A.P. Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church.⁽²⁾ After censuring the liberal theologians like Bishop Colenso and the authors of Essays and Reviews,⁽³⁾ who, unlike Dean Stanley, shattered men's faith without giving anything in its place, Arnold says to them,

'And you are masters in Israel, and know not these things; and you require a voice from the world of literature to tell them to you!'⁽⁴⁾

It is true, he identified himself with those who 'have to quit their own sphere' to discuss these matters, but he does this 'in the mere interest of letters, of intelligence, of general culture.'⁽⁵⁾ He had no political or theological axe to grind; he simply wished to clear away some of those 'many obstacles preventing what is salutary in literature from gaining due

(1) 24 May, 1864. Ibid I. pp. 270-1

(2) Macmillan's Magazine, Feb. 1863

(3) v. below, pp. 114-119.

(4) Essays by Matthew Arnold (Oxford, 1925) p. 444

(5) Ibid, p.444

admission, and from producing due effect.'⁽¹⁾

The integrity of Arnold's work and thought is also shewn by his early interest in the matters that were to engage his later years. Professor Lowry says of the early letters to Clough, that they

'show glimpses of his first thinking upon politics, society and religion; they contain practically the first statement of almost every important view he took of life.'⁽²⁾

In these letters, alongside his frequent discussion of poetry, Arnold displays a lively interest in the middle classes, America, the Irish question, the politics of France, and many aspects of religion. He is already on the foothills of mountains to be climbed twenty or thirty years later. 'They cannot be Americans thank God if they would' he writes of the French in 1848,⁽³⁾ and in 1852 the Americans seem to him 'a nation not having on a wedding garment.'⁽⁴⁾ His comments on religious topics are equally prophetic of his later attitude, the Bible is constantly in his thoughts, 'Read the Bible - Isaiah, Job, etc..... Again consult the Bible,'⁽⁵⁾ he advised Clough in commenting on his friend's Homeric translation; his mind is already religious, yet impatient of the logic-chopping theologian.

(1) Mixed Essays p.vi for discussion of his motive in writing St.P. v, pp 51-71 below.

(2) Letters to Clough p.48

(3) Ibid, p.70

(4) Ibid, p.126 cf. CA p.37

(5) Ibid, p.103

In 1852 he touches on the close connection between religion and poetry:

'Modern poetry can only subsist', he writes, '.....by including.....religion with poetry, instead of existing as poetry only, and leaving religious wants to be supplied by the Christian religion, as a power existing independent of the political power'.(1)

Finally, his lifelong attitude to religion is expressed in this passage, so closely akin to Literature and Dogma:

'If one loved what was beautiful and interesting passionately enough, one would produce what was excellent without troubling oneself with religious dogmas at all. As it is, we are warm only when dealing with these last.....I would have others - most others - stick to the old dogmas because I sincerely feel that this warmth is the great blessing- and on the old religious road they have still the best chance of getting (it)'.(2)

Early indications of his interests are no less numerous in the general letters. From these also it appears that by 1848 his mind was working on the problem of how to 'civilise' man, particularly in Britain and America. 'I see a wave of more than American vulgarity, moral, intellectual, and social, preparing to break over us' he writes to his mother.(3) To his sister in the same year he deprecates England's 'sheer habitual want of wide reading and thinking', (4) and again he writes, 'What foreigner could divine the union of invincibility and speculative dulness in England?'.(5)

(1) Ibid, p.124 cf 'The strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry' - Essays in Criticism, Series 2. p.2

(2) Ibid, p. 143

(3) 7 March, 1848, Letters, I, p.5

(4) May, 1848, Ibid, I, p. 10

(5) 7 May 1848, Ibid. I p. 12

These letters also contain hints that he was already tempted towards that direct treatment of practical questions which was far from his purpose; to Mrs. Forster he writes:

'I was myself tempted to attempt some political writing the other day, but in the watches of the night I seemed to feel that in that direction I had some enthusiasm of the head perhaps, but no profound stirring'.⁽¹⁾

Many of the seeds which were to flower in the Essays in Criticism and in Culture and Anarchy can be seen germinating in these letters; in 1849 he is reading biographies of several men on whom he was later to write - Byron and Goethe among them; he talks to Harriet Martineau about the prospects of the Church; and he discusses education and the various religious bodies with which his new work as an inspector of schools brings him into contact.

Arnold wrote to his mother in 1869, 'My poems represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century',⁽²⁾ and his poems, no less than his letters, touch all the subjects that have been regarded as later deviations of his energy, the development of his interest in theology is particularly interesting, revealing him, not as a poet who tried to become a theologian, but as a poet interested in theology from the beginning.

Any attempt to draw from the poems statements of opinion, to be set beside the arguments of the prose, would be false

(1) 10 March, 1848. Ibid, I. pp.5-6

(2) Letters II, p. 10. (June 5, 1869).

criticism; a poet may express thoughts or use themes without committing himself to them as formal propositions. The present intention is rather to indicate the interest in theology to which much of his poetry bears witness.

In the 1849 volume of poems, 'Stagirius' ⁽¹⁾ dated 1844 in the manuscript, provides evidence of an early interest in the Church Fathers, and 'In Utrumque Paratus' ⁽²⁾ reveals a mind alive to contemporary ideas of evolution and their bearing on theology. 'Mycerinus', another early poem ⁽³⁾ should not be taken too seriously in its speculations, though Tinker and Lowry find 'the whole conception.....prophetic of "Empedocles on Etna"'. ⁽⁴⁾ But the interest is there - the theological questioning of a mind never, in the narrow sense, merely 'literary'. One poem in this early volume, "To an Independent Preacher", ⁽⁵⁾ is worthy of notice for its reference to Dissent; its irritation is a foretaste of later lapses on this subject.

In 1852 "Empedocles on Etna" appeared. This poem must represent some aspects of Arnold's thought for at least a decade. ⁽⁶⁾ As in "Mycerinus", the theological interest takes a form suited to the subject; but, in spite of Arnold's warning, one may see in it a reflection of his theological tendencies. The God of

(1) Poems p. 75

(2) Ibid, p. 85

(3) Ibid, p. 36

(4) Tinker & Lowry, Ibid, p. 37

(5) Poems, p. 60

(6) It was partly the outcome of a long course of reading for a projected drama on Lucretius

this poem is impersonal, fallible, and struggling; it is, indeed, more of a Power than a Person.

Suggestions of an interest in religious questions are to be found throughout the 1852 volume. After 'Empedocles', the outstanding poems are 'Progress',⁽¹⁾ and 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse'.⁽²⁾ Even when allowance has been made for practical expression, 'Progress' illustrates Arnold's attitude towards Christianity. Destructive criticism of old beliefs, he says, will do no good; man must develop everything of value that older beliefs have fostered:

'Leave then the Cross as ye have left carved gods,
But guard the fire within!'⁽³⁾

Tinker and Lowry think that this poem 'represents well the advanced thought of 1852',⁽⁴⁾ though it is doubtful whether this advanced thought was as constructive or as conservative as Arnold; one remembers Robert Elsmere's struggle to make Mr. Wendover understand his position.

Arnold visited the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse in 1851, and in a list of poems to be written during the following year is 'the Chartreuse'; the idea of the poem was therefore conceived some years before its publication in 1855. It is a reminder of the two divergent interpretations of Christianity

(1) Poems, p.193

(2) Ibid, p.270

(3) ll.27-8 cf. his emphasis on 'warmth' in the letter to Clough quoted above, p.10.

(4) The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, p.191

that influenced his youth - the Broad Church movement through his father, Rugby, and Balliol, and Tractarianism through Newman and through his godfather, John Keble.⁽¹⁾ In these stanzas Arnold stands between these two trends, feeling the attraction of Catholicism, but unable to identify himself with it. Whether the 'rigorous teachers' of his youth were the Greek philosophers or the liberal Churchmen, their love of truth has had its effect, and he feels an alien. The monks, it is true, symbolise a faith which liberal theologians are killing too violently, and the world has not found a better faith yet; but there is no returning to the Middle Ages. In 1860 he was to write to his sister,

'I have a strong sense of the irrationality of (the Middle Ages), and of the utter folly of those who take it seriously, and play at restoring it; still, it has poetically the greatest charm and refreshment possible for me.'⁽²⁾

This is exactly the dual attitude of the poem.

Dr. Arnold's influence on his son, suggested in 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse', is proclaimed two years later. Those who say that Arnold is not sincere in 'Rugby Chapel'⁽³⁾ have not understood that side of his nature which, like his ancient

(1) cf Trilling, Matthew Arnold, p.59. It is not suggested that Arnold was ever drawn to the Tractarian doctrines; but he was at Oxford while Newman's influence was at its height, and he himself acknowledges what he owes to Newman; cf. CA, pp.32-33; Essays in Criticism, p.69; and Trilling, Matthew Arnold, pp.332-3, where a letter of Arnold's to the Cardinal is quoted.

(2) 17 Dec. 1860, Letters, I. p.147

(3) Poems, p.422

Hebrews and St. Paul, thirsted after righteousness. In this poem Arnold is one with his later self who tried to remove the veil of 'Aberglaube' from simple ethics. Men like his father were the great justification of religion:

'Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died! '(1)

This theme appears again in 'The Lord's Messengers', which appeared first with the title, 'Men of Genius' (2).

'St. Brandan', published in 1860, is interesting not only for its religious content, but because of its connection with Renan, nine years before St. Paul and Protestantism. Arnold's attention was first drawn to the legend of St. Brandan by Renan, who in an essay on the Celts had declared it to be 'une des plus étonnantes créations de l'esprit humain'. (3)

A few more poems may be mentioned in this connection. Three sonnets (4) published in 1867 shew a continued interest in the Church Fathers; these are 'The Divinity', 'The Good Shepherd with the Kid' (5) and 'Minica's Last Prayer'. The last echoes Arnold's sense that

'Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole',

(1) Rugby Chapel, ll. 168-70

(2) Cornhill Magazine, July 1960. Poems, p.379

(3) V. Tinker & Lowry, The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, p.26

(4) Poems, pp.398, 400

(5) Written in 1844.

that only 'life in God' remains, and that this is not dependent on orthodoxy. 'Dover Beach' ⁽¹⁾ published in 1867 but probably written much earlier, ⁽²⁾ is an elegy on receding faith. The stanzas entitled 'A Wish' express impatience with theologians who

'Canvass with official breath
The future and its viewless things'. ⁽³⁾

Finally, 'Pis-Aller' reveals Arnold's anxiety that men should have a faith, even one which he cannot take literally.

This survey of Arnold's early and sustained interest in religious matters is only one example of the integrity of his thought, but it is the one which seems to throw most light on the place of St. Paul and Pretestantism in his development. Without holding him responsible for poetical expressions 'thrown out' in these early volumes, one may claim that they preclude any theory of an abrupt change in the subject-matter of his thought.

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- (1) Poems, p.401
(2) v. Tinker & Lowry, The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, pp.173-5
(3) ll. 24-5 Poems, p.412
(4) cf. also his own judgment on religious thought, in the essay on Joubert 'The most characteristic thoughts one can quote from any writer are always his thoughts on matters like this'. Essays in Criticism, p.339

(ii)

In St. Paul and Protestantism Arnold maintains that although the apostle gave a primary place to 'the physical and miraculous aspect of the resurrection, both Christ's and the believer's', (1) his originality lies in his transformation of this doctrine into something that the intellect can grasp. How was Paul able to do this, when he obviously centred his thought in the physical miracle? For answer, Arnold quotes these lines:-

'Below the surface stream, shallow and light
Of what we say we feel - below the stream,
As light, of what we think we feel - there flows
With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep, (2)
The central stream of what we feel indeed.'

'And by this alone', he adds, 'are we truly characterised'. (3) He acknowledged these lines as his own in a letter, and says, 'I think them good; I have seen them quoted in four places since'. (4) It is not known when they were written, but the idea they express was in his mind much earlier than 1869, and the close connection between his poetry and his prose, his early and his later work, may be illustrated by isolating this theme and examining it more closely.

It occurs in 'Empedocles on Etna', which was published in 1852, and probably represents the trend of his thought for

(1) St.P. & P, p.82, v. below p.79.

(2) Ibid, p.83

(3) Ibid, p.83

(4) Letters, I, p.32 The lines were frequently quoted and misquoted by his reviewers.

several years before that date.⁽¹⁾ Empedocles, in his last soliloquy on the brink of the crater, wonders whether, after death, there is a reincarnation for the spirits of men, another testing in this life.

'To see if we will now at last be true
To our own only true, deep-buried selves,
Being one with which we are one with the whole world'.⁽²⁾

M. Bonnerot, in his study of the poem, remarks on the importance of this theme in Arnold's thought; the notion of the mysteriously buried soul which is

'l'espoir auquel aboutit la méditation angoissée
d'Empédocle, est.....inséparable de la psychologie
d'Arnold'.⁽³⁾

Also in 1852, in the same volume with 'Empedocles on Etna' Arnold published the poem entitled 'The Buried Life',⁽⁴⁾ which is a fuller expression of the same theme. He sees man forced by a mysterious necessity to 'follow the buried stream', the 'unregarded river of our life' which represents the true self. The different levels of the currents are suggested here, as in St. Paul and Protestantism; there is the light-flowing 'war of mocking words', but

"There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life'.⁽⁵⁾

(1) v. p. 12 above

(2) ll. 370-2 Poems pp. 123-4

(3) L. Bonnerot, Empédocle sur l'Etna (1947) pp. 24-25
cf. L. Trilling, Matthew Arnold (1939), p. 136

(4) Poems pp. 168-71

(5) "The Buried Life", ll. 47-8

The desire remains unfulfilled, for 'deep enough, alas, none ever mines'. Lovers, indeed, may give each other glimpses of the hidden life; in the experience of human love

"The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know".(1)

but even then, man only

'thinks he knows,
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes'.(2)

The theme recurs in 'Mortality' (3) another poem first published in 1852:

"The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides".(4)

Again, in the same volume, "The Youth of Nature" (5) contains the vision of a poet striving to express

'the awe,
The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom
of the unlit gulph of himself'.(6)

He fails; for he himself has seen 'Less than (he) left unreveal'd'.
The closing line of the companion poem repeats the idea:

'Rally the good in the depths of thyself!'.(7)

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- (1) Ibid, ll. 86-7
 - (2) Ibid, ll. 97-8
 - (3) Poems, pp. 192-3
 - (4) 'Mortality', ll. 3-4
 - (5) Poems, pp. 186-9
 - (6) 'The Youth of Nature', ll. 100-2
 - (7) 'The Youth of Man', Poems, pp.189-192, l.118

One more poem of 1852 which may be mentioned is 'Isolation'⁽¹⁾ with its sustained image of the lonely islands; these feel their lost unity 'when the moon their hollows lights' and nightingales sing in their glens; then

'a longing like despair (2)
Is to their farthest caverns sent'.

In the last line of the poem, the 'unplumb'd' sea gives an added suggestion of depth and mystery.

Arnold returns to this theme in 'Merope'⁽³⁾ published in 1858; it emerges in the choric ode on man's limitations. Man cannot explore the secrets of nature very far; but

'more than all unplumb'd,⁽⁴⁾
Unscal'd, untrodden, is the heart of Man
More than all secrets hid, the way it keeps'.⁽⁵⁾

Man cannot even read his own heart:

'But even our own heart, that narrow world
Bounded in our own breast, we hardly know,
Of our own actions dimly trace the causes.'⁽⁶⁾

No reason for this mystery - it may be due to 'natural obscure-ness' or to 'our own want of effort.'⁽⁷⁾

In 1867 Arnold published 'Palladium', a poem of great interest for the study of his development. Its theme is essentially

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- (1) Poems, p.135. This poem was later (1869) entitled 'To
(2) 'Isolation', 11. 13-14 Marguerite'
(3) Poems, pp. 283-378
(4) An interesting verbal echo from 'Isolation' cf 'Merope', 1.629
(5) 'Merope' 11. 635-7
(6) Ibid, 11. 644-6 cf. 'Empedocles', 11.142-6
(7) 11. 647-9
(8) Poems, p.406

that of 'The Buried Life', though with two important changes: the true self is here conceived as more positively beneficent than in the earlier poem, and the image is reversed. Height, not depth, is the cause of inaccessibility here; the subterranean stream gives place to the statue of Pallas Athena standing above Troy and protecting the warriors who, immersed in the rush of battle below, cannot see it. So man, in the hurry of life, thinks he is using his whole being, yet his essence remains untouched, sending 'a ruling effluence' into his life:

'And when it fails, fight as we will, we die,
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.' (1)

In connection with this change, it is interesting to find in the sonnet 'East London' (2) also published in 1867, a similar idea - that the soul can

'Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow'.

In the poem of 1852, the youth is to 'rally the good in the depth of himself'; (3) and in 1867, in a meditation on growing old, Arnold has written

'Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change'. (4)

To man in youth and age Arnold's message is the same, whether he thinks of this hidden self as a deep stream or a lofty beacon.

This recurrent idea must be connected, not only with the fragment of verse in St. Paul and Protestantism, but also with

(1) 'Palladium', ll. 23-4

(2) Poems, p.395

(3) 'The Youth of Man', l.118, Poems, p.192

(4) 'Growing Old', ll. 28-9, Poems p.409

Arnold's doctrine of the 'best self' by which 'we are united, impersonal, at harmony'.⁽¹⁾ This is surely the true self of Empedocles, 'being one with which we are one with the whole world'.⁽²⁾ To this self we may entrust authority, because 'it is the truest friend we all of us can have....to this authority we may turn with sure trust'.⁽³⁾ This 'best self' is deeply hidden, and most of us are 'satisfied with a self which comes uppermost long before' it.⁽⁴⁾ With this may be identified the 'one central moral tendency' of St. Paul and Protestantism 'which for us and for all men is the law of our being'.⁽⁵⁾ So in 1869 Arnold is continuing the theme which had been defined in his thoughts at least as early as 1852; and this stretch of seventeen years covers the period of his central work in poetry and in prose. If his own words may be used as a comment, 'Everywhere there is connexion; everywhere there is illustration'.⁽⁶⁾

(1) CA, p.80. cf. p.77 below.

(2) 'Empedocles on Etna', l.372

(3) CA, p.80. cf. 'Palladium', ll. 21-24

(4) CA, p.81

(5) St. P. & P. p.49

(6) 'On the Modern Element in Literature', MacMillan's Magazine, Feb. 1869. v. Essays by Matthew Arnold, p.456

II. The Earlier Prose

In passing from the poetry of Matthew Arnold to his earlier prose, the prose must not be thought of as chronologically following the poetry; the two went on simultaneously, as the New Poems of 1867 shew.⁽¹⁾ Yet this earlier prose, reaching from the Preface to the Poems of 1853 to Culture and Anarchy, forms a logical bridge from the poetry to the later prose. The whole of it is an 'essay in criticism', and its climax is the volume Essays in Criticism, which represents the years 1863-4, and is in itself an example of Arnold's varied interests.⁽²⁾

Arnold's own remark that 'everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration',⁽³⁾ is perhaps the best comment on this period of his activity. The idea of 'wholeness' appealed to him strongly; in the lecture on

(1) It is probable that most of the poems in this volume were written during the period under consideration. For example, three of the elegies can be dated as follows: 'Thyrsis', 1861-6; 'Heine's Grave', 1858-67; 'Rugby Chapel', 1857-67.

(2) Professor Trilling has this period in mind when he writes: 'When a man sees life under the aspect of a distinct and illuminating idea, all things become inter-related and it is no step at all from the investigation of Homer to the investigation of elementary schools.'

- Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold (1939), p.178.
(3) 'On the Modern Element in Literature'. Essays by Matthew Arnold (1925), p. 456.

'The Modern Element in Literature' (1857) he says of

Thucydides:

'Thucydides is no mere literary man; no isolated thinker he was a man of action, a man of the world, a man of his time. He represents the general intelligence of his age and nation; of a nation the meanest citizens of which could follow with comprehension the profoundly thoughtful speeches of Pericles'. (1)

In the same lecture he repeats his comment on Sophocles in the sonnet of 1849:

'In Sophocles there is the same energy, the same maturity, the same freedom, the same intelligent observation And therefore I have ventured to say of Sophocles, that he "saw life steadily, and saw it whole"'. (2)

Even more significant is one other remark at the close of this lecture; lamenting the gloom and sternness of Lucretius, Arnold says,

'So hard, nay, so impossible for most men is it to develop themselves in their entirety; to rejoice in the variety, the movement of human life with the children of the world; to be serious over the depth, the significance of human life with the wise!'. (3)

In these observations one can see, not only the future exponent of Hellenism, but the critic who, like Thucydides, will never be a 'mere literary man'.

In 1851 Arnold became an inspector of elementary

(1) Ibid, p.462.

(2) Ibid, p.465.

(3) Ibid, p.472.

schools, and, although this profession was not altogether congenial to him in the early days, it developed his interest in education, the most widening interest a man can have. Arnold is seen as an educationist not only in his official reports, but also in his attitude to other fields, and all his later interests may be seen developing during this time. The purpose of this chapter is to review quickly the prose of 1853-65, shewing how it led to Essays in Criticism, and then to consider those essays as the forerunners of Culture and Anarchy.

Arnold's published prose work begins with the Preface of 1853, and in it he appears as a critic already possessing not only insight, but a trained mind. The purpose of the Preface is to explain his omission of 'Empedocles on Etna' from the volume; he wishes to make it clear that the poem is not abandoned in deference to those critics who think a subject from the ancient world uninteresting. Arnold appeals to principles, going unhesitatingly to Aristotle, whose influence on him is evident. The eternal objects of poetry are human actions, and the most interesting actions are those which appeal to the primary human passions; therefore 'a great human action of 1000 years ago is more interesting....

than a small human action of to-day'.⁽¹⁾ the date is irrelevant.

Arnold continues to follow Aristotle in the question of construction. The whole must come before the parts, action before expression; architectonicè is what matters, not the isolated images. He criticises modern poets for their neglect of construction, and suggests that the influence of Shakespeare has not been good for them; and he praises the Greeks as masters of the grand style. Throughout the essay he cites Goethe, 'the greatest poet of modern times, the greatest critic of all times'.⁽²⁾ His conclusion, with its eulogy of the ancients, emphasises the Hellenism of the whole;

'I know not how it is', he says, 'but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgement, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience: they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live'.⁽³⁾

Chronologically the next essay of this period to demand attention is 'Dante and Beatrice',⁽⁴⁾ probably a much revised

(1) Matthew Arnold's Poems (O.U.P. 1945), p. 4.

(2) Ibid, p. 8, ~~cf. p. above.~~

(3) Ibid, p. 13.

(4) Essays by Matthew Arnold, (1925), pp. 445-453.

Oxford lecture of 1858, which was published in Fraser's Magazine for May, 1863. Its significance lies in its literary subject, and in its illustration of Arnold's passion for 'seeing the object as it really is'. Arnold thinks that Theodore Martin trims the facts of Dante's life and work to fit his thesis, altering the nature of his love for Beatrice; and he deals with the 'accomplished recent translator of Dante'⁽¹⁾ accordingly.

'England and the Italian Question', an essay published in pamphlet form in 1859, is Arnold's first attempt at political criticism, and its date should be borne in mind by those who assume that his first essay in this field came ten years later.⁽²⁾ What he says about Italy, and how he uses historical data, are irrelevant here, but his remarks on France are of great interest, shewing that his estimate of this country is already formed. He admires, and wishes England to emulate, the intelligence of her ordinary people: 'it is,' he says,

'the bright feature of her civilisation that her common people can understand and appreciate language which elsewhere meets with a response only from the educated and refined classes.'⁽³⁾

(1) Ibid, p. 445.

(2) cf. p. / above.

(3) England and the Italian Question (London, 1859), p.22.

His characteristic view of the English aristocracy also emerges in this essay. He speaks of it with 'the most unbounded respect';⁽¹⁾ but it lacks ideas, as do all aristocracies - and these words might belong to Culture and Anarchy:

'An aristocracy has naturally a great respect for the established order of things, for the fait accompli. It is itself a fait accompli, it is satisfied with things as they are, it is, above everything, prudent. Exactly the reverse of the masses, who regard themselves as in a state of transition, who are by no means satisfied with things as they are, who are, above everything, adventurous.'⁽²⁾

Literature in the narrower sense again predominates in the three lectures 'On Translating Homer', given at Oxford in 1861, with their sequel, 'On Translating Homer: Last Words' (1862), a rejoinder to Francis Newman's reply. Arnold's Professorship of Poetry in the University of Oxford, which lasted from 1857 to 1867, is important in the development of his work. Comparatively little has been salvaged from it, but we have the essay 'On the Modern Element in Literature' (which he originally designed as a course of lectures), the Homer lectures, the lectures 'On the Study of Celtic Literature', and a few minor

(1) Ibid, p. 26.

