

who were drawn to the newly emerging industries. The artisan (often newly freed from the rural Anglican influence of squire and parson) found here a faith that gave him social rootage, a sense of equality, a measure of charity (if he was in need), and a channel of protest against the religion of those supposed to be his "betters." His Anglican "betters" chose to let him have his faith, and as a result nonconformity grew, along with the artisan class, until by 1830 it was a rival so potent that the Church feared for its own survival and at last embarked on reform.

With the advent of Anglican reform after 1838 the tables turned again. The Ecclesiastical Commissions's far-reaching changes turned Anglicanism into something very like a modern denomination and left it much better equipped in a pluralist society to compete in the battle for souls. Nonconformity was thrown on the defensive, and despite political squabbling and several legislative defeats, the Church of England remained resurgent to the end of the century. Gilbert thus sides with optimists like Desmond Bowen in his estimate of the Victorian Church. Relative to the previous era, the nineteenth century was an age of remarkable Anglican recovery.

But the analysis goes further. The ebb and flow of Church-chapel disputes at the close of the Victorian era play themselves out sadly on the surface of a much larger receding tide. For the irony of the times was that the industrialism which in its early stages provided such opportunities for nonconformity and later spurred the vigorous response of the Church produced in its last stages (after 1850) a mood of secularism which neither Church nor chapel could break. Eminently suited to a society *becoming* industrial, nonconformity proved even less successful than establishment once urban factory-oriented life fully arrived. Neither Church nor chapel had reached the lowest, or laboring, classes, and by the late 1800s religious indifference was creeping up the social ladder. By 1914 the failure on all sides was evident. The statistics tell the tale. Gilbert's book is a model study in social history—mandatory reading for students of the English churches.

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*The Mind and Art of Victorian England.* Edited by JOSEF L. ALTHOLZ.  
Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. vii + 206 pp.

These ten lectures, first presented at the Victorian festival arranged by Professor Altholz and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota, are now provided with copious notes and bound together with many fine illustrations and paintings. No student of nineteenth century thought should pass them by.

Before looking at those articles of particular interest to readers of this

journal, note should be taken of the range of social and intellectual history found in the others. Leonard G. Wilson ("Science by Candlelight") traces with evident authority the rise and fall and present-day eminence of Darwin's and Lyell's theories. Michael R. Booth ("Going on Stage") is instructive and amusing. Melvin Waldfoegel, who assembled the art display, assures us that those wonderfully didactic narrative paintings are art after all. Nothing in the book better conveys the distance between that age and ours than Holman Hunt's "Awakening Conscience," revealing as it does a maiden's dire hour of temptations.

Two pieces explore in detail the Victorian use of history. Phoebe B. Stanton ("Architecture, History and the Spirit of the Age") presents her findings on the informing background to Pugin's theories of Gothic art. Both he and his critics (and it appears, Ruskin) were independently drawing from eighteenth century definitions of aesthetic excellence, which helps explain why his efforts to turn Gothic inspiration into a "moral revolution" so swiftly collapsed.

A Burkean sense of history, John M. Robson says in "Thoughts on Social Change and Political Accommodation in Victorial Britain," informed "thinkers and politicians of almost all colors," to the extent that for many, to preserve and improve became the English response to continental ideas of revolutionary change. Burke's call for an elite political leadership occasioned many (frequently contradictory) echoes. Apparently everyone then, unlike these godless times, did have standards. Occasionally Robson's prose drifts into fashionable ambiguities: philosophies of history "may most easily be described as ascending and descending helixes . . . or a tilted helix rendered in two dimensions," whereas Phoebe Stanton is content to say, "Others perceived change as an inexorable process; periods of wholeness would be followed by confusion and transition."

Much of the intensity the Victorians brought to questions of time, process, and change was in fact due to their sense that a previous age of wholeness was slipping away. Jerome H. Buckley ("Victorian England: the Self-Conscious Society") states that their "personal bewilderment and perplexity," saturated as it was with a sense of history, resulted in "a double self-consciousness," that is, of both an awareness "of the personal self in time" and an on-going sense of "the whole era itself as a perpetual transition."

Some, he says, like George Eliot, welcomed this heightened self-consciousness, stating that "to forget oneself" was to risk personality disintegration. Others, like Carlyle, finding "the dialogue of the mind with itself" a prescription for disaster, urged through selfless hard work "self-annihilation."

David DeLaura ("The Poetry of Thought") is particularly acute in

developing these indubitably modern themes, the phenomenological basis of a sense of history, self, thought, and society. By 1850 it was the poets, especially Browning, Tennyson, Arnold, and Clough, who clearly saw the futility of the debate swirling around Lyell's geology, Mosaic cosmologies, and emerging evolutionary ideas. Neither science nor faith, they realized, could "win," for rationality itself was the issue. "We have learned," DeLaura writes, "to call this situation the death or disappearance of God."

So these four plunged into "the pathology of thought" and through poetic intuition tried to perform "the most grimly truthful inspection of traditional moral and intellectual complacencies." Before turning away, as they all did, each had experienced, DeLaura says, "pain, alienation, and dread," what is today called, "the existential basis and background of all human consciousness."

Josef Altholz ("The Warfare of Conscience with Theology") argues that long before the sixties when the struggle over evolution and higher criticism became intense, the clergy had largely lost the battle. Too long had they defended Biblical history and Christian doctrines repugnant to the general moral and ethical tone of the day. Altholz finds the clergy "slightly comical" and skilled "in the practice of evasion." Wilberforce is once again seen as the loser to Huxley, and deserving to be, for the scientists were "armed with a weapon which even clergymen were taught to fear, the weapon of truth."

Robert M. Young in a perceptive essay in *The Victorian Crisis of Faith* (edited by Anthony Symondson) argues a different point but one essential to the discussion. The crude oversimplifications of which both sides were guilty should not disguise the heart of the matter: behind the issue of evolution and higher criticism was the question of the validity of empirical methods. Were they adequate to deal with man's nature and history? Not only the clergy were concerned with naturalistic definitions; Adam Sedgwick, Professor of Geology at Cambridge, as early as the mid-forties wrote a six hundred page warning on that subject. As the century closed, many leading European voices (Husserl, Weber, Durkheim, etc.) were alarmed over the devastating victory of positivism.

So, in fact, was Huxley himself. Thirty years after his debate with Wilberforce he could write: "It is the secret of the superiority of the best theological teachers to the majority of their opponents that they substantially recognize the realities of things, however strange the forms in which they clothe their conceptions. The doctrines of predestination, of the innate depravity of man and the essential vileness of matter . . . faulty as they are, appear to me to be vastly nearer the truth."

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