(2) Ibid, p.2 pp. 27-8.

pieces.⁽¹⁾ Through this Professorship Arnold, while restricted to some extent by the word 'Poetry', was able to explore various themes, with the result that the fruit of his work for it might constitute a volume of early Essays in Criticism.

The Homer lectures foreshadow several themes later developed by Arnold: the 'grand style' occupies him, for it is Homer's style, and he contrasts it with the ballad style used by some English translators. Eccentricity, he says, is the great fault of English literature, and, as in 1853, he upholds the classical discipline as the best for a modern writer. His trick of using proper names is already there: when a translator of Homer is needlessly quaint and eccentric, Arnold says he 'Newmanises'.⁽²⁾ His interest in the Bible is also evident; he repeats the advice given to Clough in an early letter,⁽³⁾ and urges all translators to read and re-read the Authorised Version; 'My Bibliolatry

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- (1) These are: (probably) 'Dante and Beatrice', and 'Pagan and Mediaeval Religious-Sentiment'. The latter was originally called 'Pagan and Christian Religious Sentiment', and contained much about Protestantism which Arnold removed when it was published in the Cornhill in April 1864. See Letters, I, pp. 265-6.
- (2) Essays by Matthew Arnold (1925), p. 300. Arnold was criticising a translation of the Iliad by Francis Henry Newman, brother of the Cardinal.
- (3) Letters to Clough, p. 103. (March 1849).

is perhaps excessive' he says.⁽¹⁾ The final lecture, 'Last Words', expands the doctrine of the 'grand style', and it contains glances at Tennyson and Macaulay, and the tribute to Clough, who had died in 1861. Above all, Arnold's light, humorous approach is there, full of charm when not overstrained. Newman, he admits, is his superior in linguistic studies, and:

'the demon that pushes us all to our ruin is even now prompting me to follow Mr. Newman into a discussion about the digamma, and I know not what providence holds me back. And some day, I have no doubt, I shall lecture on the language of the Berbers, and give him his entire revenge'.⁽²⁾

To 1861 also belongs Popular Education on the Continent. This report of an official tour of Continental schools is as characteristic as anything he wrote. He comments on the English middle classes, for the problem of their crude culture was being thrust upon him by his official duties, and he traces their defects to their bad private schools. His attitude to France is admiring, as in the Italian pamphlet, though he is well aware of her faults. He sees the intelligence of the ordinary French people, but also 'their almost incredible ignorance'.⁽³⁾ He thinks that 'of

(1) Essays by Matthew Arnold (1925), p. 310.

(2) Ibid, p. 384.

(3) Popular Education on the Continent (1861), p. 159.

all civilised nations they are incomparably the most natural, while of all unsophisticated nations they are incomparably the most civilised'.⁽¹⁾

His opinion of America is also defined; he sees their tendency to 'Philistinism':

'Under a universal system of comparatively advanced education, without certain correctives, the American people has become an energetic people, a powerful people, a highly-taught people, if you will - but also an overweening, a self-conceited people.'⁽²⁾

He also touches the question of religion for the first time in discussing denominational education; and in a sentence which is prophetic of Literature and Dogma he recommends 'morality - but sublimed by being taught in connection with religious sentiment'.⁽³⁾

It is impossible to leave this report without quoting a passage which shews Arnold, the poet and man of letters, triumphing over the restrictions of an official document; it is his description of a visit to the ruined castle of Blanquefort:

'The schoolmaster guided us up and down slopes of grass and vineyards, across a clear brook, to the old castle. The masonry of its keep rises still fresh and unworn out of the reed-grown moat; but

(1) Ibid, p. 173.

(2) Ibid, p. 168.

(3) Ibid, p. 145.

all within the walls is a ruin, over which cluster the wild roses. A peasant has made his dwelling where once was the grand entrance; but he has nothing to tell of the castle's history and of the Black Prince. The ploughshare of the Revolution has passed over that feudal age; they are gone, the leopards of England from the gateway, the name of the Black Prince from the memories of the population Through a thicket of brushwood I climbed to the top of the ruin; around me, beneath the luminous air, stretched the pleasant country of southern France; on the horizon were the towers and spires of Bordeaux, and its smoke hanging in the clear sky.'(1)

During the years 1864 and 1864 Arnold wrote many of the essays included in Essays in Criticism: these will be considered below.⁽²⁾ A collection of essays on secondary education, begun in 1863, was published in the following year as A French Eton: or Middle Class Education and the State. The first essay is a description of two French secondary schools; in the following essays Arnold tries to persuade the English middle class that they would benefit by a system of state-provided secondary schools for their sons, of a similar status to that of the French lycées, instead of the 'hole and corner' seminaries which they were using. Thus did Arnold's work as an inspector of schools lead him to consider social questions, which in turn led to the subjects of his later prose.

(1) Ibid, pp. 128-9.

(2) pp. 33-38.

Essays in Criticism was published in 1865, at which time Arnold wrote to his mother,

'I think the moment is, on the whole, favourable for the Essays; and in going through them I am struck by the admirable riches of human nature that are brought to light in the group of persons of whom they treat, and the sort of unity that as a book to stimulate the better humanity in us the volume has. Then, of course, if this book succeeds, the way is the more clear for my bringing in my favourite notions yet further'.⁽¹⁾

He saw in these essays that unity in diversity which recent scholarship is finding in his whole work, and he also regarded them as a preparation for 'bringing in (his) favourite notions yet further'. Essays in Criticism did, as he hoped, succeed, and it is the centre of his work, from which one may look back or forward, finding links with all the rest. It is as a preparation for Culture and Anarchy that the essays are to be considered here.

There connection with all Arnold's interests is clear: even the titles are significant. The first essay is on 'The Function of Criticism', and the second on 'The Literary Influence of Academies'; then follow two essays on minor French writers, and one on Heinrich Heine. So far Arnold does not appear to have departed from 'literary' interests,

(1) Jan. 21, 1865, Letters, I, pp. 286-7.

though the contents of the essays must have been surprising. There follows the essay on religious sentiment, then the interest returns to France in 'Joubert'; and last come 'Spinoza and the Bible' and 'Marcus Aurelius'.⁽¹⁾ So the reader has a clue to some of the subjects: criticism, literature, France, the Bible, religion. It begins to be seen why Arnold thought of the volume as a clearer of the way. His aim, in this and all his work, is stated in the Preface:

'To try and approach truth on one side after another, not to strive or cry, nor to persist in pressing forward, on any one side, with violence and self-will'.⁽²⁾

This he sought to do 'as a plain citizen of the republic of letters'.⁽³⁾

Like all Arnold's work, the Essays in Criticism must be read as a whole if their significance is to be grasped; but for the present purpose it is necessary to shew the more direct routes from them to Culture and Anarchy. The first essay, 'On the Function of Criticism at the Present Time', is, as its place would suggest, the most important, and the way in which Arnold's theory of criticism, as set out in

(1) 'A Persian Passion Play', a lecture given at Birmingham in 1871, was added in the edition of 1875.

(2) Essays in Criticism, p. vii.

(3) Ibid, p. X.

this essay, leads on to his idea of culture, is discussed in a later chapter.⁽¹⁾ This leaves two outstanding themes to be dealt with here: social criticism, and religion. Both are prominent in these essays, which, it must be remembered, represent work written five or six years before the publication of Culture and Anarchy.

In the first essay (2) Arnold protests against the ugliness of life around him, of which the names 'Wragg,.... Higginbottom, Stiggins, Bugg!'⁽³⁾ are symbolic. The virtue of detachment, of trying to see things as they are, is what his countrymen need to cultivate in the midst of 'the rush and roar of practical life'.⁽⁴⁾ Without a 'free disinterested treatment of things, truth and the highest culture are out of the question'.⁽⁵⁾ Arnold has already diagnosed the disease, and begun to advocate the cure.

The essay on Heine⁽⁶⁾ contains his first use of the word 'Philistine' and 'Philistinism': 'Philistinism! We have not the expression in English. Perhaps we have not the word because we have so much of the thing.'⁽⁷⁾ He

(1) *Chapter III*.

(2) Published first in the National Review, Nov. 1864.

(3) Essays in Criticism, p. 27.

(4) *Ibid*, p. 29.

(5) *Ibid*, p. 31.

(6) The Cornhill, Aug. 1863.

(7) Essays in Criticism, p. 188.

continues on this theme, looking at the British Philistine through the eyes of Heine, and contrasting 'the enthusiast for the idea, for reason',⁽¹⁾ Philistinism is simply 'inveterate inaccessibility to ideas'.⁽²⁾ Besides this specific mention of Philistinism, there is the implicit criticism of English middle class life throughout the volume. It is clear that during the years 1863-4 Arnold was continuing to think about the English middle classes along the lines suggested to him by his educational work.⁽³⁾

For Arnold, social criticism was inseparable from religion; the British middle class was narrow and uncultured because it had embraced a narrow and crude Protestantism, and by the time he wrote Culture and Anarchy, Arnold believed that the only way to save English society was to free the middle class from Puritanism. This attitude is revealed in the essay on Eugénie de Guérin,⁽⁴⁾ where Arnold employs his favourite method of generalising from one or two examples. He compares the Catholic Eugénie de Guérin

(1) Ibid, p. 192.

(2) Ibid, p. 204.

(3) In a letter to his mother, dated Feb. 16, 1864, he writes:-
'I mean to deliver the middle class out of the hand of their Dissenting ministers. The mere difficulty of the task is itself rather an additional incentive to undertake it.'

- Letters I, p. 264.

(4) The Cornhill, June, 1863.

with a Protestant Englishwoman, Emma Tatham, and, though he has nothing to say in dispraise of the latter's Christianity, he finds its outward details less attractive than those of the Frenchwoman's faith. Here, as in Culture and Anarchy and St. Paul and Protestantism, Arnold seems to lose his critical tact when writing of Protestants; with amazing ungraciousness, if nothing worse, he scorns words which, though they meant nothing to him, are sacred to many. He cannot forget that

'the Englishwoman is a Protestant at Margate; Margate, that brick-and-mortar image of English Protestantism, representing it, in all its prose, all its uncomeliness, - let me add, all its salubrity'. (1)

This is clearly the tone of those writings on religion which have been supposed to belong only to the decade 1868-78.

'Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment', the essay from which have been lost some comments on Protestantism⁽²⁾, still provides Arnold's estimate of the Roman Church as 'a power, for history at any rate, eminently the Church; not, perhaps, the Church of the future, but indisputably the Church of the past, and, in the past, the Church of the

(1) Essays in Criticism, p. 164.

(2) The Cornhill, April, 1864. Title, 'Pagan and Christian Religious Sentiment'. ~~v. p. above.~~

multitude'.⁽¹⁾ Again, in 'Joubert'⁽²⁾, Arnold quotes several of his subject's writings on religion; he extracts from them the proposition that 'the British and North American Puritans are the children of the Old Testament, as Joachim of Flora and St. Francis are the children of the New'.⁽³⁾ He also quotes with approval Joubert's opinion that 'the austere sects excite the most enthusiasm at first; but the temperate sects have always been the most durable'.⁽⁴⁾ The treatment of religion in the Spinoza essay and its companion outside Essays in Criticism is discussed later.⁽⁵⁾

There are other links with Culture and Anarchy in these essays,⁽⁶⁾ but what has been said will perhaps indicate the trend of Arnold's thought in the early '60s and shew how the Essays in Criticism, while remaining predominantly 'literary', lead naturally to Culture and Anarchy without abrupt transition.

(1) Essays in Criticism, p. 228.

(2) National Review, Jan. 1864. Title, 'Joubert; or a French Coleridge'.

(3) Essays in Criticism, p. 336.

(4) Ibid, p. 337.

(5) pp. 116-119.

(6) e.g. remarks on the Press, and on Oxford.

III. 'Culture and Anarchy'.

In 1867 Matthew Arnold completed his ten years' Professorship of Poetry at Oxford, and in July of that year there appeared in the Cornhill Magazine an essay, 'Culture and its Enemies', which embodied his closing lecture at Oxford. Between January and August 1868 the Cornhill printed further essays under the general title 'Anarchy and Authority'. In 1869 Arnold collected all these, fused and condensed the titles into Culture and Anarchy, and added the sub-title, 'An Essay in Political and Social Criticism'. The Oxford lecture remained as the first chapter, 'Sweetness and Light', and a Preface was added, which expanded some points and dealt with criticisms.

The sub-title is significant, for it points to the roots of the new work; this is another 'essay in criticism', only this time the exact kind of criticism is denoted. Of the Essays in Criticism, the essay of 1864 'On the Function of Criticism at the Present Time' may be singled out as the parent stem of Culture and Anarchy, for there is a close connection between Arnold's 'criticism' and his 'culture'. Criticism gets to know 'the best that is known and thought in the world', and so creates 'a current of

true and fresh ideas',⁽¹⁾ while culture is 'a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know....the best which has been thought and said in the world', so turning 'a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits'.⁽²⁾ This is simply saying that culture pursues perfection by means of criticism; and 'the whole scope' of Culture and Anarchy is 'to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties'.⁽³⁾ Arnold continues, 'The culture we recommend is, above all, an inward operation'.⁽⁴⁾ Like criticism, it must keep aloof from practice. Though Arnold would have repudiated the title 'philosopher', and though he may have been mistaken in giving so many illustrations from current politics, Culture and Anarchy is nearer to being a philosophical treatise than a political pamphlet.

Arnold's final course of lectures as Professor of Poetry, on the study of Celtic Literature, was given during the years 1865 and 1866, thus filling the interval between the publication of Essays in Criticism (1865) and the appearance of 'Culture and its Enemies'. The Celtic lectures contain much speculation based on racial theories that are now

(1) Essays in Criticism, p.43.

(2) Culture and Anarchy, p.X.

(3) Ibid, p.X.

(4) Ibid, p.X.

discredited, mingled with some of his best literary judgments; but above all, they reveal Arnold meditating on those defects in his countrymen which were hindering the work of criticism and resisting true culture. The English have the Germanic basis of steadiness, the Germanic excellence of 'fidelity to nature', but they suffer from the Germanic defect, the tendency to commonness and the humdrum. Arnold analyses Philistinism, crystallising its virtues and revealing its faults.⁽¹⁾ The English should welcome and cherish the Celtic in their makeup, lest they fall into unalloyed Teutonism, for

'we are becoming aware that we have sacrificed to Philistinism culture, and insight, and dignity, and acceptance, and weight among the nations and yet that it cannot even give us the fool's paradise it promised us.'⁽²⁾

(1) 'Philistinism, that plant of essentially Germanic growth what a soul of goodness there is in Philistinism itself! This steady-going habit leads at last up to science, up to the comprehension and interpretation of the world How it has augmented the comforts and conveniences of life for us! Doors that open, windows that shut, locks that turn, razors that shave, coats that wear, watches that go, and a thousand more such good things, are the invention of the Philistines'. Yet there is the other side: 'When our race has built Bold Street, Liverpool, and pronounced it very good, it hurries across the Atlantic, and builds Nashville, and Jacksonville, and Milledgeville, and thinks it is fulfilling the designs of Providence in an incomparable manner.'

(2) On the Study of Celtic Literature. pp. 110, 111, 175-176.
(2) Ibid, p. 180.

Arnold rarely spoke more earnestly than this on the subject of Philistinism.

Further evidence of Arnold's trend of thought during the later Sixties is found in Friendship's Garland (1871).

This was a series of letters published in the Pall Mall Gazette between 1866 and 1870, defending his article 'My Countrymen', which appeared in the Cornhill Magazine in February 1866.⁽¹⁾ Friendship's Garland therefore spans a period beginning before the Celtic lectures and continuing beyond the publication of St. Paul and Protestantism, and it has connections with all the work of that time.

Arminius von Thunder-ten-Tronckh, the fictitious Prussian who serves as mouthpiece for Arnold's ideas in these letters, sharply criticises England and her ways.⁽²⁾

Arminius' attitude to the Philistines, and his creator's supposed pain in face of it, may serve as an example of the

(1) 'My Countrymen' closes with the lines on England, 'the weary Titan', which were to be incorporated in the poem 'Heine's Grave', published in New Poems, 1867.

(2) Mr. Trilling says of Arminius: 'A perfect Bentham in Prussian clothes, he attacks the irrationality of English education, English law, English land systems, English legal administration; he rages against a middle class which maintains the irrationality of feudalism; with red-revolutionary passion he points out that the strength of France is in the French working class But the English have no demos only masses with vulgar tastes, corrupted by the Philistines'.

- Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold. p.232.

irony in these letters, and ~~its~~ ^{their} kinship with Culture and Anarchy. Arminius divides the British Philistine into three groups: the religious Philistine, the well-to-do Philistine, and the rowdy Philistine. Arnold bans religion, so Arminius continues, 'the rowdy Philistine is represented by the Daily Telegraph, and the well-to-do Philistine by the Times'.⁽¹⁾ This latter newspaper then receives some scathing criticism; and one can imagine what would have been said, had Arnold allowed it, of the religious Philistine.

There is also the delightful comment of Arnold's Prussian friend upon the Atlantic telegraph: ' "Pshaw!" replied Arminius, contemptuously; "that great rope, with a Philistine at each end of it talking inutilities!"',⁽²⁾ In a more serious vein is the letter⁽³⁾ in which Arminius tells Arnold that the English 'have no nation,' but only the Philistines. The aristocracy once led, now it does not. It teaches the Philistines luxurious 'living', 'but it no longer rules; at most it but administers; the Philistines rule', the Philistines 'have no idea great enough' to make them in earnest. They want trade, and

(1) Friendship's Garland, p. 37.

(2) Ibid, p.57.

(3) Aug. 9, 1870, Ibid, p.76.

importance, and the power to criticise all that is being done, and complete personal liberty; but 'they have no idea deep and strong enough to subordinate everything else to itself' - that is, they have no culture; or, as Arminius likes to say, no 'Geist', no intelligence. 'My dear friend', he continues, 'I have told you our German programme, - the elevation of a whole people through culture'. The British have only 'the beatification of a whole people through clap-trap'. In a further letter⁽¹⁾, Mr. Lowe and the Times, the Edinburgh Review, and the British Philistine in general, are pilloried; and throughout Friendship's Garland Arnold attacks, in his most entertaining manner, the anarchy of English society for which culture was the only remedy.

The original Essays in Criticism, therefore, led Arnold into a wide field. No manifestation of the human spirit was alien to him. In the essay 'On the function of Criticism' he quotes from the Homer lectures of 1862 his own definition of a

'critical effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is.'⁽²⁾

(1) Nov. 21, 1870, Ibid, P. 86.

(2) Essays in Criticism, p. 1.

Arnold's theory of criticism leads on to his idea of culture, which in turn brings him to religion. Culture tries 'to make reason and the will of God prevail';⁽¹⁾ it is 'an endeavour to come at reason and the will of God by means of reading, observing, and thinking'.⁽²⁾ Its aim is human perfection, an aim sanctioned by religion, for religion itself is 'the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself'.⁽³⁾ Religion says, 'the kingdom of God is within you', and culture also places human perfection within. Yet culture goes beyond religion - that is, beyond religion in our usual narrow and partial sense - for it seeks the harmonious development of all the human powers, as did the ancient Greek ideal. Arnold feared lest religion by supplying the Philistines with grand language for their 'rudimentary efforts' at perfection, should delude them into thinking they had attained perfection, when they had achieved only a one-sided development involving the moral powers only.

This one-sided development is a fruit of Hebraism triumphant, and Arnold's doctrine of Hebraism and Hellenism,

(1) C. and A., p.8; Arnold takes the phrase from Bishop Wilson.

(2) Ibid, p. 71.

(3) Ibid, p. 11.

which is one of the fibres running through both Culture and Anarchy and St. Paul and Protestantism, occupies a whole chapter in the earlier work, forming the centre of the argument. Arnold gives slightly varied definitions of each of the two forces: Hebraism represents 'energy driving at practice', Hellenism, 'intelligence driving at those ideas' which are the basis of practice. Hebraism tries to act rightly, to obey; Hellenism strives to see things as they are, to think clearly; Hebraism consists in strictness of conscience, in doing; Hellenism, in spontaneity of consciousness, in knowing. Both aim at man's salvation or perfection, yet they have never existed in a perfect harmony, and the world fluctuates uneasily between them. Both are good, in their perfect forms, but neither should be allowed to predominate; each is a contribution to, not the law of, human development.

In an attractive, if over-simplified, historical sketch, Arnold traces the predominance of each tendency in turn. The Hellenic conception of human life proved inadequate, (therefore the bright promise of Hellenism faded, and Hebraism ruled the world'.⁽¹⁾ The form of Hebraism that superseded the ancient Hellenism was Christianity, and the

(1) Culture and Anarchy, p. 96.

Classical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century was a revival of Hellenism. This Hellenism, like its predecessor, had a strain of moral weakness, and it was soon confronted with a 'renewed and purged' Hebraism in the Protestant Reformation, 'a reaction of Hebraism against Hellenism'. But the Reformation lacked the beauty and power of primitive Christianity, and the Sixteenth Century was 'not altogether the hour of Hebraism' as was the First Century. (1)

Thus Arnold is led to consider what he calls 'Puritanism', the religion of the Protestant Reformation as expounded by the followers of Calvin, and exemplified in the Nonconformists of his time. The pugnacious motto of the Nonconformist aroused his sarcasm, (2) and he sees in the life of middle-class Dissent the antithesis of 'sweetness and light'. Our religious organizations represent the most considerable effort yet made by our race towards perfection, but it is a partial effort, and the chief offenders against totality are the Dissenters. Their type of religion may have been

(1) Ibid, p. 103. This view is an interesting instance of Arnold's notion of the 'Zeitgeist.'

(2) Ibid, p. 24.

necessary at a certain period of our history,⁽¹⁾ but it has produced 'the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism'.⁽²⁾

It may be doubted whether the best kind of Puritan was in so grievous a state as Arnold feared, and he certainly found it difficult to see any good in Nonconformity. Yet he was by no means bigoted, and he did not desire to suppress Nonconformist forms of worship or church government. In the 1869 Preface to Culture and Anarchy, he proposes a cure for the provincialism and narrowness of the Dissenters. Instead of a levelling down by disestablishing the Church, he suggests the reverse process: let a church of Presbyterian order be established alongside the existing one, with full equality of status. Unlike his father or his friend Dean Stanley, he would not simply relax the formularies of the Church of England and bid the Nonconformists enter it; 'this is hardly perhaps, to take sufficient account of the

(1) 'Puritanism was perhaps necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists has been, in consequence, sacrificed'.

- Ibid, pp. 31-32.

In this discussion, Arnold touches on the 'best self', and the treatment of St. Paul by Puritanism, both of which points he expands in St. P. & P.

(2) Culture and Anarchy, p. 10.

course of history'. Neither episcopacy nor presbyterianism is essential, but much may be said for both, and both were present in the established church at the Reformation. The severities practised upon Dissenters 'have of themselves made union on an Episcopalian footing impossible', and further,

'Presbyterianism, the popular authority of elders, has that warrant given to it by Scripture and by the proceedings of the early Christian churches, it is so consonant with the spirit of Protestantism which made the Reformation, it is so predominant in the practice of other Reformed Churches, it was so strong in the original Reformed Church of England, that one cannot help doubting whether any settlement which suppressed it could have been really permanent.'(1)

This proposal surely clears Arnold of any accusation of negative criticism, and shews him to be not only ahead of his own time, but, in this at least, ahead of ours.

With all his concessions in the matter of reunion, Arnold was inexorable in his opposition to the Puritan type of religion which, while overcoming the grosser faults of character, is 'narrow and inadequate', revealing Hebraism at its worst. The Nonconformists, he thought, were doing much harm by emphasising a quality of which the English had too much already: energy without light. This emphasis prevented any free play of thought, and must be altered.

(1) Culture and Anarchy, p. xxxvii

It was time 'to Hellenise a little'; the foundations of this narrow Protestantism must be undermined.

'A more free play of consciousness, an increased desire for sweetness and light, and all the bent which we call Hellenising, is the master-impulse even now of the life of our nation and of humanity.' (1)

This was the choice that Arnold saw before Britain: either this discipline of true culture through a right use of criticism, or - Anarchy. And Culture and Anarchy, in spite of its incursions into practical politics, was written to recommend this cure by Hellenism.

its third-rate schools, its benevolent religion, its parson-house or Puritanism'. In order to help the middle class towards this end he had to free the Dissenters from the false theology which they believed to be taught by St. Paul. He set about this task imperially, in the spirit that later (1851) prompted him to write that

'the English people are improvable, I hope.... our serious middle class, which has so turned a religion full of grace and truth into a religion full of hardness and misapprehension, is not doomed to lie in its present dark obstruction for ever, it is improvable'. (3)

(1) The essays appeared in the Cornhill in the following order: 'St. Paul & Protestantism' (1), October, 1859, p. 418; 'St. Paul & Protestantism' (2), November, 1859, p. 346; 'Puritanism & the Church of England', February, 1878, p. 20. The first edition, with a Preface on Modern Dissent, was published in 1870.

(1) Culture and Anarchy, p. 238.

(3) Irish Essays, pp. 35-39.

IV. From 'Culture and Anarchy' to 'St. Paul and Protestantism'

St. Paul and Protestantism, like Culture and Anarchy, appeared first in the Cornhill Magazine.⁽¹⁾ It is an attempt at a fresh criticism of St. Paul's thought. 'The object of this treatise', Arnold says, 'is not religious edification, but the true criticism of a great and misunderstood author'.⁽²⁾ During the 'Sixties Arnold had become ever more certain that English society would never be healthy until the middle class had been delivered from its third-rate schools, its Nonconformist religion, its 'prison-house of Puritanism'. In order to help the middle class towards this exodus he had to free the Dissenters from the false theology which they believed to be taught by St. Paul. He set about this task hopefully, in the spirit that later (1881) prompted him to write that

'the English people are improvable, I hope..... our serious middle class, which has so turned a religion full of grace and truth into a religion full of hardness and misapprehension, is not doomed to lie in its present dark obstruction for ever, it is improvable'.⁽³⁾

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- (1) The essays appeared in the Cornhill in the following order:-
'St. Paul & Protestantism' (1), October, 1869, p.432.
'St. Paul & Protestantism' (2), November, 1869, p.598.
'Puritanism & the Church of England', February, 1870, p.180.
The first edition, with a Preface on Modern Dissent, was published in 1870.
- (2) St. P. & P., p.75
- (3) Irish Essays, pp. 38-39.

When Culture and Anarchy and its successor are studied together it becomes clear that the later essays were no sudden incursion into an alien field, but a natural development. Whether consciously or not, they were taking shape while Culture and Anarchy was being written. It is not surprising to find a critic like Professor E. K. Brown writing of St. Paul and Protestantism as 'a projection of the chapter on Hebraism and Hellenism in Culture and Anarchy';⁽¹⁾ but we may call to witness a critic of the older school who did not emphasise the integrity of Arnold's work. H. W. Paul writes of St. Paul and Protestantism, 'It is rather philosophical than theological, and carries a step further the principles laid down in Culture and Anarchy'.⁽²⁾ The same critic says again, 'St. Paul and Protestantism is not really a theological book',⁽³⁾ and he quotes a letter written by Arnold to M. Fontanes in 1872, in which Arnold says,

'En parlant de St. Paul, je n'ai pas parlé en théologien, mais en homme de lettres mécontent de la très mauvaise critique littéraire qu'on appliquait à un grand esprit'.

More important than the opinions of his critics is

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- (1) E. K. Brown, Matthew Arnold: A Study in Conflict, (1949), p.144.
(2) H. W. Paul, Matthew Arnold, (1902), p.121.
(3) Ibid, p.131.

Arnold's own witness; and it is clear that he regarded the treatise on St. Paul as a continuation of the work begun in Culture and Anarchy. After stating his aim he says, 'This we propose now to do, and, indeed, to do it will only be to complete what we have already begun'.⁽¹⁾ Again, referring to Culture and Anarchy, he says,

'When we were speaking of Hebraism and Hellenism, we were led to remark how the over-Hebraising of Puritanism, and its want of a wide culture, do so narrow its range and impair its vision that even the documents which it thinks all-sufficient it does not rightly understand.'⁽²⁾

In Culture and Anarchy Arnold has touched on the dealings of Puritanism with St. Paul; now he will 'take the present opportunity of going further in the same road'.⁽³⁾ He hopes 'to make Hebraism find its true self',⁽⁴⁾ - an aim not strictly theological at all.

St. Paul and Protestantism, as Professor Brown has observed, carries on the theory of Hebraism and Hellenism. Arnold's chief care is 'neither for the Church nor for Puritanism, but for human perfection'.⁽⁵⁾ Not only would a triumphant Puritanism establish Hebraism, but the type of

(1) St. P. & P., p. 6.

(2) Ibid, pp. 6-7.

(3) Ibid, p. 7.

(4) Ibid, p. xxxix.

(5) Ibid, p. xxxiii.

Hebraism it would establish 'is one in which neither general human perfection, nor yet Hebraism itself, can truly find their account'.⁽¹⁾ He recalls⁽²⁾ the distinction between Hebraism and Hellenism which he has already established,⁽³⁾ and insists that Hebraism predominates in England. The Bible serves Hebraism; so do the whole body of clergy and ministers.⁽⁴⁾ Yet Hebraism alone will not do, and Hellenism alone will not do:

(Hebraism strikes too exclusively upon one string in us; Hellenism does not address itself with serious energy enough to morals and righteousness. For our totality, for our general perfection, we need to unite the two.'⁽⁵⁾

Hebraism and Hellenism are complementary, but they can only be united when each is at its best. Their decadent, exclusive forms Arnold calls Mialism and Millism,⁽⁶⁾ and while these prevail there can be no union, but only unhappy alternations, 'all sterile'.⁽⁷⁾ Hebraism must 'raise itself above Mialism, find its true self, shew itself in its beauty and power, and help, not hinder, man's totality.'⁽⁸⁾ In

(1) Ibid, p. xxxiii.

(2) Ibid, p. xxxiii.

(3) C. & A., Chapter IV, p.128.

(4) St. P. & P., p. xxxiv.

(5) Ibid, p. xxxv.

(6) Ibid, p. xxxvi.

(7) Ibid, p. xxxix.

(8) Ibid, p. xxxix.

order to bring this about, Arnold must 'disengage the religion of England from unscriptural Protestantism and a spirit of watchful jealousy'.⁽¹⁾

(1) The words 'a spirit of watchful jealousy' are quoted by Arnold (p.xx) from a speech in Parliament by Henry Selfe Page Winterbotham (1837-1873), who was the Nonconformist leader in the House of Commons for some years. He was educated at University College, London, and graduated with honours in 1856. Three years later he graduated Ll.D., after gaining the Hume Scholarship in Jurisprudence. In 1860 he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, and gained a reputation in Chancery practice. In 1867 he entered the House as Liberal M.P. for Stroud; he refused to join with the regular Liberals, being more advanced, and was regarded as one of the coming leaders. In 1871 he became Undersecretary of State for the Home Department; it is said that the work of this office killed him. Two years afterwards he was taken ill after addressing a meeting at Bristol; he went to Italy for a rest, and died (1873) in Rome. (v. The Times, 15 and 22 Dec. 1873, the Stroud Gazette, and the Independent; also D.N.B.).

The full context of the words used by Arnold is as follows:-

'It is useless to conceal the fact that the attitude of the Church towards Dissenters is, speaking generally, one of dislike and contempt Hence alienation, an absence of co-operation in social and philanthropic objects, a habit of watchful jealousy, a readiness (I confess it) to take offence, sometimes irritation, occasionally open strife'. (Annual Register, 1870, p. 59).

Arnold seems to have no information concerning Winterbotham, in spite of the vague tribute inserted after the Nonconformist leader's death (Popular edition, p.131); he plays with his name in a way that makes him look ridiculous, and seems to think he was condoning the 'watchful jealousy' instead of simply explaining it. But worse than this, he changes Winterbotham's words from 'a habit of watchful jealousy' to 'a spirit of watchful jealousy' - a far more evil and pervasive thing, and better suited to his own polemical purpose. To say this is not to suggest that Arnold consciously and deliberately made the alteration, or represented Winterbotham unfairly; but it is a glaring instance of the worse side of his criticism, when his dislike of Dissent prevented him from seeing things 'as they really were'.

It remained for Ernest Renan to provide the spark which fused these thoughts into St. Paul and Protestantism; in 1869 he published the third volume of his Histoire des Origines du Christianisme; this volume was a study of St. Paul. Renan's approach is in the 'scientific' tradition of his day; he gives no place to the conversion story, except as a fancy of Paul's by which he proved his apostleship.⁽¹⁾ Unlike the geographical and historical background, the character of St. Paul is not attractively drawn. Renan transfers to the apostle his own distaste for Protestantism. 'La Réforme', he says, 'ouvre pour saint Paul une ère nouvelle de gloire et d'autorité.'⁽²⁾ And again, 'Le personnage historique qui a le plus d'analogie avec saint Paul, c'est Luther'.⁽³⁾ According to his interpretation, Paul is moved chiefly by ambition, and by a jealous desire to be equal with 'the Twelve'; he is contemptuous of reason, loves transcendental paradox, and is insanelly attached to certain dogmas. His chief virtue is his 'bon sens pratique admirable'⁽⁴⁾ and his organising ability.

The French scholar's attitude aroused Arnold's imagination; the very title of his next essay is before him,

(1) Ernest Renan, St. Paul (Paris, 1869), p. 21.

(2) Ibid, p. 566.

(3) Ibid, p. 569.

(4) Ibid, p. 60.

for 'all through his book M. Renan is possessed with a sense of this close relationship between St. Paul and Protestantism'.⁽¹⁾ He translates for his readers the words that had impressed him:

'After having been for three hundred years, thanks to Protestantism, the Christian doctor par excellence, Paul is now coming to an end of his reign'.⁽²⁾

Fresh from writing Culture and Anarchy, Arnold must have meditated on Renan's words, as his habit was when any thought gripped him, and decided that 'a true criticism of men and things'⁽³⁾ proved Renan wrong. Protestantism was coming to an end, indeed; but the reign of St. Paul, freed from Protestant misinterpretation of his thought, was only beginning.

Arnold recalls how, in Culture and Anarchy, he has said that 'for us in this country, Puritanism is the strong and special representative of Protestantism'.⁽⁴⁾ He refuses to call the Church of England Protestant; it is the State Church, it existed before Protestantism, and it is upheld by other supports than Protestant dogma. The schemes of justification and election are the foundation of Puritanism,

(1) St. P. & P., p. 3.

(2) Ibid, p.3.cf. Renan, St. Paul (1869), pp. 569-570.

(3) Ibid, p. 4.

(4) Ibid, p. 4.

of modern Nonconformity; if it can be shewn that they are not the essentials of Paul's teaching, the Puritan Churches, deprived of their props, must fall. Arnold therefore conceives the idea of comparing the doctrines of Nonconformity with those of St. Paul;⁽¹⁾ and it is this task which, he says, will be the completion of Culture and Anarchy.

If Arnold needed the encouragement of a favourable reaction to Culture and Anarchy, he seems to have found it. While that work was still in the Cornhill stage, he wrote to his mother,

'I am astonished, and so is George Smith,⁽²⁾ at the favourable reception what I have said meets with, but this shows how ripe people's minds are for a change in some of their fixed notions on these matters.'⁽³⁾

Two months later, he is telling Lady de Rothschild,

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- (1) He seems to think that it is his special mission to do this, for contemporary Puritanism will not be reached by 'philosophical works' like the Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne au Siècle Apostolique of Edouard Reuss; what is needed is 'to give effect to the predominant points in Paul's teaching, and to exhibit these in so plain and popular a manner as to invite and almost compel all men's comprehension'. (St.P. & P., pp. 7-8).
- (2) Of Smith, Elder & Co., publishers of the Cornhill Magazine and of Culture & Anarchy, St. Paul and Protestantism and others of Arnold's books.
- (3) June 13, 1868. (Letters, I. pp. 455-56).

'I met Mr. Deutsch the other day Any diffidence I felt was set at rest by his telling me that he was distinctly conscious, while writing his article on the Talmud, that if it had not been for what I had done he could not have written that article in the Quarterly, and the British public could not have read it.' (1)

Attacks on the Preface to Culture and Anarchy he takes cheerfully, as evidence that he has gained a hearing;

'The Liberal newspapers one and all attack it', he writes, 'and this, too, they are likely to do more and more'. (2)

A week later he adds, 'However much I may be attacked, my manner of writing is one that takes hold of people and proves effective.' (3) In June, 1869, he makes even more confident claims:

'The chapters on Hellenism and Hebraism are in the main, I am convinced, so true that they will form a kind of centre for English thought and speculation on the matters treated in them'. (4)

Probably Arnold gathered much of his information from comments made to him personally, and later from the sales of the book. In 1869 he writes, 'I hear on all sides of the Preface being read, and making an impression'. (5) But the press was not silent. The Spectator was at first sympathetic; on January 4, 1868, it carried an editorial,

(1) August 9, 1868, (Ibid, I, pp. 458-59).
(2) Feb. 20, 1869, (Ibid, II, p. 4).
(3) Feb. 27, 1869, (Ibid, II, p.6).
(4) June 12, 1869, (Ibid, II, p.13).
(5) Feb. 27, 1869, (Ibid, II, p. 6).

'Mr. Arnold and the State',⁽¹⁾ which supported and extended Arnold's doctrine of authority. In July another long article appeared,⁽²⁾ contrasting Arnold and Carlyle as prophets of Hellenism and Hebraism respectively.⁽³⁾ The tone is still sympathetic, though it is pointed out that 'free play of consciousness' may become an end in itself, with consequent paralysis of the power of action. A short notice in the following number⁽⁴⁾ places 'Mr. Arnold's paper' as one of the two best features of the current Cornhill Magazine.

After the publication of Culture and Anarchy in book form, the Spectator was less friendly. An article on 'Mr. Matthew Arnold's Praise of Culture',⁽⁵⁾ calls the work 'an effusion or series of effusions in which the author's mind is poured out without much order'. The most valuable

(1) Spectator, Jan. 4, 1868, p. 5. It has proved impossible to identify the author of these Spectator articles, but as Richard Holt Hutton was editor at the time and usually dealt with matters literary and theological (v. Dictionary of National Biography (1901), under R.H. Hutton, p.21), it may be assumed that he wrote them.

(2) Spectator, July 4, 1868, p. 786.

(3) This article quotes a newly-found letter of Carlyle's to a Mr. Rodgers, telling him that 'the end of man is an action, not a thought', and exhorting him to strenuous work; the suggestion is made that, had Arnold known this letter, he would have seen in it an illustration of Hebraism.

(4) Ibid, July 11, 1868, p. 829.

(5) Ibid, March 6, 1869, p. 295.

'effusion', says this review, is the discussion of Hebraism and Hellenism. It is doubtful whether anarchy is necessarily the opposite of culture, and 'a little more discrimination would give his utterances more weight'. One may surmise that this failure of sympathy was due to the outspoken Preface of 1869.

The Examiner published encouraging short comments on the Cornhill papers as they appeared; the first mentions 'a thoughtful, earnest paper', deserving of attention and respect even from those who do not share Arnold's views,⁽¹⁾ and the final notice speaks of the concluding paper as 'abounding with profound thought and intelligent reflections'.⁽²⁾ These possibly rather patronising remarks were not followed up by any full review, and no further mention of Culture and Anarchy is to be found in this paper during 1869.

The Saturday Review, on the other hand, was silent until 1869, when it made some sharp comments. Matthew Arnold, it said, though excellent as a literary critic, was 'played out' as a critic of society; his analysis did not 'go far into the heart of the matter'. Let him quote

(1) The Examiner, Jan. 4, 1868, p. 8.

(2) Ibid, Aug. 1, 1868, p. 488. The date of the other notice is Feb. 8, 1868, p. 88.

Bishop Wilson as much as he likes, but he must not talk like him when discussing politics; 'play' of consciousness should sometimes become 'work'. Arnold was advocating 'culture in the next generation and anarchy meanwhile'.⁽¹⁾

The religious weeklies were not greatly stirred. The Guardian reviewed the book kindly, but suggested that it was not to be taken seriously. The Christian World, an organ of Congregationalism, under the title 'A Poet on State-Churchism', took Arnold to task for his attitude to Irish disestablishment, and for his belief that great men were not reared outside established churches. The English Independent ignored the book, and Edward Miall's other organ, the Nonconformist, gave no review until 1869, though it published short notices of the Cornhill essays.⁽²⁾ In the opinion of this paper, Arnold's work was 'deeply interesting but eminently unsatisfactory'; let him continue in this vein if it pleases him, said Miall in effect, for it is amusing and does the 'Philistines' no harm.

Of the monthly and quarterly journals, the Quarterly Review, Fraser's Magazine and Macmillan's Magazine ignored

(1) The Saturday Review, March 6, 1869, p. 318.

(2) The Nonconformist, Jan. 11, 1868, p. 42; July 8, 1868, p. 683; Aug. 5, 1868, p. 779.

the publication of Culture and Anarchy. The Contemporary Review published a sympathetic but not uncritical estimate,⁽¹⁾ in which it is suggested that Arnold would have a better hearing if he dropped the tone of the 'salon' and avoided cruel humour. The reviewer also questions whether Hebraism and Hellenism are ultimately compatible.

The review in the Fortnightly,⁽²⁾ signed by William Kirkus, is courteous but guarded; Arnold, it says, indulges in 'rather unfair sarcasm', and what is worse, his 'culture' seems incapable of acting until perfection has been attained. The Athenaeum⁽³⁾ is amusing at Arnold's expense; culture, it says, obviously means Matthew Arnold, and anarchy the rest of us. He has fallen a victim to his love of phrase-making, and his style is losing its clearness in consequence - much of Culture and Anarchy seems to have been written by 'a dandy Carlyle'. Let Arnold beware; others 'may wish to let their consciousness play freely upon Mr. Matthew Arnold. We hope it will not put him out'.

The Edinburgh Review,⁽⁴⁾ as might be expected, has

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- (1) The Contemporary Review, May, 1869, p. 150. The article is initialled 'G.S.'
- (2) Fortnightly Review, Jan-Apr., 1869, p. 371.
- (3) Athenaeum, Feb. 20, 1869, p. 271. ~~It has proved impossible to trace the author of this review, as the files have not been kept.~~ This review is signed in the file, 'Miller Field'.
- (4) Edinburgh Review, Apr., 1869, p. 486.

little support to offer Arnold, though it defends him against the label 'elegant trifler'. It champions Hebraism, which is 'good in itself', while Hellenism is only valuable as the 'instrument of good'.

The British Quarterly Review,⁽¹⁾ though it calls Culture and Anarchy 'a very racy and suggestive essay', upbraids Arnold heavily, and one feels, without a grasp of essentials, for it considers that 'the pith and point' of the essay is Arnold's wish to arrest the disestablishment of the Irish Church. It naturally takes much notice of his attitude to the Nonconformists, and, though the complaints are often just, the lighter approach of the Athenaeum seems more effective.

The North British Review devoted more space than any of these journals to Arnold's book, using it as the basis of a 36-page article entitled 'What is Man's Chief End?'⁽²⁾ The reviewer puts an undue strain on Culture and Anarchy, treating it with the severe logic from which Arnold always recoiled, and complaining that the theme is 'needlessly cumbered' by criticism of politics, newspapers, and churches. The review proper is prefaced by a philosophical

(1) British Quarterly Review, Apr. 1, 1869, p. 569, cf. St. P. & P., p. 102.

(2) North British Review, March-July, 1869, p. 190.

dissertation on culture - a continual process of education - as the chief end of man. Arnold's Hebraism and Hellenism are then examined, and 'a very decided Hellenic bias' is noticed. Arnold is indisposed to action until the wisdom of each step is fully assured; but the law of Hebrew action is nobler. He has no constructive solution, and his criticism of Liberal measures and of the Nonconformists is unfair. He refers everything to 'the firm intelligible law of things'; but, 'when we ask what this law is, we get no firm intelligible answer'. Man must find the urge to culture, not in himself or in some 'barren aphorism', but in his origin and destiny as a being 'cast in the image of the Creator'.

These reviews do not reflect wide agreement with Arnold's thesis in Culture and Anarchy, but most of them treat him with respect, and they provide evidence that he was making people think. Widespread interest among serious people; the encouraging attitude of his friends; above all, perhaps, the knowledge that he must make himself clearer on some points - all these factors probably urged Arnold to 'repeat the dose'.

Finally, in considering the passage from Culture and Anarchy to St. Paul and Protestantism, it should be remembered that in 1868 Arnold lost both his eldest and his

youngest son. Of such an experience no-one who has not suffered it can speak with confidence, and any attempt to do so would be presumptuous; but it seems, as far as one can see, to have deepened and matured his mind. Mr. Lionel Trilling's statement that Arnold 'is not brought to religion, as men so often are, by thoughts of death',⁽¹⁾ perhaps needs some modification, though he is right in saying that 'the intensest emotion seems to have gone into the hidden stream'.⁽²⁾

In a letter to his sister, Mrs. William Forster, written on the day of his youngest child's death, Arnold remarks that the loss has come, just after his forty-fifth birthday, along with other cares which include 'an almost painful anxiety about public matters', to remind him that 'the time past of our life may suffice us', and that 'we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God'. He adds, 'However different the interpretation we may put on much of the facts and history of Christianity, we may unite in the bond of this call, which is true for all of us, and for me, above all, how full of meaning and warning.'⁽³⁾

After the second bereavement, in November 1868, he

(1) Lionel Trilling, *Matthew Arnold* (1939), p. 297.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 297.

(3) Jan. 4, 1868, Letters, I, p. 443.

speaks more fully, this time in a letter to his mother. He feels that this year has been 'the beginning of a new time' for him, and mentions 'the gradual settlement of my own thought' and the two deaths as marking it particularly.

'Tommy's death', he continues, '.... was associated with several awakening and epoch-making things. The chapter for the day of his death was that great chapter, the 1st of Isaiah; the first Sunday after his death was Advent Sunday, with its glorious Collect,⁽¹⁾ and in the Epistle⁽²⁾ the passage⁽³⁾ which converted St. Augustine. All these things point to a new beginning'.⁽⁴⁾

Characteristically, he has found solace in the Bible and the Anglican liturgy; and surely it is significant that the set passage from St. Paul made such an impression on him at this crisis. The Advent Epistle opens with the

(1) The Collect for the First Sunday in Advent:

'Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which Thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever'.

(2) Romans XIII⁸⁻¹⁴.

(3) Romans XIII¹³: 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying'.

(4) Dec. 24 (his birthday), 1868. Letters, I, 466.

words, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth hath fulfilled the law', a few months later, these words appeared in the second essay on St. Paul:

'Our duties towards our neighbour we perform, not in deference to external commands and prohibitions, but through identifying ourselves with him, by sympathy with Christ who identified himself with him. Therefore, we owe no man anything but to love one another, and he who loves his neighbour fulfils the law towards him'. (1)

The whole passage from Romans which forms the Epistle is an example of that thirst after righteousness which Arnold most stressed in his interpretation of Paul's teaching.

With his tendency to dwell on these matters accentuated by the double bereavement, and encouraged by the knowledge that what he had said, especially about Hebraism and Hellenism, was reaching the public and making them think, Arnold wrote his preface to the first edition of Culture and Anarchy. (2) In it he tells his readers that 'the whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties'. (3) In re-stating his position he comes to the subject of Puritanism. 'Certainly we are no enemies of the Noncon-

(1) St. P. & P., p. 80.

(2) A letter dated Dec. 24, 1868, fixes the date of writing: 'I am up at six, and work at the preface to my Culture & Anarchy Essays'. (Letters, I, p. 467).

(3) C. & A., P. x.

formists', he protests, 'for on the contrary what we aim at is their perfection'.⁽¹⁾ But he sees that what they need is 'a more full and harmonious development' of their humanity', and deliverance from provinciality.⁽²⁾

Establishment keeps a church in contact with the main current of the nation's life, while dissent tends toward narrowness and lack of balance, as we see when we compare the Church of Scotland, or the Reformed Churches on the Continent, with their non-established sister communions.⁽³⁾

The established Churches have retained a capacity to produce 'men of national mark', which the Nonconformists have forfeited. The tendency to Hebraise is balanced, in an establishment, by contact with the current of national

(1) Ibid, p. xiii.

(2) Ibid, pp. xv-xvi.

(3) A scholar of our day who is both a man of letters and a competent theologian provides an interesting supplement to Arnold's view of 'hole and corner' religion:

'Any small coterie, bound together by some interest which other men dislike or ignore, tends to develop inside itself a hothouse mutual admiration, and towards the outer world, a great deal of pride and hatred which is entertained without shame because the "Cause" is its sponsor and it is thought to be impersonal We want the Church to be small (a devil is speaking) not only that fewer men may know the Enemy but also that those who do may acquire the uneasy intensity and the defensive self-righteousness of a secret society or a clique'.

- C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, (1943), pp.40-41.

life and thought; in Dissent it continues unchecked. Hebraising America, with no Establishment, should be a warning to would-be disestablishers in Britain.

As a suggested cure for this defectiveness of Dissent, Arnold outlines his plan for establishing a Presbyterian Church of England on equal terms with the Episcopal Church; this has been discussed above,⁽¹⁾ and here it is only necessary to say that Arnold, like his father, was an extreme Erastian, and entirely failed to see why his scheme would have been unacceptable to men like R. W. Dale, who, with most Congregationalists and Baptists, regarded an established Church as an encroachment on the sovereign rule of Christ over His own. The scheme would probably have been acceptable to Presbyterians, and perhaps to the Methodists.

The rest of this considerable Preface is devoted to a further elucidation of Arnold's doctrine of culture.

Culture does not condemn Hebraism absolutely, as many critics of the essays had supposed:

'The habits and discipline received from Hebraism remain for our race an eternal possession, and . . . one must never assign to them the second rank today, without being prepared to restore to them the first rank tomorrow.'⁽²⁾

(1) v. pp. 48-9.

(2) C. & A., pp. xlvii-xlviii.

This preface, written at the end of 1868 and published in the following year, is the chief connecting link between Culture and Anarchy and St. Paul and Protestantism. In it, Arnold faces the central problem of his social criticism - the narrowness, provinciality, and over-Hebraising tendency of the British middle class, with the Nonconformists as its core. This problem was fertilised in his mind by his interest in the Biblical writers, and this process, as far as we can trace it, produced St. Paul and Protestantism.

misunderstood author'. (1)

As might be expected, he begins by reminding us how his eyes are on the subject:

'When we are told that St. Paul is a Protestant doctor whose reign is ending.....we in England, at any rate, can best try the assertion by fixing our eyes on our own Puritans, and comparing their doctrine and their hold on vital truth with St. Paul's'. (2)

This, says Arnold, will complete the work begun in Culture and Anarchy: 'This we now propose to do, and indeed, to do it will only be to complete what we have already begun'. (3) In Culture and Anarchy he has criticised the rigid Hebraism of the Puritans; now he will show them that St. Paul does not support their doctrine. He hopes that his interpretation will

(1) St.P. & P. 1.75

(2) Ibid. p. 6

(3) Ibid. p. 6

V. 'ST. PAUL AND PROTESTANTISM' AS LITERARY CRITICISM

It is clear that Arnold intended his treatment of the Pauline epistles to be literary rather than theological, and the fact that his criticism of St. Paul is so much happier than his criticism of Calvinism and the Puritans, may be claimed as evidence that he remained essentially a man of letters. Many summaries of St. Paul and Protestantism exist; this survey is not an attempted addition to them, but a study of Arnold's approach to 'the true criticism of a great and misunderstood author'.⁽¹⁾

As might be expected, he begins by resolving to keep his eye on the object:

'When we are told that St. Paul is a Protestant doctor whose reign is ending.....we in England, at any rate, can best try the assertion by fixing our eyes on our own Puritans, and comparing their doctrine and their hold on vital truth with St. Paul's'.⁽²⁾

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(1) St.P. & P. p.75
(2) Ibid, p. 6
(3) Ibid, p. 6

rescue 'the great name of St. Paul' from Puritan perversions, and his one qualification for this attempt is his belief in the need for 'seeing things as they really are'.⁽¹⁾ His method will be that of true criticism, the 'letting our consciousness work quite freely, and.....following the methods of studying and judging thus generated'.⁽²⁾

Arnold therefore treats the Bible as he would treat any literature, though he would have claimed that his method was very different in spirit from that of the liberal theologians. He approaches St. Paul as a literary critic who has equipped himself for his task by getting to know 'the best that is known and thought in the world';⁽³⁾ he reads him

'with the sort of critical tact which the study of the human mind and its history, and the acquaintance with many great writers, naturally gives for following the movement of any one single great writer's thought'.⁽⁴⁾

He tries to approach his task without bias, 'reading (Paul).... without preconceived theories to which we want to make his thoughts fit themselves'.⁽⁵⁾ The question whether he was successful in this will be considered later in the chapter.

Arnold does not study St. Paul as a theologian would necessarily do, with a weighty apparatus of texts and commentaries;

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- (1) Ibid, p.8
 - (2) Ibid, p.8
 - (3) Essays in Criticism, p.45
 - (4) St. P. & P. p.29
 - (5) Ibid, p.29

he takes from the theologians what he needs, and then sets out to discover the essential spirit of his author.⁽¹⁾ He will try to indicate what is primary and essential in Paul's thought, and what is secondary and subordinate; and by these terms he means,

'so far as the apostle is concerned, a greater or less approach to what really characterises him and gives his teaching its originality and power.....So far as truth is concerned a greater or less agreement with facts which can be verified and a greater or less power of explaining them'.⁽²⁾

After this preliminary sketch of his method, Arnold outlines Calvinist theology as he understands it, drawing upon various confessions, chiefly the Westminster Confession of 1649⁽³⁾. He then turns to St. Paul to point the contrast. Unlike many, if not most theologians of his day, he understands the difficulty of knowing exactly what Paul meant, when he is 'so separated from us by time, race, training and circumstances'.⁽⁴⁾ Experience in literary criticism can help us to get near his meaning; more than that we cannot attain. Moreover, the English

(1) Professor Basil Willey brings out Arnold's position clearly: 'To extract the essential things from the New Testament, we require not so much profound scholarship, and certainly not so much scholastic subtlety, as wisdom and purity: wisdom in the sense of ripeness; experience of men's ways of thinking, feeling and speaking; literary tact above all; and purity, to feel without impediment the irresistible force of Christ's teaching and example'.
-Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (London 1949) pp. 274-5

(2) St. P. & P. p.9

(3) v. Below, pp. 112-113.

(4) St. P. & P. p.29

translation presents obstacles; (1) for, in translating Paul's most mature work, the Epistle to the Romans, the makers of the Authorised Version had 'their heads full of the current doctrines of election and justification', (2) giving their work a bias which needs to be watched.

A further difficulty in the way of true criticism, Arnold thinks, is Paul's habit of using highly-coloured language, like other Biblical writers,

'he uses within the sphere of religious emotion expressions which, in this sphere have an eloquence and a propriety, but which are not to be taken out of it and made into formal scientific propositions'. (3)

It is an abuse of Scripture to take, for example, a text from some Old Testament prophet, and use it to 'prove' the proposition that God is vengeful. Familiarity with other literatures safeguards the true critic against this; he knows it would be false to take a chorus from ~~Aeschylus~~ Aeschylus, cast it into the formal style of Aristotle, and regard it as the teaching of Greek philosophy. To his Bible-worshipping contemporaries Arnold recommends a maxim of the mediaeval Jewish rabbis: 'The Law speaks with the tongue of the children of men'. (4)

In characteristic manner, Arnold finds a word to describe Paul's eastern style: he calls it 'Orientalising'. When the

(1) The Authorised Version of 1611 was then the only standard one available in English, and Arnold was writing for a public unlikely to know Greek.

(2) St. P. & P. p.29

(3) Ibid, p.30

(4) Ibid, p.31

apostle expresses religious emotion in richly figurative language, he Orientalises, and Western readers should not take his images as a basis for formal theology. In clearing away this cause of misunderstanding, Arnold finds another, for Paul also 'Judaises', that is, he uses the Old Testament Scriptures in an uncritical way in order to find additional proof for his doctrines;

'and thus Puritanism, which has only itself to blame for misunderstanding him when he Orientalises, may fairly put upon the apostle himself some of its blame for misunderstanding him when he Judaises.' (1)

Another point which Arnold considers is the order of Paul's ideas, for 'the order in which, in any series of ideas, the ideas come, is of great importance to the final result.' (2) Paul, writing to edify, did not set out his teaching in a scientific way, and the critic's task is to discover 'the order in which Paul's ideas naturally stand, and the connection between one of them and the other.' (3)

Having explained his aim and pointed out possible pitfalls, Arnold grasps his subject boldly and extracts Paul's master-impulse 'the desire for righteousness.' As literary evidence of the 'incomparable honesty and depth in Paul's love of righteousness' (4) Arnold quotes his lists of virtues and vices. An

(1) Ibid, P.34

(2) Ibid, p.34

(3) Ibid, pp. 34-35

(4) Ibid, p.38

astounding criticism' has deduced Antinomianism from this man, who 'is in truth so possessed with horror of Antinomianism that he goes to grace for the sole purpose of extirpating it.' (1)

Using his skill as a critic of literature, Arnold follows St. Paul's thought, with the apostle's thirst for righteousness as the clue. At this point may be noticed one of the interesting links between St. Paul and Protestantism and its predecessor, for Arnold points out (2) that Paul speaks of a man sowing to his flesh, but to the spirit. By following the spirit - the 'best self' of Culture and Anarchy, now inevitably expressed in more theological language - men are 'united, impersonal, at harmony.' (3)

In his search for power to govern the 'self-seeking tendencies of the flesh', St. Paul discovered a fact of human nature which is verifiable by 'science', the sense which seeks exact knowledge. (4) This fact was that a code of rules cannot make a man righteous. In this dilemma Arnold leaves him at the close of the first essay, thus marking 'the critical point

(1) Ibid, p.42

(2) Ibid, P.48

(3) C. & A, p.80, and pp. ~~45~~ 22 above.

(4) Professor Basil Willey says of Arnold's 'science': Arnold has sometimes been taken to task for an alleged over-deference to 'science'; he was.....anxious to separate from religion those elements which exposed it to scientific attack. But by 'science' he means simply the search for truth, or, more specifically, the modern spirit, in so far that spirit seeks to prove all things, and hold fast only that which is sure.'

Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (London 1949), p. 272.

for the scientific worth of his doctrine'. Puritanism expects Paul to have recourse to the dogmata of election and justification; but, says Arnold, 'we will proceed to show that Paul has recourse to nothing of the kind'.⁽¹⁾

This study does not attempt to follow Arnold into the detailed interpretation of St. Paul's thought which he gives in the second essay. After leading his readers to face Paul's central problem, he traces the solution provided by the Apostle's positive teaching. Paul is 'in collision with a fact of human nature, but in itself a sterile fact',⁽²⁾ - the fact of sin. Here again Arnold builds on the foundation of Culture and Anarchy, for in the chapter on Hebraism and Hellenism he has noticed the preoccupation of Hebraism with sin:

'As one passes and repasses from Hellenism to Hebraism, from Plato to St. Paul, one feels inclined to rub one's eyes and ask oneself whether man is indeed a gentle and simple being, showing the traces of a noble and divine nature; or an unhappy chained captive, labouring with groanings that cannot be uttered, to free himself from the body of this death'.⁽³⁾

Now, in St. Paul and Protestantism, Arnold contrasts the attitudes of Hebraism and Hellenism, both of which need

(1) St. P. & P., p. 51

(2) Ibid., p. 55.

(3) C. & A., p.138.

modifying to attain the realism of St. Paul; 'sin is not a monster to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of'.⁽¹⁾ Paul had a sense of moral guilt, and felt 'the impulsion outside ourselves',⁽²⁾ which overwhelms Calvinism; but he kept his balance. He saw the non-fulfilment of righteousness by men, and the fulfilment of it by Christ, and thus he conceived his central doctrine - dying with Christ to sin, 'necrosis'.⁽³⁾ His essential ideas are 'dying with Christ, resurrection from the dead, growing into Christ'; Arnold contrasts the Puritan 'calling, justification, sanctification'.⁽⁴⁾

In order to bring out more clearly what he believes to be essential in Paul's doctrine, Arnold analyses the Epistle to the Romans, dividing it into primary, sub-primary and secondary sections. He quotes Romans vi⁴ as an expression of Paul's central thought:

'We are buried with Christ through baptism into death, that like as he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also shall walk in newness of life'.⁽⁵⁾

(1) St. P. & P., p. 56.

(2) cf. the 'power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness'. Literature & Dogma, p. 43.

(3) St. P. & P., pp. 75-76.

(4) Ibid, p. 81.

(5) Ibid, p. 100.

The resurrection of which Paul here speaks is not a physical miracle, but the death to sin and resurrection in this life, which the believer shares with Christ by a process of identification with Him. Doctrines like predestination are accidental additions, contradicted by the whole drift of Paul's thought; even belief in the physical Resurrection of Christ, though Paul undoubtedly believed in it, was not the true centre for him.⁽¹⁾ So Arnold completes his contrast. Paul himself, he says,

'would have told Puritanism that every Sunday, when in all its countless chapels it reads him and preaches from him, the veil is upon its heart'.⁽²⁾

Since Arnold's aim was to treat St. Paul as he would any other great author, it is appropriate to criticise his method from a literary point of view; and the question that must arise is whether he succeeded in 'seeing St. Paul as he really is', in approaching him without prejudice in accordance with his own principles.

It cannot be said that he did succeed entirely in this difficult task; the fault in St. Paul and Protestantism seems to be that he approached his subject with too

(1) Ibid, p. 83. cf. pp. 17-22 above for discussion of Arnold's idea of the 'buried life' in connection with this passage. v. also p. 81 below.

(2) St. P. & P. p. 114.

compelling a purpose and a thesis too fully defined: the purpose being to shew modern Puritans that the doctrinal basis of their dissent had crumbled away, and the thesis being that Paul did not teach what Puritanism said he did. Arnold is therefore prevented from coming to his study with the plain question, 'what exactly did Paul teach?' and 'true criticism' is that much further away.

The critical process by which Arnold gives greater prominence to Paul's 'unconscious' ideas than to his conscious ones is of doubtful value, though it is clear that he was led to it by his notion of the 'buried life'.⁽¹⁾ To take his favourite instance, Paul's idea of resurrection,⁽²⁾ it seems certain that the Apostle's 'necrosis' - which Arnold rightly emphasises - was completely dependent on the physical and miraculous Resurrection of Our Lord. Whether Paul was right or wrong does not concern the literary critic; but it may be asked whether 'necrosis' as Paul teaches it is possible apart from belief in the Resurrection of Christ, except as a subjective emotion.

Doubtful, also, is Arnold's method when St. Paul appears to support the traditional doctrines. In discussing the thorny question of Paul's teaching on predestination,

(1) v. pp. 17-22 above.

(2) St. P. & P., pp. 81-85.

for example, he shews how the Apostle was motivated by awe:

'It is not of him that willeth or of him that
runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy'.⁽¹⁾

This, of course, is the master-thought of Calvinism; but Arnold cannot allow Paul's application of it any more than he can Augustine's or Calvin's. 'It may be regretted', he says,

'for the sake of the clear understanding of his
essential doctrine, that Paul did not stop
here'.⁽²⁾

This seems to introduce a misleading note into impartial criticism; and worse still is Arnold's sigh a little later, when discussing Paul's application: 'This is Calvinism, and St. Paul undoubtedly falls into it'.⁽³⁾ Arnold's meaning is clear: that this particular piece of teaching is not in tune with the rest; but such a dismissal tends to leave the reader unsatisfied. There is a feeling that when the words of Arnold's author suit his purpose, they may be quoted in full and dwelt upon, while, if they are not so convenient, they are dismissed as 'Calvinism', or 'Orientalising'. No-one who knows Arnold will attribute this to deliberate distortion; but at times he was carried

(1) Ibid, p. 96.

(2) Ibid, p. 97.

(3) Ibid, p. 99.

away by his desire to vindicate St. Paul, and with much true criticism he unconsciously mingled some false.

In spite of this, Arnold's reconstruction of St. Paul's thought remains a valuable contribution to literature, and deserves the closer consideration of literary scholars which has in recent years begun to be given to it. It is good to have a literary approach to the New Testament, and Arnold's critical tact enables him to clarify a neglected side of his subject. His understanding of the difficulties involved⁽¹⁾ prevent the over-confident approach which has been the practice of theologians; and his emphasis on Paul's desire for righteousness, and on his grasp of the implications of the Resurrection, make St. Paul and Protestantism an 'essay in criticism' of no mean order.

(1) ~~as above~~, pp. 74-76.

VI. MATTHEW ARNOLD'S APPROACH TO THEOLOGY

In considering Matthew Arnold's approach to theology, it is necessary to bear in mind a picture of religious thought during the 'sixties. In this chapter, therefore, an outline will be given of the controversy over Essays and Reviews and Bishop Colenso, of the scientific movement in relation to theology, and of the 'Bicentenary Controversy' of 1862. The influence of these events and movements of thought on Arnold will then be discussed.

(i) 'Essays and Reviews', Bishop Colenso, and the growth of scientific knowledge

A contemporary critic of Essays and Reviews likened it to a straw which, though insignificant in itself, serves to indicate the current of a stream;⁽¹⁾ and it is in this way that they will be considered here. The volume was published in February 1860, with an 'Advertisement' asserting that each writer was responsible for his own contribution only.⁽²⁾

(1) A.W. Hadden, Replies to 'Essays and Reviews' (1862) p. 347

(2) This Advertisement ran as follows:

'It will readily be understood that the Authors of the ensuing Essays are responsible for their respective Articles only. They have written in entire independence of each other, and without concert or comparison.

The volume, it is hoped, will be received as an attempt to illustrate the advantage derivable to the cause of religious and moral truth, from a free handling, in a becoming spirit, of subjects peculiarly liable to suffer by the repetition of conventional language, and from traditional methods of treatment.'

Six of the seven authors were in Anglican orders; (1) the writer of the first essay, 'The Education of the World', was Frederick Temple, headmaster of Rugby, and the last essay, 'On the Interpretation of Scripture', was by Benjamin Jowett, tutor of Balliol.

At first no great interest was aroused; but a denunciation in his charge by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, quickly brought the essays notoriety. In January 1861 Wilberforce again attacked them, this time in the Quarterly Review, (2) and his article may stand as an example of the kind of criticism encountered by the Essayists.

The bishop saw in the essays, beneath a specious attractiveness, latent infidelity and even atheism. He refused to allow the authors' plea of independence, though he challenged Temple to dissociate himself explicitly from his colleagues on account of the more edifying tone of his contribution. The great principle of the Essayists he says, is that 'Holy Scripture is like any other good book', this, to him, is the first step

(1) The layman was C.W. Goodwin (1817-78), the Egyptologist. He was also a Hebraist, botanist and geologist, and an Anglo-Saxon and German scholar. He had intended to take orders, but his views prevented him, and he resigned his fellowship at St. Catharine's Hall, Cambridge. His essay was on 'The Mosaic Cosmogony'.

(2) The Quarterly Review, Jan. 1861, pp. 248-305.

towards undermining the whole Christian faith.⁽¹⁾ The essays put forward the view that the Bible contains a residuum which may be regarded as a revelation, along with much poetic licence, myth, and legend; and that any individual man may determine for himself what to accept and what to reject. The authors are even more free with the doctrines of the Church; Wilberforce believed their opinions to be incompatible with their status in the Church of England, and he thinks that a clear statement of these opinions will reveal their speciousness. He continues with a detailed review of recent religious movements, and attempts to shew that the teaching of Essays and Reviews is false both to Anglican doctrine and to philosophy.

Then follows a defence of the conservative view of the Bible, with an analysis of the method of the German rationalists. There is danger in asking 'how?' of Scriptural inspiration, as of the Sacrament; these mysteries are a barrier against the proud spirit 'which evermore leads men on to seek to be as gods, knowing good and evil.'

Shortly after this attack, Arthur Stanley defended the essays

(1) An impression of the prevailing view of Scripture can be gained from the following words:-

'Every scientific statement is infallibly accurate, all its history and narrations of every kind are without any inaccuracy. The words and phrases have a grammatical and philological accuracy, such as is possessed by no human composition.'

This is quoted by Colenso from Baylee's Verbal Inspiration, a manual used at St. Aidan's College, where one twentieth part of the candidates for the Anglican ministry were trained.

v. Colenso, The Pentateuch...Critically Examined, Part II (1863), p. xii.

in the Edinburgh Review⁽¹⁾; but he denounced the wild tone of one of the authors, Rowland Williams.⁽²⁾ What the biographers of A.C. Tait call 'an agitation of the wildest sort'⁽³⁾ was by now aroused; and it was not so much what was said in the essays that caused alarm, as who said it.

In February 1861 the bishops met at Lambeth, and recorded their displeasure. Temple was pressed to repeat his desire to be judged by his own essay alone, but he refused. After debates in Convocation it was decided that there were sufficient grounds for a synodical judgment. Meanwhile, a prosecution in the Court of Arches had been set on foot against Rowland Williams and Bristow Wilson,⁽⁴⁾ and not until 1864 was it decided that the charges brought against them were not proved.

By 1864 there was 'widespread panic',⁽⁵⁾ A defensive alliance was formed between High Church and Low Church leaders, and a declaration that the Church of England teaches full inspiration and eternal punishment was sent to every clergyman in England and Ireland, to be signed 'for the love of God.'

(1) The Edinburgh Review, April 1861, pp. 461-500

(2) Rowland Williams (1817-70) He was ordained priest in 1843 and received the M.A. degree of Cambridge in 1844. His essay was on 'Bunsen's Biblical Researches'.

(3) R. Davidson & W. Benham, Life of A.C. Tait (1891) I.p.279

(4) Henry Bristow Wilson (1803-88) 1839-41 he was Rawlinsonian Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford. In 1841 he joined A. C. Tait in the 'protest of the four tutors' against Tract 90. His essay was on 'The National Church'.

(5) R. Davidson & W. Benham, Life of A.C. Tait (1891) I.p.316

11,000 signatures were obtained in a few weeks. Alone among the bishops, A.C. Tait, Bishop of London, seems to have stood for a calmer attitude; he considered that 'a very undesirable amount of excitement' had been raised, which would only lead to greater harm. In April 1864, however, there was a synodical condemnation of Essays and Reviews 'as containing teaching contrary to the doctrine received by the United Church of England and Ireland in common with the whole Catholic Church of Christ.'⁽¹⁾

Into the midst of this turmoil there burst the bombshell of Bishop Colenso's criticism of the Pentateuch. John William Colenso had been consecrated first Bishop of Natal in 1853, and was noted for his efficient missionary work; but his opinions gradually became alarming. In 1861 he published a Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which his Metropolitan, Bishop Gray, considered 'full of the most objectionable views'.⁽²⁾ In October 1862 the first volume of his commentary on the Pentateuch appeared. This work had grown out of questions put to him by his catechumens, and its main object was to prove largely by mathematical calculations, that much in the first five books of the Old Testament is unhistorical. It is starkly negative and deserves the ironical criticism accorded to it by Matthew Arnold;

(1) R. Davidson & W. Benham, Life of A.C. Tait (1891), I. p. 322

(2) Ibid, I. p. 333.

but perhaps the most startling thing about it was the bishop's declaration, in the Preface, that he could no longer use the Ordination Service, in which the literal truth of the entire Bible was assumed.⁽¹⁾ In the Preface to the second volume, which appeared in January 1863, Colenso's scruples were extended; he could now no longer use the Baptismal Service, because of its allusion to a Flood in which he did not believe.⁽²⁾

All this aroused the greater feeling because of the Essays and Reviews controversy which was its background. Wilberforce would have condemned the absent bishop, but Tait intervened. During the winter of 1862-3 Colenso and his Metropolitan were in England, and Gray tried to set in motion an action against Colenso. The bishops discussed the matter; they agreed to advise the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to withhold its grants from the diocese of Natal, and to prohibit Colenso from preaching in their own dioceses, Tait dissenting from the second resolution.

Colenso refused to resign. 'To resign my office,' he said, would be to admit that my conduct has been legally or morally wrong, which I am far from feeling.'⁽³⁾ In May 1863 the Convocation of Canterbury pronounced judgment on the errors in Colenso's book; but their attitude was more guarded than it had

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- (1) J.W. Colenso, The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically Examined, (1862 -), Part I, p. xii.
(2) Ibid, Part II, pp. xxi - xxii.
(3) R. Davidson & W. Benham, Life of A.C. Tait, (1891), I. p. 343

been towards Essays and Reviews.

Bishop Gray now attempted to have Colenso tried; but his proceedings were declared illegal. In 1865 Colenso resumed his missionary work in spite of opposition. Gray excommunicated him, leaving him to be regarded as 'a heathen man and a publican',⁽¹⁾ and prophesied that the Church of England would perish for not doing the same. After this the controversy entered upon a new phase, and Bishop Colenso ceased to be its central figure.

These attempts at radical criticism of the Bible probably troubled the Victorians because they knew the time was ripe for it. Knowledge of every kind was being sifted and tested, and it was not likely that theology would be an exception. Yet Protestantism, in dispensing with an infallible church, had for three hundred years rested on infallible Scriptures; if these were proved to be capable of error, what foundation was left on which to stand against the flood of scepticism?

The most spectacular results of the new knowledge lay in the field of physical science, especially of those sciences which directly touch life and thought. Astronomy is one of these, but its influence had been felt long before the Victorian era, and in the 'sixties most people accepted the fact that the earth is not the centre of the universe, without being troubled when they opened their Bibles. Geology and biology were the two branches

(1) R. Davidson & W. Benham, Life of A.C. Tait, (1891) I. p. 359

of physical science that disturbed nineteenth century religious thought. Indeed, their impact on the minds of ordinary people may have been more disturbing than that of the Reformation, for the latter did not affect the very foundations of Christianity as these sciences seemed to do.

The geologists were first in the field, and the immediate result of their work was to upset the traditional time-scale. This said that the world was created in 4004 B.C; but the geologists found that the earth's strata had been laid down millions of years before that. Sir Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830-33) maintained that the history of the earth must be deduced from observation by the use of reason; and in 1863, in his Antiquity of Man, Lyell touched the problem of organic origins. This difficulty could not be ignored by geology, for remains of ancient man had already been discovered.⁽¹⁾

Hugh Miller was another geologist of considerable influence. His works, The Old Red Sandstone (1841) and The Testimony of the Rocks (1857), popular rather than profound, simply supplied the raw material for science, but, like Lyell's work, they brought before Christians facts which had to be connected with the Bible narrative.

(1) In 1833 a human skull was found in the Meuse valley, embedded in remains of extinct animals. In 1857 the Neanderthal man was discovered, with stone tools evidently made by him.

Geology led on to biology. Robert Chamber's Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844) was a bold pre-Darwinian attempt to formulate a theory of evolution, and it was published anonymously for fear of an outcry. At first, the development of life from lower to higher forms seemed but one more illustration of progress; but when, in 1859, Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species (1) stated the case for man's evolution from lower animals, orthodox Christians of every description were alarmed.

Other studies were also having an effect on Victorian theology. Among these was the comparatively new study of philology. Scholars could see that Hebrew, instead of being the one primeval language, was simply one of a group of Semitic tongues, possibly less important than the Indoeuropean family; the story of the Tower of Babel began to look improbable. As knowledge of Hebrew grew more exact, it was harnessed to the study of the Old Testament. Philology, joining with palaeography, cast doubts on important passages, some of which now appeared to be copies of the original documents. Textual criticism found that some

(1) Baden Powell, Savilian Professor of Geometry at Oxford, in his 'Study of the Evidences of Christianity' in Essays and Reviews, wrote:-

"A work has now appeared by a naturalist of the most acknowledged authority, Mr. Darwin's masterly volume on The Origin of Species...which must soon bring about an entire revolt of opinion."

Essays and Reviews, (1860) p. 139

books of the Bible were compounds of two or more separate traditions. The authorship of the Pentateuch could no longer be confidently ascribed to Moses, nor the Psalms to David, nor the Proverbs to Solomon. This radical criticism of the Bible had been developed in Germany, whence its influence spread to England in the 1850's. The idea of translating Strauss's Leben Jesu into English having been abandoned by the first translator, George Eliot undertook the task, and published her version in 1846. She afterwards translated Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity, (1854) which was the only book ever published under her own name. These translations, 'straws in the flood' like Essays and Reviews, indicate the influence of the radical German critics on intelligent readers in England.

Another comparatively new study, archaeology, was at first welcomed as a means of throwing new light on the Bible; but it also raised awkward questions, and the reply that the archaeologists must be mistaken was no answer.

Finally, the study of anthropology began to combine the findings of both biology and archaeology. The existence of primitive peoples in the modern world seemed to support the theory of man's evolution; and anthropology also discovered that most races in their infancy tell stories closely akin to those in the Book of Genesis.

These were some of the studies and events which were influencing English religious thought when Matthew Arnold was at

the height of his career; but there is another side to the picture which must not be ignored - the effect of the Anglican Revival, or Oxford Movement, which, though it started as far back as 1833, was still exercising an influence in the 'sixties. In the concluding chapters of his study of the movement, Dean Church tells how the years 1844-1845 brought a crisis in religious opinion.⁽¹⁾ In the summer of 1844, W.G. Ward published his Ideal of a Christian Church, and in February of the following year he was degraded and his book condemned by the University. It seemed as if the Tractarians had received their death-blow. Oxford repudiated them, and the way was opened for a new school of liberal theologians in that University. The flow of converts to Rome began, and on 8th October 1845, Newman was received into that Church.

Newman's secession marks the end of the Oxford Movement, but not of the Anglo-Catholicism to which it gave birth. Its influence spread into the parishes of England, and was seen in a greater care for beauty in worship and for discipline in life, which affected other communions as well as the established Church. These were the outward signs of a doctrine of the Church as a mystical society whose continuity was guaranteed by a succession of bishops reaching back to the Apostles; and this idea of the

(1) R.W. Church, The Oxford Movement (1922) pp. 336-385.

Church was in strong contrast to the conception of the 'Establishment' as a department of the State. The influence of the Oxford Movement also brought before Englishmen the possibility of there being some good in the Roman and Orthodox expressions of Christianity. (1)

On the question of the inspiration of Scripture and its implications, the inheritors of the Oxford Movement were still, in the 'sixties and 'seventies, on the side of the conservative critics, though later some High Church leaders leaned towards a more liberal theology. (2)

(ii) The Bicentenary Controversy

The 'Bicentenary Controversy' of 1862 demands separate treatment, because it divided men according to their denominational loyalties, while the more strictly theological controversies cut across denominations.

In October 1861, the Congregational Union, meeting in Birmingham, decided that in the following year they would commemorate the bi-centenary of the ejection of two thousand clergy from their livings under the Act of Uniformity.

(1) The Rev. T.M. Parker, Librarian of Pusey House, Oxford, says of the Oxford Movement that it 'challenged the insular early Victorian assumption that there could be only one expression of Christianity intellectually and emotionally acceptable, at least to Englishmen - namely Protestantism in one of its forms. Mr. Parker adds that, until the end of the century, Roman Catholicism was, in England too weak and 'Foreign' to do this. Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians (1949) p. 123

It is interesting to note that, while Matthew Arnold patiently helped Anglo-Catholicism in this task, he had little sympathy with its idea of the Church; his view was frankly Erastian.

(2) As, for example, did the authors of Lux Mundi (1889).

A conference of Non-conformists was accordingly held in London, and plans were laid. The Evangelical Alliance, whose membership was drawn from the Church of England as well as from the Free Churches, would only promise support on condition that no controversial application should be made, but the non-conformists could not agree to this somewhat impossible stipulation.

In Birmingham the Church moved first; the Rev. Joseph Bardsley lectured in the Town Hall on the Church of England and the Liberation Society.⁽¹⁾ He was followed by the Rector of Birmingham, Dr. J.C. Miller, whose lecture was entitled, 'Churchmen and Dissenters: their Relations as affected by the proposed Bicentenary Commemoration.' His attitude was that of the Evangelical Alliance, and his lecture was afterwards printed.

Feeling now ran high on both sides; the local Bicentenary Committee approached the Rev. R.W. Dale,⁽²⁾ who agreed to lecture

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- (1) This was a Society whose aim was the disestablishment of the Church of England.
- (2) Robert William Dale (1829-95) Congregational minister and leader. In 1869 he was elected to the Chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and in 1872 he became editor of the Congregationalist. Throughout most of his career he was minister of the well-known church at Carr's Lane, Birmingham, and became a leader in civic affairs especially education. He was widely travelled and a competent scholar; he published several books, and received the LL.D. of Glasgow and the D.D. of Yale University. See his biography by his son: Sir A.W.W. Dale, the Life of R.W. Dale of Birmingham (1898). v. Appendix, p. 169.

on their behalf. He spoke in the Birmingham town hall, which according to his biographer,

"was thronged from end to end...men stood packed in a solid mass...the very embrasures in the windows of the deep gallery facing the platform were filled to overflowing; even then, many hundreds were turned away from the doors, so deeply had the controversy stirred and agitated the town.' (1)

The tone of the lecture⁽²⁾ was temperate but firm. After an historical survey, Dale dealt with the objection that modern Dissenters had no right to commemorate the Non-conformists of 1662. The 'two thousands', he said, were not commemorated on the ground of identical faith, but for these reasons: first, for their heroism;⁽³⁾ secondly because their action had helped to secure religious liberty; thirdly, because many Non-conformists congregations could trace their origin to them; and lastly because Nineteenth Century Dissenters did share many of the principles which led these men to separate from the Church of England.

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- (1) Sir A.W.W. Dale, The Life of R.W. Dale of Birmingham (1898) pp. 166-167
 - (2) R.W. Dale, Churchmen and Dissenters...A Lecture delivered in Birmingham, 1862
 - (3) This passage from Dale's lecture illustrates the feeling that had been aroused among Dissenters:-
'Two thousand were undaunted by the prospect of poverty and of persecution; two thousand thought it better to be deprived of the opportunity of preaching the Gospel at all, than to move a hair's breadth from the straight line of integrity in order to retain their pulpits.'
- Churchmen and Dissenters (1862) p. 11.

In contrast to these men, Dale pointed to the contemporary clergy of all parties, many of whom, he maintained, preached or put into practice, principles which their conscience could not approve. He defended the so-called 'political' Dissenters; and finally, he affirmed his desire for unity between all Churches, which ought not to be broken by frank criticism.

"Religious fellowship between Christians belonging to different Churches," he said, "is not merely a pleasant luxury, it is an important aid to religious knowledge and spiritual growth...it is a means of grace." (1)

The effect of this lecture was to spread the controversy over the whole country. The town hall meeting broke up in wild enthusiasm, and afterwards,

"in pamphlet form (the lecture) ran through edition after edition, and made its way into all parts of the country. The religious newspapers on all sides took note of it; friends and foes alike combined to make it known." (2)

In Birmingham the dispute continued, both between the Church and the Non-conformists, and within the Church itself, where the Anglo-Catholics used Dale's words against the Evangelicals, and these defended themselves with the same weapon. For many weeks the newspapers were crowded with letters reflecting every facet of the dispute. Sir Culling Eardley,

(1) Churchmen and Dissenters, (1862) p. 25

(2) A.W.W. Dale, Life of R.W. Dale, (1898) p. 175. The British Museum copy of Dale's lecture bears on its cover the words 'sixth thousand'.

Chairman of the Evangelical Alliance, spent several days trying to make terms between the antagonists, but without success. Dr. Miller had withdrawn from the presidency of the Bible Society, and Dale could not now be moved. He continued to take part in the Commemoration, lecturing at Chester, where Joseph Bardsley replied, and at Kidderminster, where his opponent was Dr. Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews. He also gave a course of lectures in London on 'Nonconformity in 1662 and 1862', and spoke at a mass meeting in St. James' Hall, as well as at many demonstrations in various parts of the country.

Considerable notice was taken of this controversy by the leading journals. The Edinburgh Review, in a survey of some Anglican publications on the subject,⁽¹⁾ mentioned the preparations that were being made by the Nonconformists. Its attitude was that of the Church - that the Nineteenth Century Nonconformists had little in common with the ejected clergy, and ought not to stir up dead disputes. "This retrospect", said the reviewer, "ought to be one of humiliation to all parties, rather than of self-gratulation to any."

The Quarterly Review published a hostile article⁽¹⁾ stating

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- (1) "Clerical Subscription", Edinburgh Review, April 1862 pp. 577-608.
(2) 'The Bicentenary', Quarterly Review, July-Oct. 1862, pp. 236-270.

that the Dissenters were working up the Commemoration in order to support their dying cause, and charging them with exaggeration of the truth. The Commemoration, according to this journal, was dangerous, for "it is distinctly announced as the commencement of a great political agitation."

Several months after the appearance of these articles, Fraser's Magazine printed one on 'The Future of the National Church', (1) which, though it does not mention the Bicentenary, was probably written with it in mind. The writer sounds a warning: "Let prudent Churchmen...before it is too late, enlarge the boundaries of the Church." This counsel is the opposite of that proffered by the Quarterly, which thought that, if Dissenters were admitted into the Church, unbelievers would follow, and the Church be destroyed.

Of the weeklies, the Spectator mentioned the Bicentenary in an article on 'Modern Puritanism', (2) a title foreshadowing Matthew Arnold's 'Puritanism and the Church of England' and 'Modern Dissent'. The Spectator states very fairly the Dissenter's case against the Episcopalians; of the Act of

(1) Fraser's Magazine, May 1863, pp. 549-562

(2) The Spectator, Oct. 25. 1862, pp. 1185-1187.

Uniformity it says "Never in English history has an indictment been more solemnly drawn up against liberty of conscience or more pitilessly carried out." Yet Puritanism is dying out, thinks the writer, and he gives Arnold's reason:

"Puritanism is inflexible and unchanging, or it is not...it rests upon one faculty of the soul." But

"Christianity was based on a living truth, and nothing less will preserve or restore it."

The 'Examiner (1) reported the celebration of the Bicentenary, on St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, 1862, and it also reviewed sympathetically the documents prepared by the Bicentenary Committee. In the opinion of this paper, more good than harm was likely to come of the celebration; but Nonconformists should remember that they themselves persecuted when they were in power.

The Times devoted a good deal of space to the matter, giving full reports of meetings and lectures. On the eve of the Bicentenary it printed a leading article (2) on the subject. The Nonconformists of the country, said this article, were

"invited to celebrate (the Bicentenary) with a hearty sympathy for the sufferings of the expelled clergy, a deep admiration for their heroism, and a qualified respect for their opinions and their cause."

(1) The Examiner, 30th Aug. 1862, p. 550

(2) The Times, 23rd Aug. 1862 p. 8.

The Times was in sympathy with the commemoration, and understood the Nonconformists' claim, that they were celebrating, not the views of the ejected, but their action.

On the following Monday, the Times reported⁽¹⁾ a service at the Weigh House Chapel in London, at which Dr. Binney, a Congregational leader, preached. After a summary of the sermon the reporter adds, "it was listened to throughout with very marked attention, and appeared to make a profound impression on the vast congregation."

The Guardian⁽²⁾ gave full and frequent reports of the many Bicentenary meetings,⁽³⁾ one of which has an interesting connection with Matthew Arnold. This was a meeting at which J.C. Ryle⁽⁴⁾ entreated the Evangelicals not to believe all the

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- (1) The Times, 25th Aug. 1862, p. 12.
(2) This paper would probably be seen by Arnold; cf. his remark in a letter: "(The Guardian) is a paper I like, and generally read." 19th May 1863, Letters I, p. 225
(3) Reports of meetings appeared on the following dates during 1862:- 26th Feb, 12th Mar., 26th Mar., 6th April, 14th May, 11th June, 18th June, 23rd July, 20th Aug.
(4) John Charles Ryle, a strong Evangelical, afterwards (1880) became the first Bishop of Liverpool. Arnold mentions him in St.P. and P., p. vii. v. Appendix, p. 171.

Dissenters were saying. In the course of the speech, Ryle applied to the Dissenters the fable of the fox who lost his tail, which Arnold uses in the same way. (1)

The whole controversy seems remote, if not ludicrous, to-day; but for the student of Matthew Arnold it retains an interest. There is nothing in his published letters for 1862 to prove that he noticed these events; but the press comments analysed above were deliberately chosen from periodicals that Arnold would be likely to see, and one may surmise that, having so detailed a knowledge of other religious disputes, he probably followed this one also.

The nearest thing we have to evidence is Arnold's reference to Dale, many years later, in his lecture, 'The Church of England', delivered to London Clergy, published in Macmillan's Magazine, in April 1876, and afterwards included in Last Essays on Church and Religion. In this lecture he calls Dale

(1) Culture and Anarchy, p. xxi.

Ryle said:

"I remember a fable that I have often laughed at about a fox who got into a trap and lost his tail, and when he came back to his comrades, he endeavoured to persuade them all to have their tails cut off in the same manner, saying how much better it looked....

The Dissenters having got outside the Church of England, would be very glad if the Evangelicals would come outside, too."

- The Guardian, 6th April, 1862, p. 362.

"a brilliant pugilist," and continues, "He has his arena down at Birmingham...and then from time to time he comes up to the metropolis, to London, and gives a public exhibition here of his skill. And a very powerful performance it often is." (1)

We cannot be sure that the Bicentenary lectures were in Arnold's mind when he said this, though it was the agitation of 1862 that launched Dale on his 'pugilistic' career, and it is possible that Arnold's interest in him began then.

More interesting for the present purpose is the possibility that these events were a factor in the building up of St. Paul and Protestantism. In this work, Arnold emphasises two questions that were closely involved in the controversy: the position of the Evangelical party in the Church of England, and the question of Church establishments.

Dale's charges against the conforming Evangelicals have already been noticed; (2) and it was one of the favourite arguments of the Nonconformists that the ejected clergy had been more honest and courageous than the evangelical clergy of their own day, who remained in their livings and adjusted their consciences to the Book of Common Prayer as well as they could. In the Preface to St. Paul and Protestantism Arnold

(1) Last Essays on Church and Religion, p. 185

(2) p. 98 above.

strongly defends the Evangelicals. He does not regard their party as one with a future, but he supports their action in staying within the establishment.

"The Evangelical party in the Church of England," he says, "we must always, certainly, have a disposition to treat with forbearance inasmuch as this party has so strongly loved what is indeed the most loveable of all things - religion." (1)

They have avoided becoming 'political Dissenters' on account of their faith: they have 'avoided that unblessed mixture of politics and religion by which both politics and religion are spoilt.' (2) They have not added to unsound opinions, the unsound action of separating; by staying within the national Church, they have maintained contact with the main current of national life, and retained the possibility of development. They have remained in communion with a Church which has not only an Evangelical, but a Catholic heritage, and so have avoided the narrowness of Nonconformity. The Evangelicals 'do not tie themselves tighter still to these erroneous notions by resolving to have no fellowship with the man of sin who holds different notions.' (3)

In this defence of the Evangelicals, Arnold aligns himself with the Rector of Birmingham (4) in his dislike of

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- (1) St. P. and P. p. vi.
(2) Ibid, p. vi.
(3) Ibid, p. vii.
(4) p. 96 above.

'political dissent'. If he saw Dale's lecture, its arguments had no more effect on him than some of the replies to St. Paul and Protestantism were to have; he seems to see no difficulty in the Evangelicals' subscription to the Anglican formularies, though he saw some of the difficulties of the Broad Churchmen. (1)

The whole question of separation from a Church was in Arnold's mind when he wrote St. Paul and Protestantism, for he held that separation for matters of opinion was morally indefensible, and that it had accentuated the errors of Puritanism. Religion aims at moral practice, edification; and the bandying about of opinions should be left to specialists. From this it followed that a man might believe very much as he liked, so long as he remained in communion with a national or 'historic' Church; the only possible ground for schism was a moral ground, a protest against grave practical abuses such as existed in the Catholic Church at the Reformation.

The direct occasion of Arnold's defence of the Evangelicals in St. Paul and Protestantism was the criticism of those who censured him for blaming the Dissenters, when the Anglican Evangelicals held exactly the same faith; the claim made here for the Bicentenary controversy is that it may have been an additional stimulus.

(1) v. discussion of his attitude to Essays and Reviews, p. 114 below.

(iii) Matthew Arnold's Approach to Religious Thought

Against this background, Arnold's own approach to theology, and the effect of these movements upon him, can now be considered. Although he was a clergyman's son and proud of the fact, his own attitude was always that of the layman,⁽¹⁾ and he never intended his so-called 'theological' works to be technical surveys of religious questions. His interest in theology sprang partly from his education and background, and partly from his conception of criticism as a free play of mind on all matters that concern humanity. Critics have often remarked upon the two opposing theological influences that impinged upon his upbringing.⁽²⁾ From Newman and the other leaders of the Oxford Movement he probably derived his love of the beauty in Catholicism, but he could not accept the Catholic doctrine,⁽³⁾ and his ideal Catholicism of the future was to be

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- (1) There is a suggestion in one of Arnold's letters that he did at one time seriously consider taking Orders. Writing to Frederick Temple in 1869 he says: "The times, in spite of all that people say, are good, and will be better. In the Seventeenth Century, I should certainly have taken Orders, and I think, if I were a young man, I should take them."
— E. G. Sandford (ed.), Memoirs of Frederick Temple, (1906), I. p. 278.
- (2) Lionel Trilling puts this well in his Matthew Arnold (1939) p. 36.
- (3) Cf. 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse', published in 1855—
'For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith and trimm'd its fire,
Show'd me the high white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire;
Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
What dost thou in this living tomb?
Forgive me, masters of the mind!
At whose behest I long ago
So much unlearnt, so much resign'd!
I come not here to be your foe.'

severely purged and renewed.

To Arnold, religion was 'morality touched by emotion,'⁽¹⁾ and the Church in each country 'a great national society for the promotion of...goodness.'⁽²⁾ He abhorred doctrinal rigidity, and here both Catholicism and Calvinism stood condemned, though the older system was redeemed by its beauty and its power of 'development'. He saw the works of Calvin as 'rigid, militant, menacing', as he describes them in his survey of the theological shelves in the British Museum.⁽³⁾ In the same essay, he says, "Calvin's name suggests Dr. Candlish."⁽⁴⁾ Casual remarks are sometimes better guides to a man's thought than carefully reasoned statements; for Arnold, the father of Reformed Christendom⁽⁵⁾ was inseparably linked with the leader of the Free Church of Scotland, a Church which even today remains

(1) Literature and Dogma, p. 16.

(2) He emphasises this in the lecture, 'The Church of England', Last Essays on Church and Religion, p. 152.

(3) 'Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment,' Essays in Criticism, p. 227.

(4) Ibid, p. 227. Robert Smith Candlish, 1806-73. Scottish preacher and theologian, who after the death of Dr. Chalmers (1847) became leader of the Free Church of Scotland. In 1862 he succeeded Dr. Cunningham as principal of New College, Edinburgh, the divinity hall of the Free Church.

(5) The word 'Reformed' is here used to denote those Protestant Churches which trace their descent to Geneva.

loyal to the sterner aspects of Puritanism. The word 'Calvinism' seems to have represented to Arnold all that was most harsh and narrow in Protestantism.

St. Paul and Protestantism contains Arnold's fullest interpretation of Calvinism. Before 1869 he had no occasion to deal with the subject in detail, and after 1870 he deals more tenderly with Protestants and, though he writes much on religion, seldom mentions Calvinism. His full treatment of it in St. Paul and Protestantism is therefore unique.

He believes that Calvinism has wrecked Paul's teaching, and finds that his own approach to religion is from the opposite pole to that of Calvin's disciples. Arnold was sure that religion should only state what can be verified by the 'scientific sense', the faculty which weighs statements by experience. He imagines 'the men of science' saying to the theologians, "We, too, would gladly say God, if only, the moment one says God, you would not pester one with your pretensions of knowing all about him."⁽¹⁾ It is useless to plead that theology is a science, for Arnold replies that it deals with what cannot be tested. "The only definition of God that he can allow is the 'stream of tendency by which all things strive to fulfil the law of their being;'⁽²⁾ this may be called 'the fountain

(1) St. Paul and Protestantism, pp. 11-12

(2) Ibid, p. 12 cf. Lit. and Dogma, p. 31

of all goodness', because all welfare consists in fulfilling the law of one's being.

With this definition Arnold contrasted 'the license of affirmation about God and his proceedings, in which the religious world indulge.'⁽¹⁾ Calvinism was the chief offender, 'talking about God just as if He were a man in the next street.'⁽²⁾ The scientific sense demands verification of the Calvinist's statements, and is referred to St. Paul. It is true, says Arnold, that Paul often talks like Calvinism; but 'this is only pushing the difficulty a stage further back'; the scientific sense treats Paul's assertions as being of no consequence when he 'falls into' Calvinism.⁽³⁾ Religion may speak poetically and figuratively, but if it is crystallised into formal theology its statements must stand the test of scientific verification. In this way Arnold tries to reconcile religion and 'science'.

Having made his own position clear, he gives an outline of Calvinistic doctrine, freely using and condensing the

(1) St. P. & P., p. 10.

(2) St. Paul and Protestantism, p. 10

(3) Ibid, p. 99. cf. p. 11.

Westminster Confession of 1647.⁽¹⁾ He extracts the outstanding characteristics of Calvin's theology: "There is very little of what God thinks and does."⁽²⁾ This, to him, is a fault, for we cannot know what God thinks and does, and we ought not to indulge in vain speculation.

Leaving Calvinism for a time, Arnold turns to the Arminian attempt to evade the doctrine of predestination. He sees that Wesleyan Methodism is Arminian, and recalls that John Wesley called his magazine the Arminian Magazine;⁽³⁾ he appreciates this attempt to avoid the rigid logic of Calvinism, but 'Calvinism is both theologically more coherent, and also shows a deeper sense of reality than Arminianism;⁽⁴⁾ and Arminianism falls into

(1) In ~~the~~ St. Paul and Protestantism, pp.10, 174 Arnold quotes a long passage, but gives no reference. This passage, beginning 'It is agreed between God and the Mediator, Jesus Christ...' provides Arnold with support for his criticism of the 'parties-contractors' attitude. Dr. A.Dakin, the author of Calvinism (London 1940 & 1949) writes:-

'Your quotation...hardly sounds like Calvin; it strikes me as a very crude statement.'

Neither the word 'bargain' nor the phrase 'Council of the Trinity' (St. Paul and Protestantism, p.15) occurs in the Westminster Confession.

cf. This comment by a theologian:-

"Contract passed in the Council of the Trinity" - This phrase is well known as one with which Matthew Arnold made frequent and sarcastic play. Its aptness cannot be disputed. But it is incorrect to represent it as naturally occurring in the Westminster Confession itself, as Arnold in one place says it does."

- Henry W. Clark, The Cross and the Eternal Order (1943) p. 225, n.1.

(2) St. Paul and Protestantism, p. 17

(3) Ibid, p. 21

(4) Ibid, p. 21

the same error of anthropomorphism. Like Calvinism, it also 'rests...on the assertion of certain minutely described proceedings on God's part, independent of us, our experience, and our will.'⁽¹⁾ So the Arminian, or - as he somewhat inaccurately calls it - the Methodist wing of Puritanism comes out of the examination no better than Calvinism, though it is upon Calvinism that Arnold fixes his severest strictures.

A theologian would certainly find much error in Arnold's criticism of Calvinism; but Arnold would probably have met any such accusations with a smile, answering that he was not a 'master in Israel', but 'a voice from the world of literature.'⁽²⁾

The Westminster Confession is not a document of great literary value; but, whether or not Arnold was fair to it, he misunderstood Calvinism. He asserts that this system regards God as a 'magnified and non-natural man' who redeems one man or nation rather than another 'at his mere good pleasure'. But the Westminster Confession, on which he draws for his account, does not say this; it says, 'according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will,' and 'according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will,' The words 'unsearchable' and 'secret' do not suggest a 'man in the next street', and to overlook their significance

(1) St. Paul and Protestantism, p. 27.

(2) Essays by Matthew Arnold, p. 444.

seems a fault in criticism which Arnold would not have condoned in others. It may be that he was irritated by the phrase 'good pleasure', and turned it, by a natural process of thought, into 'mere good pleasure'.

Between Arnold the humanist, and the Calvinist with his exalted conception of the Sovereignty of God, there is fixed an almost impassable gulf, and Arnold's readers today should not blame him for lack of insight. Writing in 1869, he was likely to see Calvin in the dress of the contemporary Protestant Dissenter, and to attribute to Calvin's system the narrowness and exaggeration around him. A theologian of our day who has contributed towards a revaluation of Calvinism writes:

"Calvin's great principle, "Scriptura duce et magistra", could degenerate into a narrow biblicism in the hands of later Calvinism,"(1) and Arnold realised that a deterioration had set in as early as the middle of the seventeenth century.(2) He did not take the next step and see that Victorian Puritanism, as represented by the Non-conformist Churches, had degenerated into something that the early reformers would hardly have recognised.

This was Arnold's view of Calvinism and of the Evangelicals; he shunned rigidity and exact definition in religion, and took as his guide to the Bible the old Jewish maxim, "The law speaks

(1) J.S. Whale, Christian Doctrine (Cambridge University Press, 1941), p. 16

(2) V. St. Paul and Protestantism, p. 18.

with the tongue of the children of men"(1). But what was his attitude to the liberal theologians whose difficulties have been outlined above?(2)

Here Arnold perplexed those who had come to regard him as a fellow liberal; he condemned Bishop Colenso's book, and held aloof from the authors of Essays and Reviews. In a letter to his mother, written in 1861, he shews some sympathy with their aims:

'Certainly the wine of the Essays is rather new and fermenting for the old bottles of Anglicanism. Still the tendency in England is so strong to admit novelties only through the channel of some old form, that perhaps it is in this way that religion in England is destined to renew itself, and the best of the Essayists may have some anticipation of this, and accept their seemingly false position with patience in this confidence.'"(3)

This fundamental sympathy was mingled with much caution; in another letter to his mother, written two years later, he mentions 'Colenso and Co's jejune and technical manner of dealing with Biblical controversy, and contrasts it with the method of Spinoza:

'Spinoza broaches his (heresy) in that edifying and pious spirit by which alone the treatment of such matters can be made fruitful, while Colenso and the English Essayists, from their narrowness and want of power, more than from any other cause, do not.' (4)

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- (1) St. Paul and Protestantism, p. 31
(2) pp. 84-90.
(3) 14th March, 1861. Letters, I. p. 152
(4) 19th Nov. 1862 Letters, I. p. 204

So Arnold finds 'narrowness' even in the Broad Churchmen. Yet he knows that not only the new wine, but also the infirm vessel of the Anglican formularies, is at fault; he writes that:

'if a clergyman does not feel (his restriction) now, he ought to feel it. The best of them (Jowett for example) obviously do feel it, and I am quite sure papa would have felt it had he been living now, and thirty years younger.' (1)

The liberal cause is, after all, his own; his father's influence, often hidden, is still potent. He adds the famous remark about the Church of England's seeing Christianity through the spectacles of 'a number of second - or third $\frac{2}{3}$ rate men' of Queen Elizabeth's day - evidence, incidentally, that he could criticise his own Church severely.

Arnold's first public attack on the methods of Colenso and Co.' appeared in Macmillan's Magazine (2) under the title, 'The Bishop and the Philosopher'. As in his private comments, Arnold turns to Spinoza for a contrast to Colenso; he defends the right of literary criticism to judge works like theirs. The bishop's book has been criticised from the theological point of view, and now Arnold intends to judge it as literature. Literary criticism, he says, tries books for their

(1) 17th Dec. 1862 Letters, I. p. 206

(2) Macmillan's Magazine, Jan. 1863, pp. 241-256

influence on culture generally; all books must undergo first a technical criticism according to their subject, and afterwards a literary criticism. This literary criticism demands of a book that it either edify the uninstructed, or inform the instructed; but Colenso's book does neither. It is not only useless, but harmful, for it attempts to enlighten the general religious world without attempting a previous 'softening and humanising'. Yet it does not inform the few for it only repeats what they already know. (1)

With his skill in catching public interest by reference to current literature, Arnold takes Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, then recently translated into English, as an example of a theological treatise which literary criticism approves. Spinoza aims at informing the 'instructed few', and he succeeds; he also takes pains to prevent those not likely to profit from his work from reading it; and though he is to address the instructed, he concentrates on what is positive and helpful in the Old Testament, not on its inaccuracies.

In this essay Arnold displays his own blend of conservative

(1) Arnold's remark that Colenso had made himself, "the laughing stock of the civilised world", though cruel, is not altogether unjustified; cf. the judgment of F.S. Taylor, Curator of the History of Science Museum, Oxford: "On the Continent there was a certain amusement at our spiritual struggles."
- Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians (1949) p. 194.

and liberal views, which baffled critics on both sides. First he says that theology requires only three speculative beliefs as essential to faith; these are Spinoza's articles: that God is; that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him; and that the proof of seeking Him is a good life. None of the errors of the Bible affects these, and no church should require more than these as its foundation. But then Arnold says that the Anglican clergy hold office only 'in virtue of their relinquishing in religious matters full liberty of speculation'; the liberal clergy are in danger of forgetting this. The formularies of the Church need revision; but until they are revised the clergy must be bound by them.

Returning to Spinoza, Arnold shews how, passing lightly over Biblical discrepancies, the philosopher answers the question, 'What then?' which Colenso fails to answer. Spinoza interests the higher culture of Europe, and satisfies literary criticism, which says, 'Edify the uninstructed or inform the instructed.' Colenso's book entirely fails to fulfil these conditions; and Essays and Reviews fails to fulfil them satisfactorily. If doubts are to be publicly discussed, it is good that Spinoza has been translated:

"Along with the weak trifling of the Bishop of Natal, let it be lawful to cast into the huge cauldron, out of which the new world is to be born, the strong thought of Spinoza."

A month after the publication of this article, Macmillan's again gave Arnold scope to develop his criticism of Colenso and the essayists, this time in a review,⁽¹⁾ of Arthur Stanley's 'Lectures on the Jewish Church'. He repeats the injunction to edify the uninstructed, or inform the instructed; Spinoza achieved the latter aim, Stanley the former;⁽²⁾ his lectures are addressed to a general audience, but they edify. He does not waste time discussing historical detail, but devotes himself to the moral lessons of the Old Testament.

In order to maintain his argument, Arnold has to distinguish between the intellectual and the religious life, between truths of science and truths of religion.⁽³⁾ Truth of science must be made to harmonise with truth of religion, or it will remain sterile:

"Applied as the laws of nature are applied in the Essays and Reviews, applied as arithmetical calculations are applied in the Bishop of Natal's work, truths of science, even supposing them to be such, lose their truth, and the utterer of them is not a 'fearless speaker of truth', but, at best a blunderer." (4)

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- (1) Macmillan's Magazine, Feb. 1863 pp. 327-336
(2) Benjamin Jowett had invited Stanley to contribute to Essays and Reviews, but Stanley had refused. v. L. Campbell & E. Abbott, Life of Benjamin Jowett (1897) I. p. 275
(3) cf. the letter to his sister, 3rd Feb. 1863 (Letters I. p.211) where he discusses and illustrates this problem.
(4) Essays by Matthew Arnold, p. 436

Literary criticism seeks unction⁽¹⁾ in a work addressed to the general public; lack of unction, not heretical opinions, is what draws Arnold's censure:

"I said that the Bishop of Natal's book was censurable, because, proclaiming what it did, it proclaimed no more; because it treated its subject unedifyingly." (2)

Arnold placed himself in a delicate and awkward position by these two essays, and it is not surprising that he was misunderstood. Superficially his attitude seemed to be, keep Biblical criticism for the intellectual aristocracy, and continue to feed the masses on the old myths.⁽³⁾ In reply to critics he maintained that by 'the instructed' he did not mean all the educated, still less all the upper classes, but rather that slender minority who have minds fitted for the handling of theological details. 'The many' meant everyone else, including the great majority of those who had received the education of the privileged. He never intended to advocate 'economy of truth'; he merely meant that for purposes of edification - which is the chief purpose of religion - a constructive rather than destructive attitude should be adopted.

(1) The word 'unction' has deteriorated in general use; but Arnold used it with the meaning given under 3 (b) in the New English Dictionary: - "Deep spiritual feeling, or the manifestation of this in language and utterance; manner suggesting religious earnestness or appreciation of spiritual things."

(2) Essays by Matthew Arnold (Oxford, 1922) p. 437

(3) F.D. Maurice wrote an article, 'Spinoza and Professor Arnold' (Spectator, 3rd Jan. 1863) in which he inferred that Arnold believed the intellectuals did not need religion.

It may be asked how far Arnold's own 'theological' books were an attempt to practise what he had preached; certainly St. Paul and Protestantism passes the test of edifying, however much its conclusions may startle. Ten years after his criticism of Colenso, in the preface to Literature and Dogma, he returns to this question, and it is clear that he understands the trend of theological thought:

"An inevitable revolution of which we all recognise the beginnings and signs, but which has already spread, perhaps, farther than most of us think, is befalling the religion in which we have been brought up."(1)

He still pleads for caution, even in the preface to a book in which he makes extreme statements about Christian doctrine and the Bible. 'There is incumbent on everyone,' he writes, 'the utmost duty of considerateness and caution.'(2) Truth, in religious matters, is not always to be proclaimed; he who thinks that his truth must be proclaimed, when, where, and to whom he will, is 'a man whose truth is half blunder, and wholly useless.' The aim is nothing less than 'to recast religion', but in such a way that it remains religion.

The connection between Arnold's position and that of the liberal theologians is obvious; but equally so is the difference in method. It may be that he learnt from the essayists' mistakes, and the bishop's folly, for he takes pains to be

(1) Literature and Dogma, p. xiii
(2) Ibid, p. xiii.

constructive. Where, in Essays and Reviews is there anything so illuminating as this sentence of Arnold's?;

"To understand that the language of the Bible is fluid, passing, and literary, not rigid, fixed and scientific, is the first step towards a right understanding of the Bible."(1)

Before we can take this step, we must have some understanding of human thought and its expressions, some 'flexibility of spirit'; that is, we must have culture, we must practise that free play of mind which is a part of true criticism. It is a difference of approach that separates Arnold from the essayists and Colenso. Verbal inspiration means no more to him than it does to Benjamin Jowett, but Arnold fills the vacuum left by the annihilation of old beliefs. He rarely makes a destructive statement without linking it to a constructive one. Jowett, and still more his colleagues, simply say that the New Testament is liable to error; but Arnold says:

"The more we convince ourselves of the liability of the New Testament writers to mistake, the more we really bring out the greatness and worth of the New Testament."(2)

The New Testament 'exists to reveal Jesus Christ, not to establish the immunity of its writers from error.'(3)

The publication of St. Paul and Protestantism and its

(1) Literature and Dogma, p. xx
(2) Ibid, p. 111
(3) Ibid, p. 111

successors drew not a fraction of the censure heaped upon Essays and Reviews; this fact cannot, indeed, be taken to prove the success of Arnold's 'unction'; probably it was largely due to the fact that he was a layman, not bound to subscribe to the articles of the Church. Yet it may be due in part to Arnold's more 'edifying' method. While the others criticise and depart, he stays to make the greatness of Jesus the centre; the readers are made to see Him as a mighty figure triumphing over faulty records. Judged as literature, Colenso's book and Essays and Reviews are completely dead, while Arnold's works are alive and likely to continue living, even though they, too, reflect the dilemma of a period when science seemed to be at enmity with religion in a way that it is not today.

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VII. THE CONTEMPORARY REACTION TO
'ST. PAUL AND PROTESTANTISM!'

The reception accorded to St. Paul and Protestantism supports its author's view that disinterested criticism is rare. Press comments began soon after the appearance of the first Cornhill essay, and reached a climax in 1870, when the three essays were published in book form. The reviews may be placed in three groups: first, hostile criticism; secondly, fairly impartial criticism; and thirdly, articles using Arnold's essays as a starting-point for the development of some particular thesis.

The most hostile reception, as might be expected, came from Nonconformist quarters. The more militant Dissenters, angry with Arnold on account of his ecclesiastical views, concentrated on the less important part of his work, the essay 'Puritanism and the Church of England'. Arnold himself noticed this, and wrote to his mother,

'My expostulation with the Dissenters has rather diverted attention from the main essays, but the two things, the position of the Dissenters and the right reading of St. Paul and the New Testament are closely connected'. (1)

(1) Nov. 8, 1870, Letters, II, p. 48.

It was, indeed, inevitable that the Nonconformists should lose their sense of proportion over the new essays; had not Culture and Anarchy prepared the ground for a fight? As E. E. Kellest says,

'Of all distinguished Victorians, the most utterly detested by Nonconformists was Matthew Arnold.... As is the way of humanity, they read what made their blood boil. Literature and Dogma, Culture and Anarchy, Friendship's Garland, they studied with fascinated fury'. (1)

Whether or not Arnold saw Dissent 'as it really was', he adopted an unfortunate tone in dealing with it, and his cruel humour, noticed by some reviewers of Culture and Anarchy, was not softened in the succeeding work. It must have been a trial of charity for a body of Christians to be excluded from the best education their country afforded, and then told that they lacked culture, sweetness, and light.

Foremost among the attackers of the new essays was the Nonconformist. This weekly paper, founded in April

(1) E. E. Kellest, As I Remember (London, 1936), p. 217.

1841 by Edward Miall,⁽¹⁾ carried the motto which troubled Arnold. 'The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant Religion'.⁽²⁾

The reviews in the Nonconformist began in October 1869.⁽³⁾ Arnold had as yet scarcely touched the subject of Dissent, and Miall considers the essay (one of the most able and interesting articles of the month.' He is pleased with Arnold's mention of the doctrinal agreement prevailing among Congregationalists in spite of their non-use of written creeds.

A month later another review appeared,⁽⁴⁾ dealing with the second essay. This review is an example of 'journalese', or what Arnold called the 'Corinthian style'. It is far

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- (1) Edward Miall (1809-1880) was one of the most vigorous Nonconformist leaders of his day; his chief aim was the disestablishment of the Church of England, and all the power of his newspaper, the Nonconformist, was thrown into the campaign. It is almost certain that the articles discussed here were written by him, in view of this statement in his biography: 'In the first five volumes of the Nonconformist, (Miall's) pen alone, with very occasional exceptions, furnished the editorial matter of the paper'. - Arthur Miall, Life of Edward Miall (1884), p. 107. v. Appendix, p. 171.
The first five volumes of the Nonconformist reach to 1870. In discussing these editorials, therefore, Miall's name has been used without further reservations.
- (2) St. P. & P., p. xvi.
(3) The Nonconformist, Oct. 6, 1869, pp. 961-2.
(4) Ibid, Nov. 10, 1869, p. 1081.

more hostile than the first, with an undercurrent of self-satisfaction as irritating as Arnold's sarcasm. Arnold's attack on Puritanism, says Miall, might have injured if his power had equalled his will, but as it is, the Puritan position has not been weakened. Puritanism is

'the most active and intelligent part of Christendom, and that which has certainly done most for human liberty and progress'.

Miall does not neglect Arnold's interpretation of St. Paul, and here, freed from personal prejudice, he writes as a competent theologian. No agreement is possible between him and Arnold on the subject of Biblical criticism, for if - as Miall believes - the New Testament 'be a divine revelation', Arnold's mode of treatment is unacceptable, 'altogether out of place'.

The first edition of St. Paul and Protestantism evoked a further review, and a bitter one, in this paper.⁽¹⁾ Why, asks Miall, does not Arnold include the Anglican Evangelicals in his condemnation?

'(Their) solifidianism appears to be condoned because of their remaining in the Church'.

But the Dissenters will never

'crucify conscience, subscribe creeds we do not believe, submit to episcopal ordination as a mere State ceremony, and take our places in the ranks of the national hierarchy'.

(1) Ibid, June 8, 1870, pp. 549-550.

The English Independent, another weekly paper under Miall's control and similar in content to the Nonconformist,⁽¹⁾ also attacked St. Paul and Protestantism. The first review⁽²⁾ gives a somewhat twisted summary of Arnold's first essay, and is written in a tone of ridicule which degenerates into banter. Arnold, having entered the lists,

'will proceed to attack the most famous champions of Christendom, driving the lance of Anselm into shivers, splitting the helmet of Augustine laying the burly Luther flat rolling Calvin in the dust, routing the Jansenists, and finally, having dispersed the whole Puritan horde, waiting meekly to receive the crown of sweetness and light, amid the grateful plaudits of English Christians'.

Such Corinthian writing, though possibly amusing, is powerless against an opponent who is a master of criticism.

The second review in this paper⁽³⁾ deals with Arnold's interpretation of St. Paul. The doctrine of salvation by faith, says the writer, is held by 'all the churches of Christendom, with one insignificant exception'.⁽⁴⁾ This insignificant body, one must suppose, is the Church of Rome.

A fortnight later, this paper printed an anonymous letter in defence of Arnold.⁽⁵⁾ 'It seemed to me', writes

(1) The two papers were amalgamated in 1879.
(2) The English Independent, Oct. 7, 1869, pp. 978-980.
(3) Ibid, Nov. 4, 1869, p. 1088-1090.
(4) cf. St. P. & P., p.124, where Arnold echoes this.
(5) The English Independent, Nov, 18, 1869, p. 1143.

the correspondent,

'and I am not alone in the thought, that you are not quite just to the new expounder of St. Paul'.

The letter goes on to mention 'an undertone of anti-Arnoldism' which is as unfair as Arnold's own anti-Puritanism. Unfortunately this rebuke only irritates Miall; he mentioned it in the next issue,⁽¹⁾ and denies that he has misrepresented Arnold. He then returns to Arnold's treatment of St. Paul, and again the cleavage between two different schools of Biblical criticism appears. The great question is, had Paul a divine commission to speak with authority? Orthodoxy, both Anglican and Dissenting, said he had; then,

'when agreed as to his meaning, after any amount of criticism and scientific investigation, we are bound to accept his doctrine.'

The English Independent continues with a review of 'Puritanism and the Church of England'.⁽²⁾ Arnold's purpose, says Miall, seems to be two-fold: to shew that belief cannot be the basis of ecclesiastical unity, and to shew that errors can be tolerated in a church, so long as it is 'national and historic'. Arnold's picture of the Church struggling with Puritanism for her openness of mind

(1) Ibid, Nov. 25, 1869, pp. 1161-1162.

(2) Ibid, Feb. 17, 1870, pp. 149-150.

is a strange new reading of history; Arnold should remember that the doctrines he attacks are embodied in the services of the Church. But as long as the Authorised Version of the Bible is in people's hands, both St. Paul's doctrines and Puritanism are safe.

The final volley from this quarter came after the first edition, in an article entitled 'Mr. Matthew Arnold's Preface'.⁽¹⁾ Arnold, says this article, has a horror of Calvinism and Dissent, and thinks the 'zeit-geist' will soon have melted both; but it may melt established churches:

'Twenty years hence! There will be no political Dissenters in Mr. Arnold's sense then; for the political establishment will have vanished'.

Dissenters inherit their 'watchful jealousy' from persecuted ancestors; and, though Arnold might cut at many of their acknowledged weak points, they object to being whittled away.

'We leave Mr. Arnold to his elegant conceits', the article concludes, 'and since the need of the time and of the world is preachers with more individuality, not less, with stronger faith, with intenser convictions, with a more consuming zeal, we rejoice that Puritanism and Dissent still live to furnish such men, and pray that they may flourish still'.

Calmer, and so more effective, attacks came from the

(1) Ibid, May 13, 1870, pp. 445-6. In the third and all subsequent editions of St. P. & P. this Preface is called 'Modern Dissent'.

Christian World, another organ of Congregationalism with a wide circulation outside that denomination. This paper, after summarising Arnold's argument,⁽¹⁾ has made a great fuss about nothing. Calvinism need not be alarmed; Paul's declaration was that all things have been determined by the will of God. This assertion of the apostle's is not necessarily fatalism, and Arnold has left it unscathed. The review shews no appreciation of the good in Arnold's work, and it is not followed up by any further comment.

The weekly paper of the Baptists, the Freeman, also joined battle. A short notice⁽²⁾ of the first Cornhill essay sums up Arnold's position, and adds, temperately enough, 'We certainly think he misrepresents the Puritans'. A longer review followed,⁽³⁾ concentrating on St. Paul. The reviewer, at one with Arnold in desiring to understand Paul, is utterly at variance with him concerning the apostle's divine inspiration. Arnold's abandonment of the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement cuts away the cause of Paul's attachment to Christ, and leads him hopelessly astray. The review is continued in the following issue,⁽⁴⁾ when it deals

(1) The Christian World, Nov. 5, 1869, pp. 712-713.

(2) The Freeman, Oct. 15, 1869, pp. 830-831.

(3) Ibid, Nov. 12, 1869, pp. 901-903.

(4) Ibid, Nov. 19, 1869, pp. 922-933.

with Arnold's interpretation of the Sacrifice of Christ. In 1870 the essay on Puritanism is reviewed under the title, 'A New Invitation to Conform'.⁽¹⁾ The Puritans, contrary to Arnold's belief, separated because the Church was too narrow for them. 'This new step towards comprehension', continues the review, 'convinces us more than ever that the greatest obstacle to the unity of Christendom is the system of political establishments'.

The Freeman, more moderate than the Congregational weeklies, emphasises the Baptists' proud claim to pre-Reformation origin.

'Our protest against State interference with religion', it says, 'is as old as that interference itself. "What has the Emperor to do with the Church?" cried the Baptists of the Fourth Century'.

Heavier artillery than the weeklies could muster was brought into the field by the British Quarterly Review.⁽²⁾ In 1870 this journal reviewed Culture and Anarchy and St. Paul and Protestantism together, in an article which might

(1) Ibid, Feb. 4, 1870, p. 101-102.

(2) The British Quarterly Review, July, 1870, pp. 170-199. This Review is the 'quarterly organ of Puritanism' mentioned by Arnold in the second essay (St. P. & P., p. 102). The article she quotes is 'The Hundredth Number of the British Quarterly Review: A Retrospect and a Prospect', which appeared on Oct. 1, 1869, pp. 520-539. Arnold's quotation appears on p. 533.

stand as an example of strong intellect mastered by still stronger passion. The writer starts well enough; Arnold's exposition of St. Paul's teaching and rebuke to Puritanism are not to be regretted, he says; fresh thought must come. But this tone is not maintained. Some good points are made, (1) but exaggerated language destroys their effect, as when the reviewer writes of

'the short period of the Commonwealth - which, although not without its excesses, we must ever exult in as the glorious uprising of an outraged people against ecclesiastical and civil tyranny'.

There is no sign of an understanding of Arnold's basic ideas; for example, the reviewer, anxious to prove that the Dissenters are not 'an obstacle to progress and true civilisation', lists

'their evangelising work among the poor in rural villages, and large towns, their Sunday and Ragged Schools, their Home and Foreign Missions, and their educational efforts'.

But one who has read Culture and Anarchy should know that Arnold would regard all this simply as 'machinery', the pursuit of which, as an end in itself, was the bane of Hebraism.

(1) For example, that Arnold is apt to brand as 'Philistine' any intellectual life not bearing the stamp of the ancient Universities; and that he is almost blind to the faults of his own Church.

This writer is on stronger ground in charging Arnold with indifference to virtue when it appeared in a form that seemed to him vulgar:

'We much fear', he says, 'that the first church of the Galilean fishermen, as contrasted with the cultured "sweetness and light" of the Sadducees and Pharisees, would, because of its vulgarity, have found but little favour in the eyes of Mr. Arnold'.

If the Free Churches seem vulgar, it is because they allow the poorest and simplest Christians to have a part in their government. Arnold should reconsider his conception of vulgarity.

A sequel⁽¹⁾ to this review surveys Arnold's interpretation of St. Paul, and is therefore less heated. Arnold thinks he has said enough in pointing out Paul's passion for righteousness; but this is a half-truth, and he misses the core of the religious life, which is union with God. Paul was certainly against Antinomianism, but it does not follow that the doctrines of Calvinism are false. Again, on what authority does Arnold take a merely ethical sentence from Paul,⁽²⁾ and affirm that it is the exclusive foundation of the Christian Church? He strains

(1) British Quarterly Review, Oct. 1870, pp. 386-419.

(2) 'Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity'. (II Timothy 2¹⁹). v. St. P. & P., p.vii.

this text because he believes in a Church that is co-extensive with the nation; this forces him to sacrifice doctrine to inclusiveness.

There remain two other of these hostile reviews which seem worth mentioning; first, a short comment in the Fortnightly Review.⁽¹⁾ St. Paul and Protestantism, says this notice, is 'a valuable contribution to a Rose-Matilda⁽²⁾ school of theology', and, 'if truth were a thing of minor consequence, and justice an open question, Mr. Arnold's essay and its preface would be extremely important.'

Secondly, there is an article, signed H. Lawrenny, which appeared in the Academy.⁽³⁾ It suggests, as did the Athenaeum,⁽⁴⁾ that the essay 'Puritanism and the Church of England' should follow, instead of preceding, the essays on St. Paul.⁽⁵⁾ Arnold's appeal to the Dissenters, it

(1) Fortnightly Review, Jan.-June, 1870, p. 752.

(2) Apparently a reference to William Gifford's Baviad and Maeviad.

(3) The Academy, Sat., Aug. 13, 1870, p. 282. This journal describes itself as 'A Monthly Record of Literature, Learning, Science, and Art', and carries the motto, 'Inter Silvas Academi Quaerere Verum'. It has signed articles, often by outstanding men; for example, in the number dated June 11, 1870, Mark Pattison reviews J. H. Newman's Grammar of Assent.

(4) v. p. 147 below.

(5) In the first edition (1870), the essay 'Puritanism and the Church of England' stands first, and is referred to on the title-page as an 'introduction'. In the second and all subsequent editions, it is placed last.

continues, misses its aim because of his inability to see 'that there are two ways of disagreeing, and that one is as final as the other'. The review, continues with a spirited defence of Puritanism, both seventeenth Century and modern, and with an attack on Arnold's controversial methods.

Among the more considered articles is one in the North British Review⁽¹⁾ which, though obviously from an unfriendly source, is less partial than those written with a sense of personal pique; it is a true review, attempting to see clearly. Typical of the journal in which it appears, it seems to have been written by a logician.⁽²⁾ Its comments are shrewd, but almost entirely negative; the writer accepts Arnold's view of Dissent, but says in effect, 'neither Rome nor Canterbury is any better'.

Two groups of Nonconformists at this period lay outside the usual categories, for they achieved a higher standard of life and culture. These were the Society of Friends and the Unitarians; and both contributed fairly disinterested reviews of St. Paul and Protestantism. The Friends' Quarterly Examiner, a journal of high intellectual quality,

(1) North British Review, July, 1870, pp. 602-604.

(2) cf. the review of C. & A. in this journal (v. p. 63 above).

published an article, 'Paul and Christianity',⁽¹⁾ signed by Edward Pearson. He says that the attention of the 'intellectuo-religious' world has been drawn to Arnold's book, and there is much in it that is beautiful. He strongly sympathises with the main line of the argument, though he feels bound

'to reassert, on behalf of the Apostle, those utterances of his which we think are most prominent with him, and to object to the introduction into his words of meanings which cannot be proved to have been within his intention'.

The Unitarian periodicals received Arnold's essays calmly, having no fear of his view of Calvinism. The Inquirer⁽²⁾ deals kindly with his criticism of St. Paul⁽³⁾. It fears the value of his articles may be overlooked; 'they are in truth elaborate and masterly, (and) cast in a literary and critical mould; and they have rendered an important service to Christian truth and progress.

The Inquirer reviewed 'Puritanism and the Church of England' later;⁽⁴⁾ Arnold's 'noble vindication of St. Paul'

(1) Friends' Quarterly Examiner, Vol. 5, 1871, pp. 31-44.

(2) This 'weekly journal of Religion, Politics and Literature' had been edited by R. H. Hutton, v. Elliott Binns, Religion in the Victorian Era. (1936), p. 331.

(3) The Inquirer, Sat., Nov. 27, 1869, pp. 761-2.

(4) Ibid, June 4, 1870, pp. 354-5.

is praised, and his view of orthodox Dissent is in part accepted. A fortnight later⁽¹⁾ another review appeared, this time defending the Dissenters. Arnold, it says, must be reminded that 'the true schismatics are they who compel separation'. Unlike Carlyle or Kingsley, he seems unable to appreciate the nobler qualities of Puritanism, and he does not understand the power of religious ideas. Comprehension is now impossible; the only solution is equality, which means disestablishment. There is truth in much that Arnold says, and Unitarians also deplore the narrow rigidity of some Dissenters; but he must see the other side and drop 'these ingenious nicknames and acrid sneers'.

In October of the same year⁽²⁾ this journal mentions with approval the 'vigorous paper in reply to Mr. Matthew Arnold's notorious philippic against the Nonconformists', by Leslie Stephen, in Fraser's Magazine,⁽³⁾ and a week later⁽⁴⁾ it praises the articles in the British Quarterly Review.⁽⁵⁾ Arnold must by now regret his 'dilletante onslaught on Nonconformists' and 'heartily repent his scornful philippic

(1) Ibid, June 18, 1870, pp. 393-4.

(2) The Inquirer, Oct. 8, 1870, pp. 656.

(3) v. below, p. 148.

(4) The Inquirer, Oct. 15, 1870, pp. 670.

(5) v. above, p. 131.

against a class of men so well able to defend themselves'. Finally, the Inquirer, in an article entitled 'Dissenters and Disestablishment',⁽¹⁾ disclaims

'that watchful jealousy and suspicion of the Church of England which Mr. Matthew Arnold, with some rhetorical exaggeration, describes as the normal attitude of the Dissenting sects'.

Another Unitarian journal, the Theological Review, published a solid and thoughtful article by Kegan Paul, 'Arnold and St. Paul'.⁽²⁾ Paul approves of Arnold's method, but does not accept all his conclusions. He would like to see the new book reprinted, expanded by a paraphrase of the harder passages in the Epistles, and 'docked of personalities' which, though amusing in a magazine article, blemish a permanent work.⁽³⁾ His agreement with the 'whole drift and spirit' of Arnold's book counterbalances minor disagreements.

Outside the denominational press, three of the more thoughtful reviews attempted a constructive defence of Nonconformity. The best is probably that by R. W. Dale,⁽⁴⁾ 'Mr. Matthew Arnold and the Nonconformists', in the

(1) The Inquirer, April 22, 1871, pp. 245-6.

(2) The Theological Review, Oct. 1871, pp. 521. ff.

(3) Time has vindicated this judgement, and all Kegan Paul's suggestions are full of a constructive spirit rare in reviewers.

(4) v. above, p. 96, note 2.

Contemporary Review.⁽¹⁾ Dale cuts at once to the root of the controversy; Arnold, he says, misses the true 'idea' of Puritanism, which is not a set of doctrines, but a sense of the value of personal religion and of unfettered access to God. Arnold also errs in his reading of history, for the Puritans did not seek to bind the Church to extreme Calvinism. They left it because they could not remain in it honestly, repeating words or performing ceremonies which they believed to be superstitious. Dale explains Congregational church order, shewing why the Puritans rejected the liturgy of the Church of England. The whole article is as good a defence as could have been made, and displays more critical ability than any review so far mentioned, except those in the Friends' Quarterly Examiner and the Theological Review. The conclusion is characteristic: 'Let us part good friends.

Mr. Arnold bears a name which Nonconformists regard with affection and veneration.⁽²⁾ From his own writings we have received intellectual stimulus and delight, for which we are grateful We can but bid each other God-speed'.

In the following year the Contemporary Review published

(1) The Contemporary Review, July 1870, pp. 540-571.

(2) cf. E.E.Kellett:

'What made things worse was that he was a degenerate son; for Dr. Arnold of Rugby was the admired of all Dissenters'.

- As I remember (1936), P. 217.

another defence of Puritanism, 'The English Church and Dissenters',⁽¹⁾ by the Nonconformist leader, J. Baldwin Brown.⁽²⁾ This is not a direct review of St. Paul and Protestantism, and dwells much on Culture and Anarchy, but the later book was probably the occasion of its publication. Brown argues that the Roman and Anglican Churches represent attempts to support Christian truth by political action, and that this support, useful in the Middle Ages and at the time of the Reformation, should now be withdrawn before it endangers Christianity. Arnold, the 'franc tireur of the Establishment', is one of the champions of comprehension who dread excess and fanaticism - the 'apostles of culture',⁽³⁾ who think that contact with a wider world would benefit the Nonconformists.

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- (1) The Contemporary Review, Jan, 1871, pp. 298-320.
- (2) James Baldwin Brown (1820-1884), a Nonconformist minister. He studied at London University, and afterwards read Law at the Inner Temple; he then received his theological training and entered the Congregational ministry. In 1878 he was elected to the Chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He was distinguished for the breadth of his theological views, and gained a reputation as a preacher far beyond his own denomination; he was also a voluminous writer, and his sermons and writings were marked by literary finish. v. Dictionary of National Biography, and also The Times, 24 June, 1884; the Christian World, 26 June, 1884; the Brixton Free Press, 28 June, 1884.
- (3) This phrase is reminiscent of the title of an article on Arnold by Henry Sidgwick, 'The Prophet of Culture'. This appeared in Macmillan's Magazine in August, 1867. It is reprinted in Sidgwick's Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses (1904), pp. 40-58.

'We agree with them profoundly. But we pray them, instead of lifting up their bars to let us into their pale, to cast down their walls, and let us out together into the wider world'.

Arnold criticises Nonconformists and their sphere; he should recall the disabilities under which they have suffered.

The third article to be considered in this group is 'A Puritan's Apology', by A. S. Wilkins,⁽¹⁾ published in Macmillan's Magazine.⁽²⁾ The Guardian called this 'a weak and thin paper',⁽³⁾ and contrasted it with 'the really powerful, not unworthy of its distinguished author, Dr. Dale'. This article is an 'apology', in every sense of that word; anxious to retain 'sweetness', Wilkins makes but a feeble search for 'light'. He does attempt, however, to shew that

'it is impossible for honest men to accept formularies which they believe lead to errors against which they feel most bound to protest'.

The essay does not dig deep. No attempt is made to examine Arnold's interpretation of history; it is assumed that he

(1) A.S.Wilkins (1843-1905), a classical scholar and a Congregationalist. He took the London M.A. degree, and became Professor of Latin at Owen's College, Manchester. Later he was examiner in Classics at London University, and received honorary degrees from the Universities of St. Andrews, Cambridge, and Dublin. He was a very successful popular lecturer on literary subjects. (v. Dictionary of National Biography).

(2) Macmillan's Magazine, Aug. 1870, pp. 265-270.

(3) The Guardian, Nov. 9, 1870, p. 1325.

is right in saying that the Puritans separated because the Church was not narrow enough for their taste.

In Anglican circles little notice was taken of St. Paul and Protestantism. This is at first surprising, considering the storm that broke over Essays and Reviews and Bishop Colenso's book, which contained criticism less radical than Arnold's work. It may be due in part to Arnold's 'unction', his constructive approach, and his literary treatment of his theme; but more probably he escaped through being a layman. The scandal of Essays and Reviews was that six of its seven authors were in orders,⁽¹⁾ and Colenso was a bishop; but Matthew Arnold was a poet and literary critic, and therefore, within reason, he could write what he pleased.

The High Church Guardian published a fairly impartial review of the first edition.⁽²⁾ The writer considers points of agreement between his view and Arnold's; he is doubtful about Arnold's classification of Paul's ideas as 'primary' and 'secondary', and he dislikes his method of Biblical criticism generally. Arnold's view of Scripture inspiration, to this orthodox Victorian, is 'one which we are compelled entirely to repudiate'. He warns Nonconformist critics not

(1) v. p. 85 above.

(2) The Guardian, Nov. 9, 1870, p. 1325.

to concentrate so much on Arnold's attitude to themselves, that they miss his heresy. Arnold's remarks on Dissent are often 'unjust or unreasonably severe', but what will the future say of Dissenters who neglect his attack on revealed religion and concentrate on his subsidiary attack?

A good review appeared in the Spectator.⁽¹⁾ It shews an understanding of Arnold's thought, and maintains an even tone. Arnold's Preface is 'instructive, but patronising', and he has misinterpreted Winterbotham's remark on the Dissenters' 'watchful jealousy'. He would be better employed in improving his own Church than in interfering with the Nonconformists. At the root of his misconception of Nonconformity lies his belief that separation on dogmatic grounds is indefensible.

The rest of this article is devoted to Arnold's interpretation of Pauline teaching. St. Paul certainly desired to shew how the practice of righteousness could cease to be a burden and become a joy; but has Arnold rightly understood the motive power? He thinks the agent of the transformation is the soul itself - a psychological, not a theological explanation. St. Paul's 'faith' is

(1) The Spectator, May 21, 1870, pp. 642. ff. As with the Spectator's reviews of C. & A., it is impossible to be certain of authorship, but it seems probable that this was by Hutton. See above, p. 60, note 1.

receptiveness, willingness to receive the divine power.

If science cannot admit this view,

'we should be disposed to reply that it would not be the first time that science has prided itself on its nescience'.

Again the Contemporary Review comes into the field, this time with a signed article by R. H. Hutton, 'Matthew Arnold on St. Paul and his Creed'.⁽¹⁾ Hutton says that Arnold 'touches nothing that he does not elucidate'; but he often elucidates his theme at the expense of some greater issue. An example is his contention that the Puritans of the Seventeenth Century misunderstood Paul's teaching even more grievously than the Church did. That is true; but the homily he builds upon it, on the theme that the only justifiable schisms are made on moral grounds, is not true.⁽²⁾ Hutton outlines several replies which a Dissenter might make to this. Is it fair to accuse Dissent of captious separating, from a point of view that makes all creeds look captious?

Turning to the Pauline interpretation, Hutton defends orthodoxy. There is no evidence in Paul's writings to prove that he ascribed his conversion to subjective emotion. The

(1) The Contemporary Review, June, 1870, p. 329-341.

(2) The same point is made in the Spectator article.

renovation of the affections was caused by something deeper. Arnold's view would reverse Paul's argument, making the apostle say, 'If then ye seek the things which are above,.... ye are risen with Christ'. With Paul, the resurrection of the believer comes first, and 'seeking the things which are above' afterwards.. Christ's love, not our love for Christ, 'constraineth us'. If, with Arnold, we believe that science can neither deny nor affirm Paul's central assumptions, science will push its claims further, and we shall be left with a misty idea of God, with Arnold's 'stream of tendency', access to which seems impossible. 'I, for my part', says Hutton,

'see as plainly as Mr. Arnold the difficulties which attend our apprehension of God, creation, will, evil, immortality, and I am by no means willing to deny that those difficulties may be lessened as time goes on But they become indefinitely greater when I pare down the meaning of Revelation by a liberal use of the zeit-geist to which Mr. Arnold trusts so much'.

In a letter of 1870 Arnold writes, 'My book is doing very well, Reeve tells me he intends to have it reviewed in a sense of string approval in the Edinburgh'.⁽¹⁾ This review appeared in the following year, and was entitled 'Arnold on Puritanism and National Churches'.⁽²⁾ The

(1) Letters, I, p. 40.

(2) The Edinburgh Review, April, 1871, pp. 399-425.

reviewer is 'in broad agreement' with Arnold, whose argument against Dissent he summarises. Dale's defence, he admits, is very consistent, and largely overturns the basis of Arnold's argument; but Dale and his fellow-Nonconformists forget the very different circumstances of the Church in New Testament times. This review supplements Arnold's attempt to persuade the Puritans, but it maintains an objective attitude on doubtful points, and the writer says that 'in their survey of the past relations between the Dissenters and the Establishment, Mr. Arnold's critics have got the better of him'.

With these more temperate reviews may be classed two short notices, the first of which appeared in the Sunday Times⁽¹⁾ as part of a regular feature, 'Our Church'. This article is signed 'Episcopos', and is cast in the form of a letter. St. Paul and Protestantism is not mentioned, but the writer condemns 'the sneers which very worldly-wise people are in the habit of bestowing upon what is vulgar in Dissent'; this is 'not only ungenerous and uncalled-for, but infamously unjust'. The Dissenters have been excluded

(1) The Sunday Times, Nov. 7, 1869, p. 7. It has proved impossible to trace the author of this short article, as files have not been kept. In the same issue of the Sunday Times, the two essays on St. Paul are noticed as 'clever and readable, though below their author's mark'.

from the great Universities of England for centuries, and it is time they were admitted. This defence apparently written with Arnold's essays in mind, is interesting in that it appears in a newspaper not likely to have any prejudice in favour of Dissent.

The other notice, in the Athenaeum,⁽¹⁾ deserves attention because it declines to enter into theological argument, and treats Arnold's essays as literature. His style, it says, is 'as brilliant as ever', and his description of the degenerate forms of Hebraism and Hellenism⁽²⁾ is particularly good. It suggests that the essays should be read in reverse order, 'Puritanism and the Church of England' being placed after the essays on St. Paul to mark its subsidiary status.⁽³⁾

The two last reviews to be considered both use Arnold's essays as the starting-point for the discussion of a related topic, and they are written from opposite points of view. The first is 'Mr. Matthew Arnold and the Church of England',

(1) The Athenaeum, Jan.-June, 1870, p. 669. Marked 'Jackson' in file.

(2) St. P. & P., pp. xxxv-xxxix.

(3) The same suggestion was made by the Academy (pp. 134 above), and Arnold made this change in the second and all subsequent editions.

by Leslie Stephen, published in Fraser's Magazine.⁽¹⁾

Though he has no tenderness for Nonconformity, Stephen develops a strong case against established churches. The theme of his essay is his own reaction to Arnold's opinion

'that all who believe in right reason, Culture, and enlightenment, should endeavour to maintain the Church of England as a national institution'.

He summarises Arnold's view of Dissent, and points out that, if speculative truth be no ground for schism, the Church of England is no more justified than the Dissenters. It is easy, he says, to see how a Dissenter could defend his separation; separation is imperative when the only alternative is to break the moral law.⁽²⁾ Stephen has little to say in favour of any church; 'When we have all got rid of our nonsense', he says, 'there will be no difficulty about securing unity'. The real difficulty is that

'all the religion of the present day is more or less incapable of standing the tests by which all opinions have in these days to be tested'.

There are only two possible solutions: either the differences must be fought out on equal terms, or everyone

(1) Fraser's Magazine, Oct. 1870, pp. 414-431. This article is praised by the Inquirer; v. p. 137 above.

(2) Arnold would of course have agreed, but he would have differed from Stephen in defining this breaking of the moral law.

must be driven into one fold, and opinions be left 'to shake down as they may'. Arnold would take the second course, Stephen the first.

In strong contrast to Stephen's essay is that on 'The Church and Nonconformity', which appeared in the Quarterly Review⁽¹⁾ under a notice of the first edition of St. Paul and Protestantism. This reviewer eloquently defends the Church of England. There are, he says, two rival systems in English Christianity - the Church and Nonconformity. They have much in common, but the one is public, the other private, and this is the great difference. Matthew Arnold has assumed the role of cross-examiner, and has opposed the Nonconformist policy of 'levelling down'. Wto things, however, are liable to blind Arnold's readers - especially Nonconformists - to the good in his work. These are his manner, and his attitude to doctrine. In his sketch of Calvinism and Arminianism Arnold disregards the truths beneath the repulsive statements he quotes.

This, however, says the reviewer, does not affect the question of Nonconformity and its relation to the Church. The question at issue is not, which is more true? but, can one body rightfully deny to another the establishment which

(1) The Quarterly Review, Jan-April, 1871, pp. 432-461.

they themselves cannot have? Disestablishment would give no added freedom to Dissent, but it would rob many of a heritage,

'a historic, inherited Church not set on foot and self-constituted by the piety and reforming zeal of certain private Christians but one which "could not help existing" in which a man found himself, just as he found himself in the State'.

Arnold brings out 'with great clearness and power' the Church's preference for 'uncontroversial religion' and for the broader tolerance in theology. The Nonconformists, unlike the Evangelicals within the Church, have separated for their doctrines, and, founded on a theory now fading, they are bound to suffer.

Then follow several paragraphs dealing with special aspects and difficulties of the Church of England, and the writer concludes with some remarks on the Dissenters' 'watchful jealousy'. The prospect for religion would be brighter if they learned from Arnold's criticism. The whole article, though blind, perhaps, to Arnold's lapses, is well-written and persuasive.

Though it is impossible to consider every press comment on St. Paul and Protestantism the aim in this chapter has been to give a representative selection, concentrating on those

VIII. CONCLUSION: AFTER 'ST. PAUL AND PROTESTANTISM'

A study of Matthew Arnold's letters for the months following the publication of St. Paul and Protestantism reveals one outstanding fact: his rising confidence. This seems strange at first, for the press reception of the essays afforded few, if any, expressions of unqualified approval, and much adverse criticism. But this problem is resolved when one remembers that Arnold was an educator; his object was not to win the approval of his readers so much as to stir up their complacency, and, in Socratic fashion, to make them re-consider their 'stock notions and habits'. This he felt he had achieved, and he was confident that a way was opening for the acceptance of his teaching.

His confidence was not due to ignorance; it is clear that he read both public and private criticisms with interest, and he did not neglect the Nonconformist papers.⁽¹⁾ Writing to his mother after the appearance of the first two Cornhill essays, he says that the time is ripe for the acceptance of new truth in theology, and continues,

'It is not worth while to send you the lucubrations I receive, but the newspapers I forward (the organs of the Independents and Baptists) will show you how entirely I have reached the special Puritan class I meant to reach. Whether I have rendered St. Paul's ideas with perfect correctness or not, there is no doubt that the confidence with which these people regarded their conventional rendering of them was quite baseless, made them narrow and intolerant and preventing all progress.'⁽²⁾

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- (1) The letters provide evidence that Arnold read the Nonconformist several years before this time; for example, he mentioned it in letters dated 16th Feb. 1864 (Letters, I.p.263) and 21st Jan. 1865 (Letters, I.p.286)
- (2) Nov.13, 1869. Letters II, pp.23-4

His view of the Church has not been altered by Nonconformist criticism, for he tells his mother that he intends to write a further essay

'to show how the Church, though holding certain doctrines in common with Puritanism, has gained by not pinning itself to these doctrines and nothing else, but by resting on Catholic antiquity, historic Christianity, development, and so on, which open to it an escape from all single doctrines as they are outgrown.'⁽¹⁾

On December 5th of the same year Arnold writes that 'nearly all the new periodicals have something about' him, and add that 'the better Dissenters' are 'aimiable' towards him. He thinks that the notice taken by the Press shews 'how much more what (he) write(s) is coming into vogue.'⁽²⁾ To Lady de Rothschild he writes,

'I should like to have shewn you some of the Nonconformist speeches at the recent May meetings,⁽³⁾ full of comments on my preface to St. Paul & Protestantism. We shall see great changes in the Dissenters before very long.'⁽⁴⁾

Throughout 1870 his assurance grows. He writes again to his mother,

'You will see the enclosed from Church⁽⁵⁾; his sense of the importance of the distinction I have drawn out between Hellenism and Hebraism shows his width of mind. It is a distinction on which more and more will turn, and on dealing wisely with it everything depends.'

(1) Ibid, II, p.24

(2) Dec. 5, 1869. Ibid II. p.27

(3) These have unfortunately proved so far impossible to trace

(4) June 1, 1870. Letters II. pp.34-5

(5) R.W.Church, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's

(6) June 7, 1870. Letters II. p.37

Again, in the same month, he writes, 'My book is doing very well,'⁽¹⁾ and in another letter written at this time he mentions the variety of the comments on his last Cornhill article, 'Puritanism and the Church of England', adding

'The question is, is the view there propounded true? I believe it is, and that it is important because it places our use of the Bible and our employment of its language on a basis indestructibly solid.'⁽²⁾

In this letter, also, he says that

'the Bishop of Manchester ⁽³⁾ told me (my view) had been startlingly new to him, but the more he thought of it the more he thought it was true.'⁽⁴⁾

In November, 1870, he writes,

'My expostulation with the Dissenters has rather diverted attention from the main essays, but the two things, the position of the Dissenters and the right reading of St. Paul and the New Testament, are closely connected; and I am convinced the general line I have taken as to the latter has a lucidity and inevitableness about it which will make it more and more prevail.'⁽⁵⁾

His reaction to adverse criticism is made clear by a letter in which he discusses the attitude of the Guardian;

'My book and mode of criticism they could not like', he says, 'and no church can like it for it is a mode of treatment which inevitably brings to light the

(1) Ibid, II. p.40

(2) Ibid, II. p.44

(3) James Fraser (1818-85) became bishop of Manchester in March 1870; he had been offered the bishopric on account of his authority on educational questions.

(4) Letters II. p.44

(5) Ibid, II. p.48

unnaturalness and artificiality of the mode they have themselves adopted, and which must be fatal to their mode in the end.'(1)

There is no hesitation here; Arnold is certain that he is right, and is unscathed by unfavourable criticism from the religious world; he believes that

'more than half the world can never frankly accept the person of whom they learn, but kick at the same time as they learn.'(2)

Arnold did not ignore criticism; he would elucidate, but not retract. The last Cornhill essay "Puritanism and the Church of England" was written, as he tells us in the Preface to St. Paul and Protestantism, 'to clear away offence or mis understanding which had arisen out of' the two earlier articles.(3) His object in this last essay was to shew 'that the aim at setting forth certain Protestant doctrines....is the main title on which the Puritan churches rest their right of existing.'(4) When the essay was published with the other two as a volume Arnold added, 'A little consideration will show quite clearly the difference in this respect between the historic churches and the churches of separatists.'(5) He follows this assertion with an historical outline, claiming that the Puritans separated because

(1) Nov.15, 1870. Ibid, II. pp.51-2

(2) March 12, 1871, Ibid, II. p.59

(3) St.P. & P. p.v

(4) Ibid, p.122

(5) Ibid, p.123

the Church was 'not predestinarian or solifidian enough for them'⁽¹⁾ and that the idea of a 'free church' came later.

In the course of this essay, Arnold answers several objections made by reviewers of the essays on St. Paul; the favourite objection was that the Puritans were not the only ones to hold these doctrines. But, says Arnold, the Puritans' churches are founded on these doctrines alone, and have not the correcting influence of Catholic tradition. He protests that he is no enemy of the Puritans; 'Our one feeling when we regard them, is a feeling, not of ill-will, but of regret at waste of power; our one desire is a desire of comprehension.'⁽²⁾ To Arnold, the Church is founded on the exhortation, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;'⁽³⁾ disagreement about doctrines and ceremonies need therefore be no barrier to comprehension. 'The Church exists, not for the sake of opinions, but for the sake of moral practice.'⁽⁴⁾ The only justifiable separation is 'separation on plain points of morals,'⁽⁵⁾ on which ground the Church of England broke from the Church of Rome.

Arnold quotes 'A nonconformist newspaper'⁽⁶⁾ which had attacked the Church of England as 'a Church that does not know her

(1) Ibid, p.123

(2) Ibid, p.125. cf C & A pp. xiii, xxxviii-xl

(3) II Tim. 2. 19

(4) St.P. & P. p.165

(5) Ibid, p.167

(6) Ibid, p.170

own mind', but this, to him, is her greatest praise. Again, he twice quotes from an address by G. W. Conder⁽¹⁾, which was reported in the Lancashire Congregational Calendar for 1869-70. In conclusion, he repeats his wish for union, but says that it can never be on the basis of 'Scriptural Protestantism', if he can convince the Puritans of this, he will not have written in vain.⁽²⁾

For the first edition of St. Paul and Protestantism in 1870, Arnold wrote a Preface, later entitled 'Modern Dissent', which aimed at clearing up 'one or two points on which a word of explanation may be useful.' ^{the} The general objection raised by critics has been 'that the scheme of doctrine criticised by me is common to both Puritanism and the Church of England.'⁽⁴⁾ and he hopes that the answer given already in 'Puritanism and the Church of England' will suffice. But a further defence of the Evangelical party in the Church of England seems necessary; and the mainstay of his defence is that 'the Evangelicals have not added to the first error of holding this unsound body of doctrines, the second error of separating for them.'⁽⁵⁾

(1) Rev. George William Conder, Congregational minister, and author of 2 pamphlets on the Bicentenary Controversy, Arnold gives a full reference to the address he quotes St.P. & P pp.172, 177

(2) St.P. & P. p.182

(3) Ibid, p.v

(4) Ibid, p.v.

(5) Ibid, p.vi

A further criticism dealt with in the Preface is that he is presumptuous in attempting a reinterpretation of St. Paul. Aiming a neat shaft at the Puritans, Arnold replies that he is not, after all, setting up a new church! The 'Zeit Geist', and not himself, is responsible for the new approach to the Bible.

The rest of the Preface is concerned with the various Non-conformist arguments against their being comprehended in the State Church; and the impression left upon the reader is that Arnold, while holding tenaciously to his previous position, is ready to do all he can to clarify what he has already said.

The two works which immediately followed St. Paul and Protestantism - Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible - provide further evidence of Arnold's confidence in the reception of his teaching; but St. Paul and Protestantism has no 'organic' connection with these, as it has with Culture and Anarchy. Arnold does not speak of them as 'going further in the same road,'⁽¹⁾ and does not seem to regard them as in any sense a completion of their predecessor. They are an adventure in a new line, in spite of the fact that all three books deal with religion. The reader no longer meets Hebraism and Hellenism, Philistines, and the relationship between Church and Dissent; and probably Arnold thought he had said enough on these matters.⁽²⁾

(1) St.P. & P. p.7

(2) In the Preface to Literature and Dogma he says: 'To be convinced, therefore, that our current theology is false, is not necessarily a reason for publishing that conviction.... To judge rightly the time and its conditions is the great thing; there is a time, as the Preacher says, to speak, and a time to keep silence.' Literature and Dogma, p.xiv

Yet he continued to criticise the Bible and the religion that was founded on it. The aim of Literature and Dogma was 'to re-assure those who feel attachment to Christianity, to the Bible, but who recognise the growing discredit befalling miracles and the supernatural.'⁽¹⁾ To Arnold the Bible is supremely valuable, but it cannot continue to exist on the old axiomatic basis, for 'an inevitable revolution.....is befalling the religion in which we have been brought up.'⁽²⁾ A verifiable basis must be found for the Bible and for Christianity; indeed, Arnold says - and ~~did~~ he realise what startling words he was using? - 'the thing is, to recast religion.'⁽³⁾ He glances back at Culture and Anarchy; the aim of putting the right construction on the Bible cannot be reached without the aid of culture: 'this aim we cannot seek without coming in sight of another aim too, which we have often and often pointed out, and tried to recommend: Culture, the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit.'⁽⁴⁾

The man who knows only his Bible will almost certainly misunderstand it, and use it as a talisman. 'Culture is indispensably necessary, ^{and} a culture is reading; but reading with a purpose to guide it, and with system.'⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) Ibid, p.vii
(2) Ibid, p.xiii
(3) Ibid, p.xviii
(4) Ibid, p.xix
(5) Ibid, p.xxi

So Arnold comes to the title of his book, Literature and Dogma - the explicit treatment of two spheres which he has already, in St. Paul and Protestantism, implicitly connected.

God and the Bible, published two years later in 1875, is a sequel to Literature and Dogma, called forth by the need to explain certain points more fully, just as 'Puritanism and the Church of England' was evoked by objections to the essays on St. Paul. Arnold repeats the aim of both works in the Preface to God and the Bible:

'To show the truth and necessity of Christianity, and its charm for the heart, mind and imagination of man, even though the preternatural, which is now its popular sanction, should have to be given up. To show this, is the end for which both books were written.'⁽¹⁾

He is still concerned with commending a 'reasonable' Christianity to his countrymen; for 'men cannot do without it;....they cannot do with it as it is.'⁽²⁾ The Protestant nations are beginning to find that their Sixteenth Century theology is at fault⁽³⁾ - and so we are brought back again to Culture. Arnold is confident that his attempt to connect Christianity and Culture will be recognised as 'an attempt conservative, and an attempt religious.'⁽⁴⁾

(1) God and the Bible, p.vii
(2) Ibid, p.viii
(3) Ibid, p.xx
(4) Ibid, p.xxx

The last twelve years of Matthew Arnold's life covered a period of great activity, especially in essays,⁽¹⁾ to which he returned after the three longer works. This period is significant, both for Arnold's return to literature in the narrower sense, and for his continuing interest in all the subjects of his earlier writings. That he still had poetry in him is proved by the elegy on the death of his friend Arthur Stanley, Dean of St. Paul's.⁽²⁾ 'Westminster Abbey', a poem of the same quality as 'Thyrsis', and on a religious subject, is a fitting close to Arnold's poetical career.⁽³⁾ The dominant idea, that of light, is characteristic; Stanley is 'a child of light', and Arnold mourns his passing at a time when his influence was needed:

(1) The chief works of these years were:

Last Essays on Church and Religion, written 1876, published 1877
Mixed Essays, most of them written 1877-8, published 1879
Irish Essays, written 1879-81 " 1882
Discourses in America, revised 1882-4, " 1885
Essays in Criticism, Series II, written 1880-88, " 1888

As the interest of this late work, and the questions raised by it, cannot be adequately treated in a concluding chapter, and as the connection of St. Paul and Protestantism with the later work is less significant than its connection with the earlier work (see pp. 52, 71), only outstanding points in these essays will be dealt with here.

(2) The funeral was on 25th July, 1881. "Westminster Abbey", Arnold's elegy, was first published in the Nineteenth Century for Jan. 1882.

(3) The other late poems are of little importance, though the animal poems, 'Geist's Grave', 'Poor Matthias' and 'Kaiser Dead' are among the most charming of his lighter verses.

'A child of light appear'd;
Hither he came, late-born and long-desired,
And to men's hearts this ancient place endear'd;
What, is the happy glow so soon expired?' (1)

The poem also illustrates Arnold's use of Christian legend, and in this it may be compared with 'St. Brandan' (2) which had been published in Fraser's Magazine twenty-one years earlier.

Arnold's return to 'pure' literature is further illustrated by the second series of Essays in Criticism, published in the year of his death, of these 'The Study of Poetry' (3) is one of his most important critical essays. In it he develops that theory of poetry which links it closely with religion: 'The strongest part of our religion to-day', he says, 'is its unconscious poetry'. (4) The link with Literature and Dogma is plain. In this essay, also, Arnold puts forward his much-criticised subjective test for the highest poetry, (5) and develops that doctrine of the 'grand style' which appears in the Homer lectures. (6) The other essays in this volume are also on literary subjects; the essay on Shelley has received sufficient censure, and critics have not always remembered that it was intended only as a preliminary sketch, to be followed by a fuller essay on Shelley's work. One interesting echo of

(1) ll. 7-10 Poems. p.450

(2) Poems, pp.380-2

(3) Published in 1880 as the General Introduction 'to The English Poets, edited by T. H. Ward

(4) Ess. Crit. ii, p.2

(5) Ibid, p.19

(6) v. pp 29 above.

some words in St. Paul and Protestantism may be noticed in passing: the notorious comment on Shelley, 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain',⁽¹⁾ is matched by the remarks on John Wesley in the earlier book: 'Yet this amiable and gracious spirit, but intellectually slight and shallow compared to St. Paul, beat his wings in vain.'⁽²⁾ Finally, the short address on Milton, which Arnold delivered almost on the eve of his death,⁽²⁾ contains a passage which, perhaps more than anything else, shews that his thought is a unity:

'As the Greek poet long ago said, excellence dwells among rocks hardly accessible, and a man must almost wear his heart out before he can reach her. Whoever talks of excellence as common and abundant, is on the way to lose all right standard of excellence. And when the right standard of excellence is lost, it is not likely that much which is excellent will be produced.'⁽⁴⁾

This was at the close of Arnold's life; he had already published the four volumes of essays in which his criticism plays upon all the topics that interested him - education, social and political questions, and religion, as well as literature in the usual sense. The title, Last Essays on Church and Religion, speaks for itself; it closed, said Arnold in the Preface, 'the

(1) Ess. Crit. II. p.252

(2) St. P. & P. p.74

(3) 13th of February, 1888, in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster

(4) Ess. Crit II, p.58

series of my attempts to deal directly with questions concerning religion and the Church,'⁽¹⁾ though he adds, 'Indirectly such questions must often, in all serious literary work, present themselves.'⁽²⁾ In this volume Arnold continues his criticism of the 'traditional religion' which he believed would if clung to, mean 'the extinction of Christianity,'⁽³⁾ and he takes a final aim at Dissent in 'The Church of England,'⁽⁴⁾ and in 'A Last Word on the Burials Bill'.

This volume contains one essay in which may be traced a close connection with St. Paul and Protestantism; this is "A Psychological Parallel", and in it Arnold returns to certain critics of his view of St. Paul, who had charged him with making that apostle appear an 'imbecile and credulous enthusiast,'⁽⁵⁾ because 'undoubtedly he believed.....in the miracle of physical resurrection,'⁽⁶⁾ which Arnold rejected. As a result, presumably, of long thought.⁽⁷⁾ Arnold decides to answer this 'by putting a parallel case.'⁽⁸⁾ This is the case of the Seventeenth

(1) Last Ess. p.v.

(2) Ibid, p.v

(3) Ibid, p.xiii

(4) This essay contains (Ibid, pp.185-6) the remarks on R.W. Dale quoted above. pp.103-4.

(5) Ibid, p.3

(6) Ibid, p.3

(7) The date of the essay is 1876

(8) Last Ess. p.4

Century Cambridge Platonist, John Smith, the author of what Arnold calls a 'great discourse'⁽¹⁾ On the Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion. This man, in common with most of his contemporaries, believed in witchcraft; and, says Arnold,

'That a man shares an error of the minds around him and of the times in which he lives, proves nothing against his being a man of veracity, judgment and mental power.'⁽²⁾

As with the Cambridge Platonists, so with St. Paul. The remainder of the essay has a stronger affinity with Literature and Dogma than with St. Paul and Protestantism; but the 'second thoughts' on a criticism of the earlier work illustrate the continuity of Arnold's thought.

Mixed Essays, published in 1879 and representing, in the main, work of 1877-8, illustrates Arnold's interest in politics and in social questions,⁽³⁾ and also contains more strictly literary essays⁽⁴⁾; the essay on Falkland is a plea for that consideration of both sides of a question, which Culture and the habit of true criticism bring. Irish Essays and Others published in 1882 and written for the most part during 1879-81,

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- (1) Ibid, p.22
(2) Ibid, p.28
(3) 'Democracy'; 'Equality'; 'Irish Catholicism and British Liberalism'; 'Porro Unum Est Necessarium'. It is of course impossible to place any essay of Arnold's in a rigid category, and this is only attempted here with full realisation of its danger; for example, the essay on 'Irish Catholicism' contains much religious criticism which cannot be called 'political', cf. Arnold's praise of Catholicism, p.121
(4) 'A Guide to English Literature' (a review of Stopford Brooke's A Primer of English Literature); 'A French Critic on Milton', 'A French Critic on Goethe', and 'George Sand'

contains a **higher** proportion of 'political',⁽¹⁾ and 'social',⁽²⁾ essays, but also two more literary ones.⁽³⁾ Arnold included in this volume the Prefaces to the Poems of 1853 and 1854, thus marking his sense of their value as a part of his work, even though he adds, "Exactly as they stand, I should not have written them now."⁽⁴⁾

There remain the Discourses in America, published in 1885 after a chequered history and much revision. Like the other volumes, this represents Arnold's interest in many aspects of life and thought. His social criticism predominates in 'Numbers; or The Majority and the Remnant', literary criticism the essay on Emerson. The other essay, 'Literature and Science', is perhaps the most interesting, for it shews Arnold defending the place of humanities in education, and regarding himself, as he always did, as 'a man of letters':

'A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural science as means of education'.⁽⁵⁾

But he promises not to be ambitious; his aim is simply to recommend literature, in the widest sense of the term, as essential

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- (1) 'The Incompatibles'; 'An Unregarded Irish Grievance' (this deals with the need for better secondary education in Ireland); 'The Future of Liberalism'
(2) 'Ecce, Convertimur ad Gentes'
(3) 'A Speech at Eton'; 'The French Play in London'; 'Copyright'.
(4) Irish Essays, p.v
(5) Discourses in America, p.81

to true education; we must, indeed, acquaint ourselves with the results of physical science, and Arnold understands its importance; 'Yet the majority of men will always require humane letters, and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty'. (1)

Thus Matthew Arnold rounded off his literary career in a way suited to the whole, with no one interest dominating the rest, yet with all subjects treated from the standpoint of the man of letters, the truly 'cultured' man. Culture, in the sense of wide reading intelligently digested and applied, is the key to his achievement; apart from his poetry, he is remembered chiefly as a critic, and criticism he regarded as the means by which culture is achieved. If, therefore, Essays in Criticism and Culture and Anarchy are the central peaks in the range of his work, St. Paul and Protestantism may claim a place not far below them, for it represents his first attempt to apply his own principles to the literary criticism of the Bible. It can hardly be too often repeated that this Biblical criticism was literary, not technical or primarily theological, and that its end was culture, or the clearing of a way for culture to work.

(1) Ibid, p.137.

It is submitted that this is the true significance of St. Paul and Protestantism when it is seen in the context of Arnold's whole achievement.

St. Paul and Protestantism

V. St. Paul & E. 7-1-7

Arnold's reference is to "The Protestant State of England", Essex's Magazine, Nov. 1830, pp. 737-74.

Appendix Notes on some Persons, Periodicals etc. Referred to in "St. Paul and Protestantism"

Cattle Rev. William

- v. C & A (1869) 7.79; (1935 ed. Dover Wilson),
p.227. p.91 n.
St. P & P (1870 second edition) p.xxxvi

Wesleyan minister, took chair for Mr. Murphy at his lectures against the Roman Catholic Church, in Birmingham, 1867-8. In second edition of C & A his name is omitted. He contributed a sermon on 'Justification by Faith' to Sermons by Wesleyan Methodist Ministers (1850 etc) vol.II.

Conder Rev. George William

- v. St. P. & P pp. xv-xvi, 172

Congregational minister at Leeds in 1862. Author of two pamphlets bearing on the Bicentenary of 1862:-

<u>The Exodus of 1662</u>	1882
<u>Intelligent and True Worship</u>	1869

A staunch Nonconformist, but evidently liberal-minded and able to criticise his own tradition.

Dale Rev. R. W. v. above p. 96, note (2).

Fawcett, Henry (1833-84)

- v. St. P. & P. p.xxxvii

Educated Peterhouse and Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

1856 Fellowship, Trinity Hall

1858 Blinded in an accident

1863 Professor of Political Economy, Cambridge.

Liberal M.P. Postmaster-General in Gladstone's government.

Was a personal friend and disciple of J. S. Mill.

Fraser's Magazine

- v. St. P. & P. p.157

Arnold's reference is to "The Present State of Religious Controversy", Fraser's Magazine, Nov. 1869. pp.537-74

Full quotations are:-

p.565 'The general result of this slight sketch....appears to be, that Protestantism as stated by Paley and other writers of that school is the only form of Christianity which is worthy of the serious consideration of rational men.'

p.566 'The only intelligible way of stating the Christian case is, that Jesus Christ being a supernatural person, affirmed the truth of certain doctrines....and that, this appears from common historical evidence.'

p.569 'The hold of the saint upon the worldly man lies in proving to him, as a fact, that Christ threatened him with hell-fire, and proved his power to threaten by rising from the dead and ascending into heaven.'

p.572 'The fundamental assertions of Christianity.'

Fraser's Magazine was edited at this time by J.A. Froude (editor, 1860-74)

Knox, Alexander

v. St.P. & P p.25

R. Southey, Life of John Wesley, with Remarks on his Life and Character by the late A. Knox esq. 2 vols. (1846)

Arnold's quotation is in Vol. II, p.478

Lecky William Edward Hartpole

v. St.P. & P p.80

Arnold's reference to his History of European Morals (2 vols. Lond. 1869) is to the following passage:-

I. pp.143-6 'Growth of veracity - industrial, political and philosophical.'

p. 145 'Truthfulness....is not reckoned among the fundamentals of morality' by non-industrial nations.

Miall Rev. Edward (1809-80) v. St.P. & P., xvi, xxxvi,
xxxvii-ix

Congregational minister, founder and editor of the Nonconformist and the English Independent, and ardent supporter of the Anti-State-Church Association, later the Liberation Society. His whole life was spent in efforts to disestablish the Church of England. v. Bibliography, and p. 125⁽¹⁾ above.

Ryle Rev. John Charles
v. St.P. & P. p.vii

Vicar of Stradbroke and Rural Dean of Horne, Suffolk. Afterwards (1880) first bishop of Liverpool. Strong Evangelical. v. the Record, 15 Oct. 1869, report of sermon by Ryle on Heb. xiii, 92: 'Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.' Ryle recommends diligent study of Bible and the 39 Articles: the latter, he says, should be read publicly once a year, for they embody the 'Glorious truths of the Reformation.'

Staniforth Sampson (1720-78(9?))

v. St.P. & P. pp. 54-5

cf. 'The Life of S. Staniforth, written by himself', in Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, etc. by Thomas Jackson, a Wesleyan Minister (1937 etc.) Vol. II

The passage quoted by Arnold is to be found in the above volume, pp. 160 ff.

It seems more likely, however, that Arnold found the passage in R. Southey's Life of John Wesley (1846) Vol. II, p.48, as his punctuation follows this more closely, and he shews a knowledge of this book, St. P. & P. p.25.

Willey (presumably) Rev. William, fl. c. 1863

v. St.P. & P. p.xvii

Wesleyan minister. He wrote a preface to Daily Meditations on Scripture by Mrs. Bridgewater (1857), and revised The History of Methodism, by A. Stevens (1865).

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God and the Bible.	Lond. 1884.
Last Essays on Church and Religion.	Lond. 1877.
Mixed Essays.	Lond. 1879.
Irish Essays and Others.	Lond. 1882.
Discourses in America.	Lond. 1885.
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE 1849 - 1870

MATTHEW ARNOLD: LIFE	MATTHEW ARNOLD: WORKS	SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS	PUBLIC EVENTS
1851 Married Frances Lucy Wightman Appointed Inspector of Schools	1849 The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems, by A. 1852 Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems, by A. 1853 Poems by Matthew Arnold: New Edition 1854 Poems: Second Edition 1855 Poems: Series 2	1849 A.H. Clough: <i>Ambervalis</i> (with T. Burbidge) 1850 Carlyle: Letter De; Pamphlets " Tennyson: In Memoriam " Browning: Xmas Eve and Easter Day	1846-52 Lord John Russell's Ministry (Liberal) 1851 The Great Exhibition 1852 Conservative Ministry 1852-55 Coalition Ministry 1855-58 Palmerston's Ministry (Liberal) 1858-59 Conservative Ministry 1859 Napoleon's war in Italy 1859-65 Second Palmerston Ministry 1865-66 Earl Russell's Ministry (Liberal)
1857 Professor of Poetry, Oxford University	1857 Poems: Third Edition 1858 <i>Marope</i>	1857 Hugh Miller: The Testimony of the Rocks 1859 J.S. Mill: On Liberty 1859 Charles Darwin: Origin of Species 1860 Essays and Reviews	
1859 Tour of Continental Schools	1859 England and the Italian Question		
1861 Death of A.H. Clough	1861 Popular Education in France On Translating Homer 1862 On Translating Homer: Last Words 1864 A French Eton 1865 Essays in Criticism	1862 Colenso on the Pentateuch 1863 J.S. Mill: Utilitarianism 1863 Charles Lyell: The Antiquity of Man 1864 J.H. Newman: Apologia	1862 Lowe's Revised Education Code 1862 Bicentenary Controversy 1866-68 Conservative Ministry 1867 Reform of Franchise by Act of Parliament 1868-74 Liberal Government: under Gladstone
1867 End of Professorship	1867 New Poems		
1868 Death of two sons	1868 New Poems: Second Edition 1869 Poems (2 vols) Culture and Anarchy 1870 St. Paul & Protestantism	1869 W.E.H. Lecky: History of European Morals 1869 E. Renan: St. Paul 1870 J.H. NEWMAN: Grammar of Assent	1869 Disestablishment of the Irish Church 1870 Forster's Education Act Gladstone's Irish Land Act